

## **Christopublicrats - A Kingdom Divided**

1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Ephesians 4:1-6; John 17:10-23

A “Peanuts” cartoon with Lucy and Linus illustrates the \_\_\_\_\_ of unity and the \_\_\_\_\_ of division.

Ben \_\_\_\_\_ made this point with his “Join or Die” cartoon, and a famous quote after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. “*We must all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all \_\_\_\_\_ separately.*”

Together, as a \_\_\_\_\_ force, the colonies defeated the \_\_\_\_\_ military force in the world at that time. This is why Jesus, with his ***last words***, prays a prayer asking his Father to make us all “perfectly \_\_\_\_\_.”  
(John 17:23)

How close has that prayer come to fulfillment? It started off pretty poorly. The disciples \_\_\_\_\_! (Matt 26:56)  
It’s not much better \_\_\_\_\_. There are about 350 different \_\_\_\_\_. (Not all bad!)

American \_\_\_\_\_ shows a significant divide. Christians vote about 60/40% Republican/Democrat. That’s remarkably \_\_\_\_\_. Consider this: 81-85% \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelicals vote one way and 83-87% of \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelicals vote another way. Mainline protestants split about 57/43% in 2024. Roman Catholics split about 55/45%.

Individual congregations can be deeply \_\_\_\_\_ over an issue as \_\_\_\_\_ as the color of the carpet, or as \_\_\_\_\_ as crucial theological issues and church discipline issues. Sometimes congregations are just divided by differing interests that deprive it of unity and sap it of its \_\_\_\_\_.

*“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, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. 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.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13*

Preparing for this sermon it dawned on me that this could be what’s holding Open Arms back. We aren’t at each other’s throats, but we may not be as \_\_\_\_\_ as we could be. We’re all off doing our own thing instead of doing OUR thing \_\_\_\_\_ at OAM.

If we want to see OAM become an even \_\_\_\_\_ force in our community, we need to come together. I’m excited about how our leaders are working on finding ways to do just that.

The same is true for our \_\_\_\_\_. Division is the work of the devil! If we really want to help our country, the most powerful thing we can do is to bring the Body of Christ together.

This isn’t something we need to \_\_\_\_\_. This is something that God \_\_\_\_\_ did when he sent Jesus and brought us to faith. (Eph 2, Eph 4)

- We were re-UNITED with our \_\_\_\_\_

- We were re-UNITED with \_\_\_\_\_
- Across \_\_\_\_\_, ethnic, linguistic, religious, educational, class, wealth lines and MORE.
- We \_\_\_\_\_ one in Christ
- We are now called to \_\_\_\_\_ like we are one in Christ

How? I asked some fellow pastors and Facebook for some ideas. Here are some: (1) \_\_\_\_\_ politics and earthly concerns, (2) \_\_\_\_\_ God and his Word in your life, (3) \_\_\_\_\_ detox, (4) \_\_\_\_\_ political ties, (5) \_\_\_\_\_ family of faith, (6) share a \_\_\_\_\_ with someone on the “other side”, (7) \_\_\_\_\_ FOR the “other side”, (8) get the \_\_\_\_\_ out (with help!), (9) \_\_\_\_\_ biblical values in others, (10) \_\_\_\_\_ alongside them.

What are some ways you can prioritize God and his Word in your life?

What are some ways you can prioritize the family of faith over the family of politics?

What are some of the “logs” in your eye? How might removing them more clearly see the specks in others’?

What are the biblical values most important to you?

What are the biblical values most important to those on the “other side”?

Where do they overlap?

What is something you can do together to live out the values that overlap?