

1Co02 – A Body Divided– 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

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Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “A Body Divided.” We’re going to 1 Corinthians 1:10-17.

Our title this morning is meant metaphorically, but it’s more dramatic taken physically. And dramatic is a good word for our verse-by-verse study of 1 Corinthians. We started last week with the overview message called, “*Welcome to Corinth*” and we learned that Corinth was quite a wild place and it grew up quite a wild church.

But even after the “wildness” of the background of Corinth and the overview of the problem in the church we saw that Paul was still so confident in God’s faithfulness toward the believers there.

In Chapter 1 verse 7 Paul says they had every spiritual gift they needed

Verse 8 says the Lord would keep them strong until the end

Verse 9 says God would do this because God is faithful and because they had been brought into Koinonia (sharing life in common) with Jesus Christ.

You would think this church had it together, but... not so much. God is faithful to complete the work he has begun in us, but we are still called to live **Life As The Church** in the middle of a dark and dysfunctional world. Today we see Paul’s first challenge to the church at Corinth to actually do that.

Let’s pray and we’ll see it. *Lord, Jesus, this is a good message. We pray that you would open our hearts to it. We love how Paul writes this letter. We love that you are so concerned about the Church that he addresses these things very directly and clearly. We pray that we would see the priority that this concern takes for you, by your Holy Spirit, to have Paul write about this problem first. We pray that you would open our eyes to it, that our hearts would receive it, that we would be either strengthened or broken according to what you know we need today, by your Word, for your glory, and in your name Jesus, amen.*

Let’s jump right in to Paul’s first challenge this morning.

**1 Corinthians 1:10(a) (NLT)**

***10 I appeal to you (beseech you), dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .***

There's a myriad of problems in the church in Corinth. So the one Paul chooses to deal with first must have some significance to address it first. I would assume this concern one of – if not Paul's highest priority concern.

Remember how the paraphrase “The Message” the introduction to this concern from last week's message.

**1 Corinthians 1:10 (a) (The Message)**

***10 I have a serious concern to bring up with you, my friends, using the authority of Jesus, our Master. I'll put it as urgently as I can . . .***

And then we read Paul's first and certainly one of his highest concerns.

**1 Corinthians 1:10(b) – (NLT)**

***. . . [you must] live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.***

After his encouraging introduction last week, Paul dives straight into the first high-priority problem. Paul says I have a serious concern about you. I bring it to you by the authority of Jesus Christ and I need to put it as urgently as possible.

***You MUST “Live in Harmony with each other” The word (for harmony) means – “Perfectly joined together”***

Paul begins by saying we must live (as the Body of Christ) *perfectly joined together*.

Paul is beginning with *THE* greatest metaphor of the Church in the New Testament and he'll carry this metaphor throughout the letter.

**A Metaphor** is: ***A word or phrase meaning one thing literally, but used to explain the similarities it has with something else.***

For instance, the Body of Christ is a metaphor. Most often when we say “the Body of Christ” we are NOT talking about the literal body that Jesus lived in while he was on this earth or that he ascended in.

When we say “the Body of Christ: we are most often talking about *the Church* and we are referring to the truth that we (as the Church) are called to live in the *same way* a healthy physical body would live.

Look down again at 1 Corinthians 1:10. First, we are called to live in harmony with each other (perfectly joined together). Then, verse 10 says ***Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.***

Just like a healthy human body  
has no divisions in it  
has only one mind  
and is united in thought and purpose

so should the Body of Christ be!

And the even more incredible reason the Church is called the “Body of Christ” is the truth Paul alluded to in the last verse we looked at last week.

It was the end of 1 Corinthians 1:9.

**1 Corinthians 1:9 (NLT)**

***9 God . . . has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***

That’s the famous Greek word KOINONIA, which means “*to share in common*” or “*to be one with.*”

Again, the paraphrase, The Message says here,

**1 Corinthians 1:9 (The Message)**

***9 God . . . shares with us the life of his Son and our Master Jesus.***

This “Body of Christ” that we are part of is connected by the shared life of Jesus Christ.

We are called to be “perfectly joined together” with *one another* because we are “perfectly joined together” with the life of Jesus Christ.

Do you see then how foundational the problem of *divisions and discord and conflict* in the church is?

