

INTRODUCTION

1. All of us have heard of church fights and splits.
2. Some of us may have been there to see it first hand.
3. I know this church has had its share of it.
4. I didn't know this at first, but the first church I pastored had been part of a church split.
5. Unfortunately it was the bad part of a split.
6. That didn't take long to figure out.

7. These things shouldn't happen but they do.
8. Richard Sibbes said, "Fractions always breed factions."¹
9. After Paul addresses who the Corinthians were in Jesus Christ, he now launches into the first major problem in the church and it has to do with their lack of unity.
10. Because they were one in fellowship with their Lord, they should be one in fellowship with each other.²
11. Nothing destroys unity more than splits and quarrels---divisions among God's

¹ Thomas, I. D. E. The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations. electronic ed. Simpsonville, SC: Christian Classics Foundation, 1999. Print.

² MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

people.

12. William Gurnall said, “No readier way to send Him (Christ) going than by strifes among brethren; these smoke Him out of His own house.”³
13. In Proverbs 6:19, Solomon tells us that God hates “one who spreads strife among brothers.
14. Paul said in Romans 16:17-18 (NASB) to “keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts

³ Ibid., Thomas.

of the unsuspecting.”

15. I have pastored a few churches in my time and all of them had this problem.
16. This is sin and must be noted for what it is.
17. And my prayer this morning is that we can learn from the word of God how to handle strife and to make sure we're not guilty of it.
18. Also, I pray that we will be diligent “to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph.4:3).
19. Please take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 1.

20. We are looking at the subject of splits and quarrels in the church in verses 10-17.

21. Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-17.

Paul begins verse 17 with his...

LESSON

I. The Plea (v.10a)

“Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

Paul literally...

A. He Comes Along Side of Them

He says, “Now I exhort you.”

1. “Now” is de and refers to a change of subject
2. He moves from talking about their position in Christ to their practice or behavior as a believer in Christ
3. The word “exhort” or “beseech” is the Greek word parakaleo
4. It’s a compound word that comes from Para which means “beside” and kaleo which means “to call”
5. It is literally means “to call to the side”
6. This word is translated in the NT as urge, beseech, exhort, appeal or

comfort

7. This is the verb root of paraklētos, the “Helper” (or Comforter) of John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 and the “Advocate” of 1 John 2:1.⁴
8. Paul used this word when he “appealed” to Philemon for his runaway slave Onesimus
9. Paul wanted to come along side of the Corinthians and help them too
10. He wanted them to protect the unity of the church

B. His Tone is Gentle. He calls them “Brethren”

⁴ MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

Instead of commanding with the authority of an apostle, he pleads with the tenderness of a brother.⁵

C. His Authority is Noted

He says his exhortation is “by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

1. Once more we hear the full, solemn designation of the Savior, which always brings to mind all of his saving power and grace.
2. And now again (v. 2) the ὄνομα or “name” is joined with this declaration

⁵ MacDonald, William. *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.

3. Peter said in Acts 2:21 (NASB) 'And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'
4. Christ's name represents all that He is, His character and His will
5. His character and His will, forms the supreme basis for all Christian behavior
6. Our behavior as believers has its most direct relationship to Jesus Christ
7. When we sin or complain or quarrel, we harm the church and its leaders and our fellow believers

8. We also put a barrier between unbelievers and the gospel. But worst of all, we bring dishonor to our Lord.⁶
9. There is no saving or no cleansing power apart from this “name.”⁷

II. The Problem (v.10b-d)

The problem is a lack of unity.

Paul says he exhorts them “by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

⁶ MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

⁷ Lenski, R. C. H. The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963. Print.

He says you all need to...

A. Agree with One Another (v.10b)

How?

1. The Greek word for “Agree” (legete) (pres.act.subj.verb), lit. “speak the same thing”
2. Paul is very intentional when he says this (subjunctive mood)
3. And with the use of the present tense he wants this to be an ongoing action (Lit. keep on speaking)

4. What are they to keep speaking the same thing about?
5. Generally - whatever this is it is to unite not divide. It is to make complete not separate. It is to be of the same mind and in the same judgment, not to be human opinion.
6. Specifically speaking this is doctrine
7. They needed to agree on doctrine
8. Philippians 1:27 (NASB) Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for

the faith of the gospel.

