

1 Corinthians

Harmony

Series Overview

Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth is a case-study in what makes an unhealthy church. In this series, we'll explore what made that church so unhealthy as a guide to becoming the healthy church God has called us to be.

Sermon Introduction

As Paul moves into the body of his letter, he turns to his first major concern for the church in Corinth: division. Sadly, church disagreements and divisions are neither new nor rare. Churches divide over all kinds of issues, big and small. The irony? We often justify our divisions in the name of the One who gave his life to unite us.

Passage: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 (NIV)

1Cor. 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1Cor. 1:11 My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

1Cor. 1:12 What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

1Cor. 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?

1Cor. 1:14 I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,

1Cor. 1:15 so no one can say that you were baptized into my name.

1Cor. 1:16 (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.)

1Cor. 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

1. Read the passage. What stood out to you? Was there anything that you found surprising or confusing?
2. Paul's desire for the church's unity was incredibly strong (v. 10). Obviously, Paul didn't expect (or want) everyone to literally think the same thing about everything. So, what do

you think Paul's getting at?

3. What do you think unity should look like in a church in today's polarized world?
4. Do you think there are issues outside of the key tenants of the faith (e.g., the Trinity, Jesus' incarnation, his death and resurrection for sin, etc.) that are worth fighting or dividing over? What would make your list? Should you have a list?
5. Looking at v. 13, why was Paul so horrified by the divisions in the church? What does Jesus' sacrifice have to do with church unity?
6. Paul's chief aim was for people to know Jesus (v. 17). Do you think Christians fighting with each other helps or hurts Jesus' reputation? Do you think it helps or hurts our witness? How so?
7. Reflection: Is there a disagreement that you have with someone in the church or with the church in general that you need to put aside for the sake of Jesus' reputation?

Prayer

Often a position of submission helps us physically connect with the spiritual reality of meeting God. A posture of kneeling with open hands can demonstrate our willingness to submit to God's power.

- Praise God for the rich diversity—culturally, ethnically, nationally, socio-economically, generationally, and politically—in his church.
- Confess if there are arguments or quarrels that you've allowed to poison your view of other believers or the church in general.
- Thank God that his grace is big enough to include all different people, including you.
- Ask him to help you to love others in the church—even those you disagree with—for the sake of his reputation in the world.