



3: UNIFIED: God's People for God's Purpose

A Church that is UNIFIED is a beautiful, powerful sight to behold. When God's people work together for God's purpose, lives are transformed and God is pleased. But when God's people don't work together lives aren't transformed and God is NOT pleased. Which kind of church will WE choose to be?

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teachingnotes

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VISUAL NOTES



today'steaching

Catch the Context from Last Week

1 Corinthians 1:17-18 (NIV)

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but **to preach the gospel**—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For **the message of the cross** is **foolishness to those who are perishing**, but **to us who are being saved it is the power of God**.

Paul was keeping the main thing...the main thing - the simple **message of the Cross** demonstrates that our sin is so serious and God is so gracious. This message is **foolishness to those who are perishing, but it is the power of God to those who are being saved**. (Have YOU experienced this?)

The Wisdom of God Revealed in a Person

1 Corinthians 2:6-8 (NIV)

We do, however, speak **a message of wisdom** among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we declare **God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden** and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

God's wisdom, declares Paul, **is a mystery that has been hidden**. This is why Paul, a well studied, well trained Jewish Pharisee, could not see the mystery of the crucified Messiah in the Old Testament writings. At one point of his life, Paul stood against the 'foolishness' of the followers of Jesus. But this same man, now transformed by the message of the cross, gives his life to persuade others that **God's wisdom** - what was once a **hidden mystery** - has now been clearly revealed in the crucified Messiah.

- ✓ Read **Isaiah 53** or **Psalms 22** to see Old Testament writings speaking of one who would be brutally beaten and killed as a substitute sacrifice for others. Also, notice how the New Testament writers often quote the Old Testament writings giving evidence that Jesus IS the Messiah.

Before the life of Jesus, this was **a mystery that was hidden**, but now God had revealed the mystery through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus!

TAKE SOME NOTES HERE

God's Spirit Reveals God's Thoughts

1 Corinthians 2:9-11 (NIV)

However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived" [Is 64:4]— the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way **no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.**

For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? The only way we can know each others' thoughts is by sharing what we are thinking with one another. So too, know one can know what God is thinking unless He reveals it to us. Thankfully, He has!

1 Corinthians 2:12-16 (NIV)

What **we have received** is not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God**, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. **This is what we speak**, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in **words taught by the Spirit**, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. **The person without the Spirit** does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But **we have the mind of Christ.**

The Gospel message Paul and other teachers like Apollos and Simon Peter **speak** is not something they made up from their own **human wisdom**, but were **words taught by the Spirit**. Believers have the **Holy Spirit** Who tells us about God's thoughts, just as Jesus knew the Father's thoughts, therefore **we have the mind of Christ.**

☀ **Craig Blomberg:** "The Spirit brings Christ's thoughts to believers by living in them."¹

✓ Those who have God's Spirit are enabled to know what God has revealed to them. This is why those who follow Jesus can have a much deeper understanding & appreciation of the Scriptures than those who do not follow Him.

✗ Those without the Spirit **cannot understand them** (the things that come from God)

Doctrine of Illumination - light cast into a dark place allows one to see what was once hidden.

☀ **John MacArthur** "The doctrine of illumination does not mean we can know and understand everything (Deut. 29:29), that we do not need human teachers (Eph. 4:11-12), or that study is not hard work (2 Tim. 2:15). It does mean that Scripture can be understood by every Christian who is diligent and obedient."²

❓ **Are you Diligent and Obedient** - growing in your faith, seeking the Lord's will, and obeying what He says?
OR....are you just in neutral coasting through life and being pressured by our ungodly culture?

Acting Like Babies

1 Corinthians 3:1-4 (NIV)

Brothers and sisters [term for "brothers" but certainly does not mean men only], **I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly**—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings?

Paul calls these people his **brothers and sisters**. He doesn't say they aren't Christians, but he **DOES** say they sure aren't acting like Christ. Instead of maturing, these people are acting **worldly**.

• The Greek term for **worldly** means "flesh" (as rendered by CSB, NET, ESV) - giving in to sinful physical desires.

These adults are acting like **infants**, still needing others to give them **milk** rather than being able to eat **solid food**.

✓ God wants us to grow in knowledge of Him and grow to acknowledge Him by our daily obedience. This happens by reading the Scriptures, being taught the Scriptures, and going to live out what you read.

• If you're a new Christian, we want to help you grow. We want to give you the basics (join Starting Point or another Group on Sundays or Wed nights).

As we have already discussed 2 weeks ago, the immaturity of this church is demonstrated in how these people have divided over the messenger rather than **uniting on the Message of the Cross**.

¹ Craig Blomberg, 1 Corinthians, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 65.

² John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Corinthians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 65.

Co-Workers in God's Service

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 (NIV)

What, after all, is **Apollos**? And what is **Paul**? Only **servants**, through whom you came to believe—as the **Lord has assigned to each his task**. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For **we are co-workers in God's service**; you are God's field, God's building.