9. Philippians 2:2 (NASB) Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

10. John Gill says, “Profess the same truths, and express them in the same words; which shows the lawfulness, yea, necessity and usefulness, of confessions and articles of faith, being made and agreed to by members of churches.”
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11. The church must be in harmony on what the Bible teaches about itself, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit,

⁸ John Gill's Commentary on the Whole Bible. 1 Corinthians.

the Trinity, salvation, baptism, sanctification and the second coming of Christ just to name a few. (This has been my purpose in reading the London Baptist Confession of Faith in the service)

B. Stop Fighting (v.10c)

“That there be no divisions among you”

1. The word **divisions** translates the Greek *schismata*,, from which we get *schism*.
2. In the physical sense the meaning is “to tear or rip,” that is, to separate, as in Matthew 9:16 (“tear”).

3. Metaphorically it means to have a difference of opinion, a division of judgment, a dissension.
4. Once when Jesus was preaching in Jerusalem the people listening to Him could not agree on who He was.
5. Some thought He was the great prophet, some that He was the Christ, and some that He was just an ordinary man making extraordinary claims.
6. Consequently, John reports, “There arose a division [*schisma*] in the multitude because of Him” (John 7:43).

7. Still today there are divisions because of disagreements as to who Christ is, even among those who go by His name.⁹

8. Paul says again in 1 Corinthians 11:18 (NASB) For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.

C. Unite in Mind and Opinion (v.10d)

“But that you may be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

1. Be made complete

⁹ MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

- a) “Made complete” is the Greek *katartizō*, used in classical Greek as well as in the New Testament to speak of mending such things as nets, bones, dislocated joints, broken utensils, and torn garments.
- b) The basic meaning is to put back together, to make one again something that was broken or separated.
- c) Christians are to be made complete (“perfectly joined together,” KJV), both internally (in the same mind) and externally (in the same judgment).

- d) Paul uses the perfect tense to indicate they were made perfect at one point in the past but it continues today
- e) The same is true for believers today. We have been made complete
- f) In our individual minds and among ourselves we are to be one in beliefs, standards, attitudes, and principles of spiritual living.¹⁰

2. In the same mind

¹⁰ MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

- a) “Mind” is nous. It refers to understanding

- b) Romans 12:16 (NASB) Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

- c) Romans 15:5-6 (NASB) Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. In the same judgment

- a) “Judgement” is gnome. It refers to one’s opinion
- b) We are to be of the same opinion in regard to Christian doctrine, standards, and basic life-style.
- c) The apostles themselves were different from one another in personality, temperament, ability, and gifts; but they were of one mind in doctrine and church policy.
- d) When differences of understanding and interpretation arose, the first order of business was to reconcile those

differences.

- e) Ego had no place, only the will of God.¹¹

Paul now tells us where he was hearing about the divisions in the church.

William MacDonald says, “In naming his informers, Paul lays down an important principle of Christian conduct. We should not pass on news about our fellow believers unless we are willing to be quoted in the matter. If this example were followed today, it would prevent most of the idle gossip which now plagues the church.”¹²

¹¹ MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

¹² MacDonald, William. Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments. Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.

III. The People (v.11)

“For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you.”

Chloe must have been an influential Christian, perhaps a member of the Corinthian church, although she (or he) is not mentioned elsewhere.¹³

Chloe either wrote or visited Paul in Ephesus to tell him of the factions in the church. It is not known whether Chloe was a man or a woman.¹⁴

Notice what they were saying...

¹³ Sproul, R. C., ed. [The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version \(2015 Edition\)](#). Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015. Print.

¹⁴ MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.

IV. The Phrase (vv.12-16)

Paul says in verses 12-16, Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, “I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ.” 13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. 16 Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

A. “Each One of You is Saying” (v.12)

That is, “each one of you keeps saying (lego)” (pres.act.ind.verb)

That party spirit ran so high that they were all listed on one side or another.

None of them were wise enough and spiritual-minded enough to hold aloof from parties altogether.

