

LET'S ALL GET ALONG / Sunday, June 29, 2014

Unifying Topic: A CALL TO UNITY

Lesson Text

I. **No Division Among Believers** (1 Corinthians 1:10-16)

II. **Paul's True Mission** (1 Corinthians 1:17)

The Main Thought: Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Disagreements in a community may cause division. How can community disagreements be resolved? Paul called disputing people to find common ground by taking on the mind of Christ.

Lesson Aim: To review Paul's explanation of how disagreements among believer should be handled.

Life aim: To live a life committed to working in unity with one another so that God's divine purpose can be our priority and focus.

1:10 Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1:11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentious among you

1:12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

1:13 Is Christ divided: was Paul crucified for you" or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

1:15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

1:16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

HISTORY:

1:1 **Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,**— This is the introduction of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. *Paul was called by God to be an apostle* which means he was appointed by God to be a messenger, a witness, a missionary to carry the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles. No man neither himself nor any other man puts him into the ministry. God alone chooses and calls him! This is Paul's declaration of his call. Paul is called to be a brother to other believers. Paul called Sosthenes our brother, which means he was a brother in Christ, and probably Paul's secretary, a former leader of the Corinthians synagogue who had become a brother of Christ.

1:2 **Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's:**— Paul addresses his greeting/salutation to the church of God in Corinth. He's addressing the saved and sanctified saints of God in the church. He lets them know who they are. They are sanctified by Christ Jesus and so they are saints. The word "*saints*" means set apart, consecrated, sacred, and live a holy life—all for the glory of God. They were set apart for God's special use. Paul's aim in the Epistle is to bring the Corinthians "*state*" into closer alignment with their positional "*standing*." Since that Corinthians are claiming the family name, Paul expects them to live in conformity to the family of Christ. All believers in whatever place they might be, that call upon the Name of Jesus is included in this letter showing forth that Christ is the all-inclusive One and belongs to all believers. The emphasis of course is upon the unity of all who call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:3 **Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.** This is the greeting Paul used in all his letters.

- The church and believers experiences grace and peace. "*Grace*" means the favor of God. "*Peace*" is the result or fruit of God's favor. This grace and peace comes from God who is identified as the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father and the Son are shown to be of equal status, yet clearly distinguished.

1:4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;— The direction of the thanks is directed to God with concerns on behalf of the Corinthians. Grace was a common Christian greeting and Paul was eternally grateful for the grace of God given by Christ Jesus. And because of His grace we see that it's something that's underserved and unmerited. We are blessed because of God's grace and for no other reason. Grace is the believer's resource and supply.

1:5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;— God's grace enriched the Corinthian believers in everything where they experienced the favor of God in every area of life. They were blessed with the gifts of utterance and of knowledge. The church and its believers were enabled by God's grace to know and understand the truth of God's Word and to speak the truth to a lost and dying world.

1:6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:— This is a reference to the moment of salvation when the gospel was heard and believed and settled in their hearts. At that moment the enabling of verse 4 took place because one became a recipient of the grace of God. The gifts and grace of God confirmed the testimony of Christ in the hearts of believers.

1:7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:— Paul moves from the specific provisions of speech and knowledge to God's general provision of all gifts that a believer needs to serve Him. The gifts and grace of God brought full provision to the Corinthian believers. As having the evidence of the message of Christ confirmed within them, they will lack no spiritual gift. The Corinthian church members had all the spiritual gifts they needed to live the Christian life and to witness for Christ. God had already provided them with everything and continues to provide them with everything. They were to wait with eager anticipation for Christ's coming.

1:8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since the Gospel had been faithfully preached and responded to by the Corinthian believers, they are now privileged to wait upon the Second Coming of Jesus Christ who in turn shall also confirm them in that day. In the day of our Lord's return He will confirm or establish us as blameless before His heavenly Father. In that day when we enter heaven, we will not have all our sins and shortcomings flashed before us for everyone to see. When the day of the Lord Jesus Christ comes, *"He is going to present to Himself "the church" in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing: but that she should be holy and blameless"* Eph.5:27.

1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The believer's resource and supply is God Himself. This strengthens the thought with assurance of God's faithfulness. When God calls someone unto salvation, He is faithful to that call. If He called us when we were lost and wretched, He surely will not cease to be faithful to that call now that we have come into fellowship with His Son, Jesus. His glorious call has one specific purpose: to be in fellowship with His Son Jesus Our Lord! The longing of God's heart is for men to know his Son. And this is not on a temporary basis; it means eternal fellowship. That word *"fellowship"* means partnership and oneness, and includes both union and communion.

LESSON:

1 Corinthians 1:10-16 No Division Among Believers

1:10 Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. The first major concern of the Apostle Paul as he addressed this letter to the Corinthians had to do with their divisive spirit. There is a difference between having opposing viewpoints and being *divisive*. The word *"division"* means to split, to rend, to tear apart, schism. This division was not outside but inside the church. A divisive church is seen fuming and fighting. Paul approaches the problem by first denouncing their factional spirit. He introduces his appeal for unity. He uses a significant way in which he addresses them. He *"beseeches"* them meaning *"I call you to my side, let's share*

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

together", talk the matter over; beg, plead, and then addresses them as "*brethren*." He does not have fire in his eyes or a spirit of rebuke and fight in his heart. He comes by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He puts Christ in front, whom they reverence. The sole purpose is that they all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among them. They are to be in perfect union together— unity in speech and fellowship; having the same mind and judgment. The mind would involve thoughts, emotions, and reasonings. The judgment would involve conclusions, goals, and objectives.

