

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**Sunday Jan 10, 2021. "Let the Healing Begin: What do we need to heal?"**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

Even though it's a new year, thankfully, we're still gathering in person. A small but growing group who follow all the safety guidelines joins us at the church. We're so encouraged with your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions you have, please pass them our way. We feel just as isolated as you, and we want to maintain that connection with each of you.

### **II Recap.**

We're in our second Sunday of our 'healing divisions' series. Last week we talked about some of the causes of division that Paul addressed in his letter to the church at Corinth. Paul said people were creating and taking sides. Forcing people into human made camps rather than embracing the beauty of diversity intentionally designed by God. We saw the creation of sides is caused by; pride, lack of understanding of diversity, and a lack of intentional self-aware dependence on God. Also divisions are caused by not having a theology rooted in a healthy, holistic understanding of scripture. So we said.

**1. Make sure your theology is centered on the truths of Jesus.**

**2. Have a center that is cross focused not 'right' focused.**

Today we ask; what are the elements of a healthy unified community of faith?

### **II Scripture.**

The scripture used Sunday is another well known one. If you've ever been to a wedding, you've probably heard this passage read. So, jump right in and read **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**.

**What jumped out to you about this passage?**

**How do you understand each in the role they play towards unity and healing division?**

Paul gives us a diagnostic template. A list of the essentials for a community that deals with things that can divide. **Are you ready to go through a little diagnostic eval?**

**WARNING: YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO THESE ON YOUR OWN!**

This is NOT a checklist of things you need to work on. These are not for you to try harder at each of these. You will be continually frustrated if you just try to do each of these 'better', whatever that means. These will grow like fruit, as evidence of a community committed to unity. All of this is based

in a covenantal relationship with Jesus. And as we said last week, centered on your relationship with the cross. Put those two at the center of your walk with Jesus, and these traits will grow.

**Score yourself on these**. (Rate yourself on a 1-10). Interrogate yourself honestly on each one of these. Again, not to try to work harder to do them, but see where you may need some work. And all of these are rooted in selflessness, which Paul seems to say promotes unity within the church.

**PATIENT**- longsuffering with kindness. Understanding another person's life as different from yours.

**KIND**- Fully understanding limitations and the humanity of others. And using that insight as the starting point to how you will relate to them. It's more than being nice. Nice is often just tolerance. Showing kindness means you really mean your good treatment of others.

**NOT JEALOUS**- rejoicing in the good fortune of others...REALLY. Not an "I" centered perception of whether they're deserving and undeserving. The ability to genuinely say; "*good for them*".

**NOT BOASTFUL**- don't have to be a story topper. Not always self-promoting. This allows the other person to be the hero in the moment.

**NOT PROUD**- deference. Willingness to give up your preferences, desires, with pleasure. Not to avoid conflict, but for the common good. Not grasping, desiring, to be noticed.

**NOT RUDE**- giving unrequested respect. Not making sure people know their 'place', or trying to fix them. How we tend to treat others we don't think matter, or aren't like us. This is connected to the behavior that undergirds what you think your position is in society.

**NOT IRRITABLE**- not easily provoked, because you don't keep a simmering fire continually stoked, where every little thing just picks at you. Always looking for places to disagree. This is found in the politics of grievance.

**DOES NOT KEEP SCORE**- don't have a balance sheet keeping up with debts and deposits. This is every night erasing all of the things that hurt you that day. Relationships are covenantal, (what I am willing to do for you), not contractual, (what will you do for me).

**IS NOT HAPPY WHEN OTHER PEOPLE SUFFER**- true compassion, hurting with others who are hurting. This requires a sizable dose of self-awareness that suffering is NOT people getting what they deserve. Out of humility we admit we could be in their place.

**CELEBRATES WHEN ANOTHER CELEBRATES**- tied into "not jealous". You can actually pray for, genuinely enjoy when another person does well. Even if you wanted it, you may have 'deserved' it more, whatever that means. And even you're not a fan of the person celebrating. It's spreading joy.

**NEVER GIVES UP**- always give the other person the appropriate chance to grow. You don't write them off because it's not happening fast enough, or to your standards. There is ALWAYS the possibility to grow. It's not based on the final product, but movement towards.

**ALWAYS HOPEFUL**- similar to "never gives up". Having a plan and a path away from discouragement and disappointment, towards a confidence about the future. Even when you can't see it. This in the context of relationships within a community.

**PERSEVERES**- similar to patient, but with endurance. Not for short bursts. Everything is the long game towards a grander vision. No discouragement when it gets hard and you don't see change. Grow the ability to endure through setbacks and frustrating times.

**How did you do?**

**Could there be an outside, remote possibility, that some of the divisions you're experiencing are caused by you?**

**IV Challenge.**

So, these specifics of love are tough...REALLY tough. Love is not this warm, fuzzy, when it feels good thing. It is hard, muscular, (requires a lot of strength and endurance), and pushes us to live selflessly ... and others-centered. But according to Paul it is the foundation and center of what makes relationships, a community of faith, a church, unified rather than divided. And you can't just try to do each of these. You will constantly be frustrated. They are the evidence, like the 'fruit of the spirit', of people who are devoted to God, and each other. Keep this checklist as a way to do a regular diagnostic on how you're doing keeping a Jesus centered, cross focused life. And don't beat yourself up when you struggle in any of them. Just consider it a good working list of things that you want to see grow in your life.

So, the regular final question. **What specific habits or practices that are Jesus centered, and cross focused, can you work into your life to grow these?**