

The "B" Team
1 Corinthians 1:18-31

In the life of the church, teamwork is critical if we expect to accomplish anything for the glory of the Lord. Unlike many other religions of the world, Christianity is not a solo journey to nirvana or divine enlightenment, but a faith-based relationship with the family of God. Even so, a personal commitment to follow Jesus Christ is necessary, and the first step on our journey towards perfection in Him. Once we make that decision, we travel not alone but as part of the family of God. Throughout history, God's people have never been a random assembly of people amassed for a divine reason, but part of a divine family.

God chose the ancient Israelites be the first family of God. We know from Genesis 17:1-8 that the spiritual father of their faith was Abraham, the one whom God promised to bless with an everlasting blessing. That blessing is irrevocable, for we also know from Numbers 23:19 and countless historically reliable examples recorded in the Scriptures that God's promises are always kept and kept fully. We can have absolute faith and assurance that God is always faithful, even when His family is not.

That is an important truth, because **the problem with God's family is that we are not always faithful.** The early family of God, Abrahams descendants known as the Israelites, failed to live up to their promises. It wasn't just once or twice, but too many times to count. To put in another way, their spiritual father Abraham was faithful, but they were not. In a strange way, that was a good thing. Romans 11:11-12 tell us why. It was their unfaithfulness that resulted in God expanding His family to include Gentiles, people like you and me. **We have been adopted into the royal family.** In legal terms, we have all the rights and privileges that goes along with having the family name, the name of Jesus Christ. The amazing thing is that God has chosen us, He has chosen His church, to help in bringing the wayward and estranged family members back into the fold. God is now using us, the church, to graft even more people to His family tree. And since God is always faithful, He has also given us what we need to accomplish that mission.

We need great power to overcome the lie of Satan that says we can come to God on our terms, rather than His. We need great power to replace our pride and selfishness with humility and sacrifice. We need great power to overcome the lie that our ways are wiser than God's ways. **Not only has God given us power, He has given us great power, the message of the cross, to do His will and bring us back together.** Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah in verse 19 and implies the message of the cross is the vehicle God will use to "destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent". And to make things even more interesting, God didn't choose to give that power to the wise, the mighty and the noble of the world. Paul says not many of those kinds of people are called.

27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

To say it another way. God chose those who use religion as a crutch, those who cling to their Bibles, the very ones that the world despises. To use a football analogy, God chose the 2nd string, the so-called "B" team, to be His family. He chose His backups to be His starters in the Super Bowl. If we had a choice, that's probably not the way most of us would choose our team or our family. We would be tempted to choose those wise in the ways of the world, the Mr. T's of the world, the rich, the powerful, the ones with the right last name, the ones with streets and cities and buildings named after them. God does things much differently. God prefers those who would be the last one to be chosen for the baseball team or the Scrabble tournament, someone who would never make it on Jeopardy. For example, He chose Abraham, once a worshiper of false gods, to be the spiritual father of His children. He chose Isaac and Jacob to be blessed instead of their older brothers Ishmael and Esau, something unheard of in the hierarchal family structure of the day. God chose the runt of the litter, a man named David to be an earthly king of His people. God used a prostitute named Rahab to help Joshua and the rest of God's family enter the Promised Land. God chose Peter to begin building His church, even though he had denied him 3 times. God chose Paul to

write 2/3 of the NT, even though he once made persecuting the church his primary mission.

He didn't stop with Paul, for God has also chosen us to be part of His family and His church. That is good news, for if we are honest with ourselves, we would have to admit we wouldn't even qualify for the Z team of the kingdom if there was such a thing. It is not our qualifications that earn us a place on God's team, but the cross of Jesus. It's not our name that will be on the top of God's family tree, it will be the name of Jesus, the One who calls us His brothers and sisters.

I pray we will be ever mindful of our call to tell others of the amazing love, grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. The world is filled with B team people who believe they have no place in the kingdom because they not wise or prudent members of the A Team. Let us use every last ounce of power we have been given to bring light to the truth and bring hope to the lost. Let us proclaim the message of the cross to bring glory to God the Father, bring glory to Jesus the Son, bring glory to the Holy Spirit, and bring glory to the B team, the royal family of God. Amen