

Unity in Christ (A Healthy Church: Prelude to God's Giftings, Part Two)

Relevant Bible Verses: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 ; Philippians 2:2-3 ; Romans 14:19 ; John 17:20-23

Message Notes:

- Paul appeals to the brothers and sisters in the church of Corinth. He has a Father's heart towards them and hearing of their quarrels troubled him. He wanted to see them thrive and grow.
- Trying to find the right word, or way, to address them, Paul came up with *appeal*. He *appealed* to them in the name of *Our Lord* Jesus Christ. The 'Our' was intentional there, as, if they failed to listen to Paul, he hoped they would listen to Jesus.
- We are to follow Jesus together. There is no place in the Church for lone rangers. Jesus calls on the Church to hold together in Unity, not to quarrel or hold grudges. We are to value others over ourselves, our rights, and our comforts. What unfinished business do you have with others? Jesus is telling us to let it go.
- There is a growing sickness in the body of Christ; the almost militant perspective on the right to personal faith as *you* wish to live it. It should not be *Jesus and Me*, but *Jesus and Us*.
- We cannot work as a body when the pieces of that body are broken and scattered around. You have a living body, working with itself, or you have a dead body. Without unity in the Church, we have a dead Church.
- Like a torn apart shirt is useless for its intended purpose, so is the Church useless when disunity is left unattended as it rends the Church apart.
- Us living together in unity is what shows the world Jesus' love and power at work. This does NOT mean that we will not have differences in opinion, but we cannot allow our opinions to jeopardize relationships, the health of the Church, or the message of the Church.
- Paul, a spiritual leader, saw the rending, and as a result the loss of purpose and the message, and addressed the Church so that those who are not of the Church would be able to see the message as it was intended to be seen.
- The nature of division in the Corinth Church is almost irrelevant. It was the *muddying of the message* that was the issue.
- We are to humble ourselves, value others before ourselves, heading the call of Jesus. How are you perceived? What would others say of you? A question to ask yourself is 'Who am I? At what point did my own opinion become so important that I bury others?'
- Make every effort to come together, serve one another, put others and the witness of the Church first. *Mend the Nets*. In restoring the Church to perfect

unity, we fix the holes. As Jesus teaches, we are *not to empty the cross of its power*.

- Stop trying to be *a part* of the body of Christ when you are *apart* from the Church.