They prided themselves on being “uncompromising” and “party men.”¹⁵

1. “I am of Paul”

The Apostle Paul.

Paul shows his indignation at their partisanship by first rebuking those who had used his own name as a party watchword.¹⁶

¹⁵ Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. 1 Corinthians. London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909. Print. The Pulpit Commentary.

¹⁶ Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. 1 Corinthians. London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909. Print. The Pulpit Commentary.

2. “I am of Apollos”

Apollos was an effective preacher from Alexandria who had ministered in Ephesus and Corinth (Acts 18:24–19:1).¹⁷

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:3-7 (NASB) For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? 4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not mere men? 5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was

¹⁷ Sproul, R. C., ed. The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition). Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015. Print.

causing the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

3. “I am of Cephas” (the Apostle Peter)

The Aramaic name (meaning “rock,” as does the Gk. petros) given by Jesus to Simon Peter (John 1:42).

Paul acknowledged that Peter was regarded as among the “pillars” of the church (Gal. 2:8–9).¹⁸

4. “I am of Christ”

This fourth group claimed some special relationship to Christ that

¹⁸ Sproul, R. C., ed. The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition). Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015. Print.

they denied to their fellow believers (2 Corinthians 10:7).

Whether this exclusive claim was founded, as some suppose, on the fact that they had themselves seen and heard Christ, or whether they asserted their superior and more intimate relationship to him on some other ground, is altogether uncertain.

It would appear from the frequency with which Paul speaks of certain people in Corinth “glorying in the flesh” and “in appearance” that this party claimed some special, external relationship to Christ and that their views of him were “carnal” or worldly.

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¹⁹ Hodge, Charles. [1 Corinthians](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995. Print. Crossway Classic Commentaries.

B. “Is Christ divided?” (vv.13-16)

Paul continues in verses 13-16 by asking, “Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. 16 Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other.”

1. The church cannot be divided

It is contrary to its nature to be split into hostile parties, just as it is contrary to the nature of a family to be thus divided. As the head is one,

so are the members.²⁰

2. Paul was not crucified for you
3. You were not baptized in the name of Paul
4. Paul baptized Crispus, Gaius (v.14).

Crispus was the chief ruler of the synagogue in Corinth, whose conversion is recorded in Acts 18:8.

Gaius is mentioned in Romans 16:23 as the host of the apostle.

5. Paul also baptized “the household of Stephanas” (v.16).

These were Paul’s first converts in

²⁰ Hodge, Charles. 1 Corinthians. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995. Print. Crossway Classic Commentaries.

Corinth, respected for their dedication.

Stephanas himself was one of the representatives who brought a communication from the Corinthians to Paul (16:15–17).

Paul says “Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in the cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.”

This was Paul’s...

V. The Purpose (v.17)

A. His Commission was to Preach the Gospel

1. He did this in Damascus after his conversion

Acts 9:20-22 (NASB) immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." 21 All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" 22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

2. He gave his history to the Galatians in Galatians 1:11-24

B. Paul is Not Minimizing Baptism

1. He knows God commanded it (Acts 10:48)
2. But God didn't command Paul to baptize but to preach

He says in 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (NASB) And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

CONCLUSION

1. The word “sent” (*apestellen*) in verse 17 involves the meaning “made me an apostle” (*apostolos*).
2. The primary function of the apostles was “to bear witness” (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8, etc.).
3. When Paul says he was sent “to preach the gospel,” he dwells for eight verses on the character of his preaching.²¹
4. The church is to have doctrinal unity not clicks and sects that only divide.

²¹ Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. [1 Corinthians](#). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909. Print. The Pulpit Commentary.

5. To form ranks under leaders as the Corinthians did was sin and it was causing splits, divisions, and quarrels.
6. This is not to be the behavior of the church.
7. We are to humble ourselves and serve one another, not pit ourselves against others.
8. We are all of Christ. Period.
9. This morning we come to the place that unites all of us in Jesus Christ and that's the Lord's table.
10. Let's pray as we prepare to partake of the Lord's table.

11. The only requirement that Scripture gives for this observance is that you be a follower of Jesus Christ.

12. Let's pray.