One farmer **plants**, the other **waters**, but the farmers don't make the seeds grow. Only **God** makes things **grow**. People in that day would pray to their gods and offer sacrifices for fruitful harvests. They understood the human task of planting and watering, but what happened under the ground was mysterious and determined by the gods. Even though we might understand the science, it is still mysterious to consider how a dried up seed planted in fertile soil and fueled by water, sunlight, and the right temperatures - can spring up from the ground and grow fruitful.

✓ Humble Christian farmers still recognize despite our hard work, **God gets the credit for making things grow**.

BIG TRUTH: God's people work together to accomplish God's purpose.

These 'farmers' have different tasks but they are working for **one purpose**, to see **God's field** grow & become fruitful.

And now Paul shifts to another word-image that the Corinthians would certainly understand and appreciate. He not only calls them **God's field**, but He also calls them **God's building**.

Whatcha' Workin' On?

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (NIV)

By the grace God has given me, I laid a **foundation** as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any **foundation** other than the one already laid, **which is Jesus Christ**. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the **fire will test the quality of each person's work**. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

The **foundation** of any building is crucial. If the foundation is faulty, then the whole building could collapse.

The **foundation** is **Jesus Christ**, and everything He says (Mt 7:24-27).

All builders understand that there will be an inspection to see if the **work** performed is worthy. So too, there is a **Day** that **will test the quality of each person's work**. Those who cut corners will be found false, while those who abide by the requirements will be found true.

- Just as **fire** would **burn up wood, hay, or straw** while **gold, silver, and costly stones** would **survive**, so the actions and intentions of our work for the King will be revealed as worthy or not. The corner-cutting builder (Christian) will not be burned up with their works, but their 'work' will be contrasted with the **reward** for the Christians who do the right things for the right reasons.

❓ If THAT DAY were TO-DAY, would the things you say you've done for the Lord **survive**?

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (NIV)

Don't you know that **you yourselves are God's temple** and that **God's Spirit dwells in your midst**? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for **God's temple is sacred**, and **you together are that temple**.

Christians in Corinth saw all the temples to false gods on a daily basis. Christians had no building that could compete with the glorious structures surrounding them.

- The temple of **Apollo** (see pic) had a roof supported by 40 massive columns.
- The temple of **Aphrodite** (Latin - **Venus**) was on the mountain.

But **God's temple** is not a building, it's a **BODY** of believers - not a place made of stone, but a people made of flesh, in whom **God's Spirit dwells**.

BIG TRUTH: God's people work together to accomplish God's purpose.



1 Corinthians 3:18-23 (NIV)

Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become “fools” so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness”; and again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.” So then, no more boasting about human leaders! **All things are yours**, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

This Church needed to humble themselves and appreciate that those who **become fools** in the eyes of the world, to **become wise** in Christ Jesus. And those in Christ have been given **all things**. Instead of claiming, “I belong to Paul, Apollos, or Cephas”, the church should recognize that ALL OF THEM...belong to us! We are to remember that all the things that we can fear - **the world, life, death, the present, and the future** - all are under the authority of God who loves us and will be faithful to us through it all.

Romans 8:35-39 (NIV)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” **No**, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, **nor anything else** in all creation, **will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

That’s the kind of hope we are to live in, until we see our King face to face. But until that day, let’s commit to be...

BIG TRUTH: God’s people working together to accomplish God’s purpose.

❓ **What if every one of us acts like the Day that is coming when Jesus will test the quality of our work?**

❓ **What if we worked together as a team, rather than worrying about which of us getting the credit?**

Let’s live like THAT!

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (850-464-6188), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today’s teaching? Explain your answer.
2. **Read 1 Cor 2:6-16.** Share the difference you experienced in understanding the Scriptures BEFORE you trusted Jesus and how came to understand the Scriptures since committing to follow Jesus. Why is there such a stark contrast between the two? (Go back and look at your notes on “the doctrine of illumination” for more insight.)
3. **Read 1 Cor 3:1-9.** Why didn’t Paul consider Apollos to be his competition? Do YOU ever fell competition with other Christians? If so, what are some practical things we can do to view them like teammates rather than opponents?
4. **Read 1 Cor 3:10-11.** How is Jesus the foundation of our faith? **Read Matt 7:24-27.** What’s the difference between those who claim Jesus and those who really know Him?
5. **Read 1 Cor 3:12-15.** Share about a time when your actions/intentions might have looked worthy to others, but the Lord viewed as unworthy. Share about a time when another person was serving Jesus well with their actions and intentions. Share some simple ways we might serve Jesus this week with right actions and intentions.
6. **Read 1 Cor 3:16-17.** How does knowing that this passage is written to the collective church (not individuals) challenge you to protect & grow God’s people instead of dividing or discouraging God’s people? What are some practical ways we can build up God’s people?
7. **Read 1 Cor 3:18-23 and Romans 8:35-39.** If you are willing, share something you fear (we all have fears). How do these passages can encourage you to overcome that fear?
8. **Share prayer needs and pray for one another.** Continue to pray for our Supreme Court decision on Roe v Wade. Pray for Christians in Ukraine and Russia to carry the message of Jesus with them wherever they go.