



1 Corinthians 1:10-17_An Appeal for Agreement!

July 16, 2013

Happy Father's Day! ☺

Text: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

- First of all, Happy Father's Day to all the Dads, Granddads, and one-day Dads! ☺ We love you brothers!
- Given our recent men's conference, I thought it would be ok to continue on with 1 Corinthians today; I hope that is ok.
- But ladies, please treat these men well today! He gets his favorite dinner! ☺

Initial Thoughts on our Text:

- As we said in our opening thoughts on this Epistle, one of the major issues facing this church was division among its members.
- Keep in mind that this epistle was written in the mid-50's AD. Christ died around 33 AD. Within the first 20 years of the church, the Apostles were already fighting major battles for unity in just about every church.
- Also remember that Christ Himself addressed "divisions" in at least three of His churches in Revelation: Pergamum (teachings of Balaam), Thyatira (tolerating Jezebel the "prophetess"), Sardis (sin).
- In fact, disunity was an issue in many churches in the New Testament and post-New Testament periods, and remains so today. Our enemy knows that if "the house is divided, it cannot stand . . . "

Mar 3:24-25 ESV If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. (25) And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

- So there has always been discord lurking at the door (Gen 4:7) of the Church. Remember again the slick methods of the enemy . . .

Mat 13:24-25 ESV He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, (25) but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

- It's hard to overemphasize the need for **unity**. Let me say this clearly (because ya'll know I struggle with clarity):
 1. The gates of hell cannot destroy the church! (Matt 16:18)
 2. Cultural forces cannot destroy the church! (1 John 2:17)
 3. BUT . . . if we allow either of these things IN, we can degrade the effectiveness of church from inside!
- Dear friends, Biblical unity is two-fold: agreeing with **God** (His Word), THEN one-another. Agreeing with one another is not enough. Many people are "in agreement" around abominable things!
- One of the challenges of 1st Corinthians for the modern church is to know and walk in the full effect of being unified, but around **Christ** (v13) and His **Word**, not around error and unrighteousness!
 1. Christ is NOT Divided! (v13) Our unity is first and foremost centered on Christ!

2. Our unity must be centered on what Christ taught! (Matt 28:20)
3. As we'll see throughout this epistle, unity is paramount but not around sin. ☺

Line by Line:

V10

- The word used for “appeal” is from the Greek “parakaleō,” which means “to entreat, implore, or to beg or plead.”
- Understand that there was a sense of **urgency** here. This was VERY important to the Apostle. Being the first area covered (and he goes right back to it in chapter three), this unity issue was likely, in the mind of Paul, **critical** to the future of the young church.
- We can surmise how important this was to Paul because of the statement, “by the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”
- There is NO stronger way to make an appeal! To invoke Christ’s name was to say, “THIS IS MAJOR! THIS IS CRITICAL! THIS IS BEYOND MY HUMAN AUTHORITY! THIS MEANS MUCH TO US . . . BUT ALSO TO CHRIST, OUR KING! YOUR UNITY IS HIS WILL!”
- The appeal had THREE elements:
 1. For **agreement**
 2. For no **divisions**
 3. For unity in mind and **judgment**
- It seems like he was saying the same thing over and over—and he was; but with subtle shades of meaning in my opinion. Given the whole context of the letter:
 1. “Agreement” suggests a general “getting along,” where pride is dealt with and there is a spirit of harmony.
 2. “No divisions” deals with the issues mentioned in verses 11-17.
 3. “Unity in mind and judgment” is an exhortation to see the wisdom of apostolic counsel, and for everyone to “agree” concerning proper and God-honoring judgments in the various issues the letter deals with.
- CRCC, I have the same prayer: that we would “get along,” “line up” not around men but around Christ, and that we’d all submit ourselves to Biblical judgments.

V11

- Although we don’t know who Chloe was, or who the “people” are, this is a “unity” principle.
- Paul received a report and moved to deal with it. This local church was under **authority**.
- Somehow, friends, we must walk under authority without that authority becoming idolatrous. When we do this, it is actually easier to walk in unity.
- Many people have issues with the idea of outside authority (even the relational type) in today’s church. In my view, this isn’t an issue to argue about or divide over. However, most Christians would agree it is wise to have one not so close to difficult events help settle disputes and maintain unity.

