

1 COR 1:10-17 DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH

We know when we talk about the church at Corinth that the mention of sin will certainly come up. They had many problems, and as we look at this section this morning we will come across the first time Paul addresses a specific sin of the Corinthians. The sin they had, was the same sin the church has today, 2000 years later. The problem of quarreling has existed all throughout the New Testament times. As we go through the book of Corinthians, we can identify with almost everything that was going on in that church. The reason is that man is sinful and the church is made up of sinners, who even though redeemed, still battle with sin. We battle with our own depraved selfish nature. Our own pride and ego always wants to look out for number one. Man is naturally inclined to self-will and self-centeredness. Christians are justified but still are selfish and when that sin has its own way, conflict will happen. When two different people want to have their own ways, they will quarrel. Sad to say, but the fact is, is that there are going to be conflicts in the church. I don't want to break your bubble but the church isn't always a perfectly peaceful place. As long as churches are made up of human beings, we will have the deficiencies of humanity. As long as Christians behave as fleshly ones there will be factions.

Quarrels are just a part of life. Starting with infants, we learn that they are very selfish individuals and think the world revolves around them. If they don't get their way, they cry. Little children will throw hissy fits when they don't get their own way. Kids will fight over a toy, then later a position on the football team, then later in business, the school board, and in politics. Friends fight, brothers and sisters fight, husbands and wives fight, and nations fight. The sin of self-will always rears its ugly head. Nobody likes confrontations and people will try to escape them, but the ego and selfish desires get involved and the battle begins.

This is not consistent with our new natures and is contrary to what our Lord desires as far as unity is concerned. Divisions in the church are a terrible witness to the lost world. Bickering and backbiting weakens the church and does much damage as the Father is dishonored and the Son is disgraced and the joy is robbed in the fellowship of believers.

The Corinthian church needed to be rebuked for their selfishness and to be restored back to harmony. Paul exhorts and instructs not only the Corinthians, but also many churches today so they would maintain the unity of the church. This can also be helpful to us in a preventive way as we listen to Paul as he instructs through the rest of the letter.

1. EXHORTATION TO DOCTRINAL UNITY 1:10

- A. EXHORT (PARAKALEO) Call alongside to help
Paul wanted to come alongside these fellow believers to help correct them. The Holy Spirit is known as the Paraclete, who

comes alongside and helps us. He is appealing to them, exhorting them that they all be one. He appealed to them as brothers. They should act in harmony as brothers.

B. NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

His appeal was to them if they had any regard for that worthy name by which they were called.

All that He is, character and will His name has authority.

When we quarrel, we dishonor Christ's name. We belong to Him.

C. AGREEMENT

To be in harmony is the main article of our religion, on such agreement the safety of the church rests and is dependent.

John Calvin

There has to be unity in the local church. In the name of Christ, it can be done. We need to agree about the things of God. We need to be speaking the same thing. It is confusing to people when there are conflicting things about the gospel.

Unity Phil 1:27, Ps 133:1, Eph 4:3, Acts 4:32 The standard was apostolic doctrine.

Doctrine John 17:11, 21-23, Acts 2:46-47 Above all, there has to be doctrinal unity. We are not to have a smorgasbord of different doctrinal beliefs. There must be agreement in the Word and will of God.

D. DIVISIONS (SCHISMATA) a division of judgment,

dissension, difference of opinion Our English word comes from this, schism.

John 7:43 Rom 16:17—To differ with Scripture is to differ with God.

E. BE MADE COMPLETE (KATARTIZO) mending nets

Put back together again---perfectly joined together

To make one again that was broken or separated This is to be done internally(same mind), and externally (same judgment)

They are to be one in beliefs, standards, attitudes, and principles.

F. SAME MIND

Unity doesn't mean give up your thinking for the sake of peace at all costs. We are to mold our Christian thinking within the mind of Christ.

Same doctrines, standards, and basic life style.

When there are differences, they are to reconcile those differences.

Acts 2:46-47, Phil 2:2-3, 3:15-16, Rom 15:5-7,

2. FACTIONS

1:11-12

A. QUARRELS

This factionalism was not denominationalism. It was far worse.

There can be some purpose in a dignified denominationalism.

The emphasis of one group balances the emphasis of another group.

Here, there was a contentious strife and selfish wrangling and was a blight on Christianity.

Prov 13:10, James 4:1-6

B. THE PARTIES

Parties had developed in the names of these men. Paul learned of

this through Chloe, a prominent person in the Corinthian church who had written or come to visit Paul in Ephesus.
These were great teachers of the early church.
Paul—Some preferred Paul's straightforward preaching.
Apollos—Others preferred the eloquence and philosophical thought
Of Apollos.
Cephas---Others like the authoritarian speaking of Peter.
Christ---Others said they were "Christ only"
They adopted party cries. They allowed themselves to be segregated.
Carnality produces pride and division. The only cure is spirituality.
Scripture is always the place to go to when there is a division.

3. ONE IN CHRIST

1:13

A. DIVISION IS A CONTRADICTION

Christians are one in Christ and Christ is not to be divided. Believers are never to destroy that unity. If they do it contradicts who they believe in. It is a violation of our redeemed nature. This is in direct opposition to the Lord's will.

1 Cor 6:17, 12:12-13, Rom 12:5, Eph 4:4-6, John 17:21-22

B. CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

Paul was ashamed that they would even think of lifting him up as a cult leader.

Paul had never been crucified for anyone. He did not save anyone. He didn't want any part of the faction named for him. He didn't bring people to himself, but to Christ. He is saying, who died for you? Was Paul your atonement? Was he the savior? Of course not.

C. BAPTISM IN CHRIST'S NAME

To whose name do you pledge allegiance? Were you devoted to my service? Were you baptized in Paul's name? It is in Christ's name our baptism is celebrated.

4. THE PRIORITY OF PREACHING

1:14-17

A. BAPTISM IS NOT AS HIGH A CALLING

Baptism is not the principal department of his office. Teaching holds a higher importance over baptism. Go preach and baptize. Baptism is connected with teaching simply as an appendage. He thanks God he only baptized a few, especially in light of what he was addressing here. So, he was certainly not baptizing in his own name to set himself as leader of a sect. He left it to others to baptize while he did a more useful work, teaching the gospel. His main business was to preach the gospel.

Crispus---Acts 18:8 He had been the synagogue leader in Corinth And was converted under Paul's teaching.

Gaius-----Rom 16:23 Corinthian host

B. PREACHING THE GOSPEL

He was not sent to ceremonialize but to evangelize.
He was to preach the gospel as far and wide as the providence of God would permit. He was not ashamed of the gospel.
It was the wisdom and power of God to these Corinthians.
Christ crucified is the fountain of all our hopes. He preached that people could be reconciled to God through the mediation of a

redeemer. By Christ's death they can live.

Mt 28:19, Acts 26:16-18, Rom 1:16, 1 Cor 1:23-24

The cross of Christ\ It conquered the strongholds of evil.

As we each have the right priority in our lives, we too will be determined to serve the Lord in truth and unity, not living in carnality and confusion of dissension and division.