

# 5. SAINTS MUST EMBRACE UNITY & REJECT QUARRELING: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

by Brett Baggett on Sunday, August 1st, 2021

**INTRO:** What do you think is the biggest threat to the health and longevity of a local Church?

**Big idea:** Local churches must be united in Christ in their confession, doctrine, and affection, refusing to quarrel for the glory of God.

## I. Saints in the same assembly must be diligent to make sure there are no divisions among them (v. 10a)

**1 Corinthians 1:10a** “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and *that there be no divisions among you,*”

- **“APPEAL”** **I** First, notice how he “appeals” to them. As an apostle, Paul has every right to command them! **II** Second, notice how he pleads with them, by reminder that they are all “brothers”—*even family members*—joined to Christ Jesus in God’s family! **III** Third, see how he ultimately appeals to them, “by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This means both “Out of love for Christ” and “Based on the authority of Christ.”
  - **Paul makes the same type of appeal to the church at Philippi in Philippians 2:1-2**  
“1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy  
2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.”
- **“DIVISIONS”** Now see what he urges them to do. (look at verse 10a again). **Q.** But what are divisions?  
**ALEXANDER STRAUCH:** “There is nothing wrong with Christian disagreeing with one another or trying to persuade another of the rightness of a particular position. What is wrong, however, is loveless conflict that ends in hate and bitterness.”
- **Divisions are when an assembly of saints is separated into different factions or sects based on PREFERENCES & OPINIONS;** Division happens when the basis of unity is made something preferential rather than Christ and the clear teachings of Scripture!
- **Matt. 9:16** “No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch TEARS away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.”
- **CHILDREN:** Can you imagine getting a new pair of pants and then your mom or dad took them and ripped them into shreds? How useful would those pants be? Can you imagine if your arms and legs and head and hands and feet were all disconnected and sitting in different places around your house? How silly would that be? You could not move or do anything! **THIS IS WHAT A CHURCH IS LIKE IF THERE ARE DIVISIONS!**
- **Divisions caused by preferences and opinions are like tearing into multiple pieces a glorious dress or suit that you are supposed to wear to your wedding, and somehow feeling proud about it;** even worse, divisions caused by preferences and opinions are like tearing limbs of a body off and putting them in separate rooms of the house, while each body part somehow feels superior.
- **RICHARD BAXTER:** “He that is not a son of Peace is not a son of God. All other sins destroy the Church consequentially; but Division and Separation demolish it directly.”
- Division has been **the fire** that burned down many local churches; **The wrecking ball** that has demolished many assemblies of saints!
- **I plead with you, beloved, we must work hard not to have any such divisions among us!** These will surely wound our fellowship.

**Q.** How seriously do you take *Divisions*? How earnestly do you strive for *Unity*?

**TRANSITION:** **Q.** But how are we to see that there be no divisions among us? **A.** 3 ways, Paul mentions: we must united in *CONFESSION, DOCTRINE, & AFFECTION.*

## II. Saints in the same assembly must be united in *CONFESSION* (v. 10a)

**1 Corinthians 1:10a** “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree (*“agree in what you say”* or *“speak the same thing”*), and that there be no divisions among you,”

- **Look at the word “SAYS” in verse 12:** “What I mean is that each one of you *SAYS*, “I follow Paul...” (says is the same word)
- **When we are united in our confession of faith and “speak the same thing” as our fellow saints,** all of our voices join together and ascribed **LOUDER** praise to God!
- **Romans 15:5-6** “5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6 that together you may *WITH ONE VOICE* glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- **Now, this confession Paul pleads with us to be united in centers on confessing Jesus Christ and Him as Lord! (v. 12)**
- **Any confession that does not center on Jesus Christ and Him crucified is about as useful in bringing unity as is Critical Race Theory**—that it is say it is not useful at all, and, in fact, quite harmful!
- **Our “speaking the same thing” as Paul appeals for here must center on Christ Jesus the Lord, or it is idolatry!**
- **CHILDREN:** Any Church that does not constantly talk about who Jesus is and what He has done must be avoided. Jesus makes us family!

**TRANSITION:** But how are we to all speak the same thing, and so steer clear of Divisions?

## III. Saints in the same assembly must be united in *DOCTRINE* (v. 10b)

**1 Corinthians 1:10b** “but that you be united in the same *mind*”

- **Luke 24:45 (after the walk to Emmaus)** “Then [Jesus] opened their *MINDS* to understand the Scriptures.”
- **Romans 12:2** “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your *MIND*, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- **1 Corinthians 2:16** “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” (*Isaiah 40:13*) But we have the *MIND* of Christ.”
- **This is why Confessions of Faith are important!** They lay out what we believe the Scriptures say concerning all major doctrines.