How often, if the Church indeed were a physical body, how often would it need to be locked up in a padded room and heavily medicated for its own safety because of its extreme schisms and dysfunctions?

It was a serious problem in the first century culture in *Corinth* and it’s a serious problem in *our* culture today.

Then, in verse 11, Paul addresses the first sign of the dysfunction in the Body of Christ at Corinth.

**1 Corinthians 1:11 (NLT)**

***11 For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters.***

Wait a minute – is that okay? Is it okay that some members of Chloe's household told Paul about the quarrels in the church? Isn't that gossip? Shouldn't they mind their own beeswax?

No, it's not gossip – why? It's because they are asking Paul to do something about a serious problem in the Church. Paul is the spiritual leader of the church and he is obligated to do something about this problem. So please, don't get angry at a leader of the church (like me) if we have to deal with a problem in the church. (Even if that problem might involve you.) It is our responsibility to do so, or we will end up having a problem with God, ourselves.

So, in verse 12 is the problem the members of Chloe's household are bringing to Paul. That leads to this first emotional appeal from Paul for harmony and unity in the Body of Christ at Corinth.

**1 Corinthians 1:12 (NLT)**

***12 Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow only Christ."***

This kind of reminds me of the problem we have today of "celebrity pastors." But the problem was even bigger in Corinth because they had more than one celebrity pastor in the same church! This is where the reality TV show started "*Celebrity Pastors of Corinth.*"

**Some** say – I follow "**My Pastor Paul**"

**And some** say - I follow "**My Pastor Apollos**"

**And some** say - I follow "**My Pastor Peter**"

And then there are people who have just as big a problem who say, "*Well! I follow only Christ*" because the people are probably saying I don't listen to *any* pastor – me and Jesus, we've got our own thing goin' on.

What's the problem with people in the Body of Christ "choosing" their favorite pastor then rooting for him in the "Real-Life Pastor Wars"?

The **PROBLEM** is - The **DIVISION** it causes - in the **Body of Christ**

The **PROBLEM** is - The **SCHISM** it creates in **the Church**

The **PROBLEM** is - The **DEATH** of **HARMONY and UNITY** it brings

Remember the basis for much of this letter is that the Church is called to function like a healthy physical body. The problem is – a healthy physical body cannot be divided into parts. That’s what they make horror movies out of and sometimes that is exactly what the Church looks like.

And that is exactly what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:13.

**1 Corinthians 1:13 (A) (NLT)**

***13 Has Christ been divided into factions(or parts)? . . .***

The Church shares the life of Christ in common as the Body of Christ. So how does that body look all chopped up into pieces and then the pieces fighting each other? It looks like some kind of twisted Chucky horror movie... (Not good).

And then Paul continues his beseeching them by comparing this dysfunction in the body – to idolatry.

**1 Corinthians 1:13(b) (NLT)**

***13 . . . Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not!***

Paul is saying – wait just a minute. *Why* are you talking more about the one you are following than the one who was crucified for you? *Why* are you putting any man in the place that *only* Jesus Christ belongs?

That my friends, is idolatry.

I mentioned recently that I wanted to make a bumper sticker that says, “*It’s not about my church, it’s about my LORD.*” The problem is – I would be so tempted to put down in the corner... *Calvary Chapel Nuevo.*

But really, isn’t that what the Church is doing today? Promoting men and the particular group we meet with over Jesus Christ.

We are holding up – *flawed men and flawed, dysfunctional churches* and we are looking to them instead of to the one who died for us on the cross and gave us eternal life. It is idolatry of a leader and/or a particular church and we have got to replace that idolatry with a consuming passion for our savior – Jesus Christ.

And then – recognizing the seriousness of the problem, Paul say in 1 Corinthians 1:14-15.

**1 Corinthians 1:14-15 (NLT)**

*14 I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,  
15 for now no one can say they were baptized in my name.*

Paul is not saying it was wrong for him to baptize – he is just saying it would’ve made the “pastor idolatry” thing even worse. Paul is saying this “leader comparison” and this “pastor idolatry” is ridiculous. It is not living as the Body of Christ. At least certainly not as the “healthy Body of Christ.”