1:11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentious among you. The contention was so severe that some believer of the household of Chloe went to Paul about the matter. Paul is writing to Corinth from Ephesus. The word "*contentions*" mean strifes, quarrels, and factions. They were arguing and splitting into groups, contending and quarreling over something. There were even cliques in the church and it got back to Paul. *Contention* is one of the terrible "*works of the flesh*."

1:12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. There appear to have been four rival parties.

1. Those who professed to follow Paul—gifted in church order and uplifting believers.
2. Those who professed to follow Appolos—gifted orator from Alexandria.
3. Those who professed to follow Cephas; Peter—one with Christ in His earthly ministry.
4. Those who professed to follow Christ—and not a man.

The three great teachers of early years, around whom people gathered to hear and receive the message of the Gospel were preachers united in their message, however, their personalities attracted different people. There was the problem in preaching ability and style; turning liberty into license. And some denied needing or receiving the help of any man. Now the church was in danger of dividing. The message should have been more important than the messenger.

1:13 Is Christ divided: was Paul crucified for you" or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?— Three things were asked of the Corinthians:

1. *Is Christ divided?* In other words, "*Is part of Christ over here with this group or clique or is Christ part of the other group? Which one rules; who is Lord; Is Christ within the church or is He in pieces?*"
2. *Was Paul crucified for you?* Paul was not the one crucified for the Corinthians! He was not the Savior for the Corinthians nor of any other body of believers! He did not hang on the cross to suffer in our place.
3. *Were you baptized in the name of Paul?* A believer is only to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Name has all authority. Jesus did not baptize anyone personally (Jh.4:2), but His disciples did in the Name of Jesus.

Their allegiance should have been to Christ and their support to the servants of Christ. The believer confesses the Lord Jesus Christ and gives testimony that he is committing his life to follow the Lord.

1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;— Paul adamantly denies that he ever attempted to secure a personal following of believers when he said thank God I didn't baptized any of you except (Crispus and Gaius). Crispus was the leading ruler of the Jewish synagogue at Corinth. He was led to Christ and baptized by Paul personally (Acts 18:8). Gaius was Paul's host when he was in Corinth (Rom.16:23).

1:15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. For no believer can rightfully accuse him of seeking to form a following or clique and baptizing them in his (Paul's) name. He's not trying to cause any division.

NOT APART OF THE LESSON

1:16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. Paul now recalls another he has baptized, Stephanas. He is one of the three messengers who delivered the Corinthian letter to Paul. Paul baptized all members of his household (1Cor.16:5).

1 Corinthians 1:17 Paul's True Mission

1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. Paul had a pacific assignment. It was not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, adding, not with wisdom of words; not with eloquent speech; words. The message was to be about the cross lest the big words spoken overshadow Christ and make Him of none effect, empty or deprived of substance. The success of the Gospel relies in the plain doctrine of a crucified Lord. It was not about being a great orator with Greek philosophy. The truth needed no artificial dress-up. It alone carries with it the "*power of God unto salvation*" (Rom.1:16). The Corinthians can be healed if they see the distinction of evangelizing the true mission of Christ on the cross, using God's wisdom more so than with speech that cannot be understood or received.

SUMMARY:

¹*Division* in the Corinthian church was the first problem addressed by Paul. He introduces the thoughts of this passage with an appeal for unity. Paul is emphasizing that as Christians we are a part of God's family and share a unity that runs deeper than that of blood brothers and sisters. To "speak the same thing, "allow for no divisions," and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" does not require that everyone believe exactly the same. There is a difference between having opposing viewpoints and being *divisive*. It seems that quarrels had split them into factions and there appears to have been four rival parties within the Church (vv. 11-17):

1. Those who professed to follow *Paul* who had founded the church.
2. Those who counted themselves to be followers of *Apollos*, a native of Alexandria.
3. Those who claimed to follow *Peter*, more favorable to Jewish forms and ceremonies.
4. Those who renounced all the others and claimed only *Christ*.

With the many churches and styles of worship available today, we could get caught up in this same game of "my preacher is better than yours". Paul makes it clear that God's message is much more important than any human messenger. In view of all these *divisions* Paul says that he is thankful that very few in Corinth were ever baptized by him (v. 14). Some speakers use a lot of impressive words but they are weak in content. Paul is stressing that solid content and practical help is what is important for the listener. The persuasive power should be in the story and not in the storyteller. Paul concludes his exhortation regarding the *divisions* in the church with a call to evangelize (v. 17).

APPLICATION:

I must never let my appreciation for any teacher, preacher or author cause me to follow a man rather than the message of God's Word. My allegiance must be to Jesus Christ.

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/divisions-in-the-church/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>