V12

- *1Co 1:12 ESV What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."*
- Madness! ☺ But VERY easy to fall into. I love what our own Pastor Wilson wrote on this subject:

Paul doesn't leave the cause of the division up for guesswork. Rather, he states it explicitly and we understand it clearly. Clearly the issue was that the Corinthians lost sight of the "head" of the church (Christ) and focused on the messenger. In laymen's terms, "I will follow whoever sounds the best and disregard the creator of the message." Modern day examples include:

- *"I don't like that Pastor because he doesn't speak well."*
- *"That Pastor's church isn't family integrated like ours."*
- *"That Pastor is better than ours because he has a strong outreach program."*

- Paul, Apollos, and Peter (Cephas) were wonderful men, but not worthy of division!
- We can fall into this too: "I follow McBath. I follow Washer. I follow Baucham. I follow McLeod." Yikes! **WE FOLLOW CHRIST!** 😊
- Yes, God ordained leaders within His church, but they are followed because they point to Christ! (1 Cor 11:1)

V13

- Christ is NOT divided! His **rule** MUST BE unmatched, unchallenged, and unmistakable in every God-fearing church!
- No preacher was crucified for you. As much as I believe in "obeying and submitting" to good leaders (Heb 13:17), my loyalty to them pales in comparison to my loyalty to Christ! Yours should too!
- I don't believe Paul was saying, "Don't follow your Elders, or don't listen to me or Peter or Apollos." If we don't do that, we disobey God's commands and order for His church. I believe He was saying that in doing so, YOU FOLLOW CHRIST. We must never get that twisted!
- That mindset **crushes** division because it shines the spotlight on Christ! There is only ONE undisputed HEAD of EVERY CHURCH; JESUS!

*Col 1:15-18 ESV He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. (16) For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. (17) And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (18) **And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.***

- It was as if Paul was saying, "So by all means, precious Corinthians, appreciate what you've learned from each of us, but recognize that Christ is your ultimate teacher!"

VV14-17

- Paul didn't want all of his hard work to result in disunity. His focus was the gospel.
- And even then, you can tell that Paul didn't want his style, knowledge, technique, or excellence to be what attracted the people or drove the narrative (v17).
- He wanted the simple preaching of the **cross** to be front and center. Therefore:
 1. There would be no doubt to whom the church belonged.
 2. There would be less comparison with Paul and others; he detested that. (2 Cor 11-12)
 3. There is POWER in the simple preaching of the cross.
- Who baptized who is not worthy of division! But if something so small could trip this church up, they needed to be reminded of who died for them to set them free from sin!

The Beauty of Agreement

1. Friends, Scripture is filled with admonitions and commands to walk in agreement:
 - a. *2Co 13:11 ESV Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.*
 - b. *Psa 133:1-2 ESV A Song of Ascents. Of David. Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! (2) It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!*
 - c. *Eph 4:1-3 ESV I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, (2) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, (3) eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*
 - d. *1Pe 3:8 ESV Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.*
2. But we understand that agreement must be in “the mind of Christ.” (Php 2:5)
3. Frankly speaking, there are some things worth disagreeing and separating over just as there are some things unworthy of that.
4. We typically believe things worth dividing over would be critical doctrines (Trinity, Deity of Christ, Salvation by Grace through Faith, Scripture’s inerrancy, etc.), and that would be right.
5. But Paul includes areas of sin in this letter that would seem extremely legalistic and mean-spirited in the current age.
6. My prayer is that even with the battle for **truth** raging around us, this church would maintain its unity in the spirit of both **truth** and **grace**; fighting for what’s true, but going to the ends of the earth to love and care for the brokenhearted and repentant.

Again in the words of Pastor Wilson: What does this mean for CRCC?

1. **Squash** divisions among us. A manhunt should be in place for the Spirit of Divisiveness and it should be dealt with immediately.
2. Our focus should be on **Christ** alone. Christ is not divided. Therefore, if our focus, our works, our ministry, and our thoughts are for His glory, unity will be cultivated. Our disagreements should never overshadow the work of Christ and our call to service.
3. Be cautious of making an **idol** of CRCC successes. It can be easy to fall into the trap of "we've got this thing down" and other churches don't. We can also fall into this trap personally: "I've got this family worship thing down while my friends don't. Therefore, I'm better off than . . ." Idolizing your growth in Christ causes division within the universal church.
4. We should thank God that **Christ** is the head of the church and not man! Bless God that He didn't create the church and leave it up to us to find our own unity.
5. **Pray** for the entire unified process in Christ; those who plant and those who water. No matter what the planter or waterer does, they are both unified in Christ.

Amen, good Pastor. In the words of another 1st century fighter for church unity, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (martyred for Christ in Rome between 98-117AD):

*Wherefore it is fitting that ye should run together in accordance with the will of your bishop, which thing also ye do. For your justly renowned presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp. Therefore in your concord and harmonious love, **Jesus Christ is sung**. And do ye, man by man, become a choir, that being harmonious in love, **and taking up the song of God in unison, ye may with one voice sing to the Father through Jesus Christ, so that He may both hear you, and***

perceive by your works that ye are indeed the members of His Son. It is profitable, therefore, that you should live in an unblameable unity, that thus ye may always enjoy communion with God.