And then Paul remembers one other family he baptized and he doesn’t want to get called on it later so he says in 1 Corinthians 1:16,

**1 Corinthians 1:16 (NLT)**

*16 (Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas, but I don’t remember baptizing anyone else.)*

So- Paul has begun to get his point across.

And now he is going to point us to the only remedy for all the division and schism in the Church. AND he is going to introduce to us a theme that runs throughout the book.

**1 Corinthians 1:17 (NLT)**

*17 For Christ didn’t send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News—and not with clever speech, for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power.*

The point Paul wants to get to and the remedy we will return to throughout the book is this:

*It is the cross of Jesus Christ that is the answer to the problems of division in the Church. A true understanding of the cross of Jesus Christ heals divided Christians and heals divided churches.*

Because – as **Pastor Ray Stedman** says, *Human selfishness and pride are scorched by the light of the cross.*

Without a correct understanding of the cross

we are *SEL-FISH*

we are *SELF-CENTERED*

we are *PRIDE-FULL*

And because of that we see our own ideas and opinions as always the *best* ideas and opinions and we are more than willing to have the body of Jesus Christ divided into pieces in order to hold on to our own ideas and our own opinions.

We will exalt our *own ideas and our own opinions* even over God's Word and so we will easily exalt our own ideas and opinions over other people in the Body of Christ.

But a true understanding of the cross uncovers our own sinfulness and our own wretchedness. If we are so unworthy and so unrighteous that God *himself* had to come to die in our place in order to pay the penalty of our sinfulness... if that is who we truly are (and it is) then how in the world can we hold our own opinions in such high regard?

As **Ray Stedman** again says here, *The cross leaves no room for divisions and factions, because it leaves no room for PRIDE.*

And pride – that's the real problem, isn't it? Pride is us thinking too highly of our own ideas and our own opinions, and isn't that what leads to the divisions and factions in the Church.

But please listen to this.

Living life as the (healthy) Body of Christ does not mean we all agree all the time. It means we refuse to “fight to the death” on the mountain of our own opinion because that death – is the death of unity, and harmony and the death of the healthy Body of Christ.

That is why when Paul is speaking of maintaining unity and harmony in the Body of Christ. He writes in Philippians 2:3-7,

**Philippians 2:3–7 (NLT)**

***3 Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.***

***4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.***

***5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.***

***6 Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.***

***7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; (&) he took the humble position of a slave .***

..

***NKJ - Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus***

But in order for you to have the mind of Christ, first your pride must be crushed and your pride is crushed at the cross of Jesus Christ.

Is there some division in the Body of Christ where you are today? Are two pieces of the Body of Christ separating and about to start fighting each other? If so, that makes for a very dysfunctional and very unhealthy Body of Christ.

The answer is *at the cross*. The answer is coming to the cross – fully recognizing your own sinfulness – wretchedness, pride and arrogance. And then being crushed by the price the Lord of All Creation had to pay in order to forgive you of your sinfulness and pride.

And then, you must make the comparison.

What did it cost Jesus Christ to live in unity and harmony – *with you*? And are you willing to have the same mind that Jesus had in order to live in unity and harmony in the Body of Christ?

And will you come to the cross – *in humility* in order to have that *Mind of Christ*?

Let's pray. *Lord, Jesus, put us right there. Put us right there and allow us to see the gravity, the priority of this. Allow us to recognize what you've done for us to live in harmony with us, to share life with us. The cost is immeasurable. The condescension – unimaginable. The reason – unbelievable, because you loved us. Because you loved us when we were set against you when we were your enemies, when we were already dead in our sin. And then you call us to have that same mind towards others in the Body of Christ. You call us to have that mind of humility and submission that we would be used by you to restore that which is lame. To prevent the body from being divided.*

I would just ask you if you're in that place, if there is something in your life – one person, one thought, one situation, would you please bring it to the cross. Say, "*Lord what am I doing? You died to save me. You died to live in me, to live in harmony and peace with me. And now you ask me to have the same mind, the same attitude to live in harmony and peace in the Body of Christ. Save me Lord, from myself. Save me from my pride and my arrogance. From my exaltation of my own ideas and my own opinions*" Would you just surrender all those things that are eating at you? Would you surrender them to Christ today?