**Q.** Do you think doctrine—*being “united in the same mind”*—is unimportant? Paul says here that it is necessary if we would abstain from divisions.

**TRANSITION:** There is one more piece to this unity puzzle that we need in order to make sure there are no divisions among us!

## IV. Saints in the same assembly must be united in *AFFECTION* (v. 10c)

**1 Corinthians 1:10c** “and (*united in*) the same *judgment*.”

- **Concerning this word that is translated “Judgement,” CALVIN said:** “I understand it here as denoting the *will*, so that there is a complete division of the soul, and the first clause refers to *faith*, the second to *love*. Then only will there be Christian unity among us, when there is not merely a good agreement as to doctrine, but we are also in harmony in our affections and dispositions, and are thus in all respects of one mind.”
- **Acts 2:46-47** “46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”
- **CHILDREN:** Christians love what Jesus loves; and Jesus loves his Church. So Christians love one another.
- **JOHN FLAVEL:** “The blood of Christ is the glue that holds saints in unity.”

**Q.** Do you have a genuine affection for those who belong to Jesus? If not, ask yourself why. If you do, praise God! This leads to *UNITY*.

**TRANSITION:** There we have laid out for us how we are to make sure there are no Divisions among us. But what happens when churches are divided?

## V. When saints in the same assembly are divided, quarreling will follow; and quarreling is a great evil in the eyes of God (v. 11)

**1 Corinthians 1:11** “For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.”

- **JOHN FLAVEL:** “What! At peace with the Father, and at war with His children? It cannot be.”
- **Galatians 5:19-21** “19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, *STRIFE*, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, *DIVISIONS*, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”
- **James 4:1** “What causes *quarrels* and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?”
- **Romans 13:13** “Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in *quarreling* and jealousy.”
- **Proverbs 20:3** “It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every *fool* will be *quarreling*.”
- **Proverbs 22:10** “Drive out a *scoffer*, and strife will go out, and *quarreling* and abuse will cease.”
- **Proverbs 17:14** “The beginning of strife is like *letting out water*, so quit before the *quarrel* breaks out.”
- **Proverbs 26:20** “For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, *quarreling* ceases.”
- **J.C. RYLE:** “The cause of sin is never so much helped as when Christians waste their strength in quarreling with one another, and spend their time in petty squabbles.”

**Q.** Have you caused quarrels before in Christ's church? Do you see how harmful Divisions are? Do you see how evil Quarrels are?

## VI. Divisions and quarrels inevitably come when saints base their identity on things other than Christ (v. 12)

**1 Corinthians 1:12** 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.”

**Q.** What is your identity based on? If it is not Christ and Him alone, it is an idol.

## VII. Unity as a local church is important because we represent Christ, and He is not divided (v. 13)

**1 Corinthians 1:13** “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”

**IS CHRIST DIVIDED? No! So how dare we be, who belong to Him and are His body?**

- **John 17:22-23** “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”
- **THOMAS MANTON:** “Divisions in the church always breed atheism in the world.”
- **The unity and love of the saints is a physical sermon preached to the world.** It says, “Look what Christ can do! He takes strangers—*even natural enemies*—and turns them into a loving family!”
- **The unity and love of the saints is a billboard on the world stage that says,** “Jesus does what the U.N. and social activists can only dream of! He brings peace, harmony, and love.”

**WAS PAUL CRUCIFIED FOR YOU; WERE YOU BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF PAUL? No! So we must not look to men, but look to Christ in faith to unite us!**

**Beloved, because of our sins—even the sins of division and quarreling—Christ was crucified! He was willingly ripped apart on the cross for us, so that we could be reconciled to God AND to one another.**

**He died and was raised to make us one! Let us not spurn the name of Christ and Him crucified by splits and fights; but rather, by the grace of God, let us labor to be UNITED in confession, doctrine, and affection for God's glory!**

- **THOMAS BROOKS:** "Discord and division become no Christian. For wolves to worry the lambs is no wonder, but for one lamb to worry another, this is unnatural and monstrous."
- **THOMAS BROOKS:** "Ah, were their souls fully assured that God had loved them freely, and received them graciously, and justified them perfectly, and pardoned them absolutely, and would glorify them everlastingly, they could not but love where God loves, and own where God owns, and embrace where God embraces, and be one with every one that is one with Jesus."
- **JOHN MACARTHUR:** "Being of the same mind and... the same judgment rules out grudging or hypocritical unity. Unity must be genuine. We are not simply to speak the same thing, while keeping our disagreements and objections to ourselves, making a pretense of unity. Unity that is not of the same mind and judgment is not true unity. Hypocrites will add to a congregation's size but they will take away from its effectiveness. A member who strongly disagrees with his church leadership and policy, not to mention doctrine, cannot be happy or productive in His own Christian life or be of any positive service to the congregation."