

Cliques In Corinth

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

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Good evening. Let's open our Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and we're going to look at verses 10 to 17. If you're taking notes, the title of my study tonight is Cliques In Corinth. We're going to look at the first problem in the church. How many of you believe a church could have problems? Yeah, we're going to find out tonight, beginning for the next many weeks as we look at the problems that Paul sought to solve in the church at Corinth and discover that the same problems exist in the church today. And so Paul is going to be dealing with the subject of division in the church at Corinth, beginning in chapter 1, verse 10. And it really runs all the way to the end of chapter 4, but we'll begin tonight with these few verses, verse 10 down to verse 17. Cliques in the church.

Let's pray together. Father, thank You for the time to worship You and study Your Word, and thank You for the scriptures tonight, Lord. May they speak to us. Speak to us, oh Holy Spirit, through the Word of God and transform us. Lord, may we be changed and rearranged and made more like Jesus Christ. And Lord, help me to make clear and apply these truths to our lives. We pray that Jesus Christ would be exalted tonight through the preaching and teaching of Your Word. And it's in His name we pray, and everyone agreeing said amen.

There's little doubt that the church at Corinth had problems. They were divided. They were defiled. And they were disgraced. And Paul doesn't waste any time right after his greeting and his gratitude for the believers there in the city of Corinth. Paul jumps right into our subject of division. You've heard me tell the little poem, "To dwell above with the saints in love, that will be glory, but to live below with some saints I know. Brother, that's another story". Well, so many of the churches at Corinth weren't dwelling together in love. They weren't living together in harmony. And they were actually grouping around personalities. And that's happening a lot in the church today as well. They had their little personality cults. And Paul is going to deal with that in this section, beginning in chapter 1, verse 10, running all the way to chapter 4 and verse 20. He deals with division in the church.

And it's sad that today, division is a problem among God's people, and it always has been. In just about every one of the epistles that Paul wrote in the New Testament, in some way, shape, or form, Paul deals with the subject of disunity, disharmony, and division in the church. Even the twelve apostles that Jesus chose had disharmony and division among them. One day, they were walking along, and Jesus, I picture the scene, was out ahead of them, and they were behind Him. And He knew what they were talking about, for they were discussing among themselves who would be the greatest in the kingdom. And they were really kind of debating over who would be the greatest, and I'm going to be the greatest. No, I'm going to be the greatest. And Peter probably said, no, didn't you see me walk on water? I'm going to be the greatest. And Jesus probably thinking, where did I get these guys? I hope we're not paying them too much. Even the apostles had their moments because they were human. So, Jesus

prayed in His great high priestly prayer, John 17:21, that they all may be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. He wants us to demonstrate the unity that we do have. Now, we do have unity in Christ, but we need to display that and demonstrate that to a watching, unbelieving world. What does the world see when they look at the church? They see a church that has schisms and divisions, and it's pretty hard to win an unbelieving world to Christ when we can't get along among ourselves. And so, it's so important that we learn to demonstrate that unity that Christ prayed for.

Very important subject as we look at Paul's instruction. Now, the first thing I want you to see is in verse 10. It's Paul's appeal for unity. If you're taking notes, you can write that down. In verse 10, he appeals to the Corinthians to have unity. Go with me to verse 10. Paul says, "now I beseech you, it's an appeal I'm begging you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you. There it is. But that you all be perfectly joined together, excuse me, in the same mind and in the same judgment". Now, a lot is packed in that tenth verse. So, I want to tarry there for a few minutes before we move on. But I want you to notice that Paul beseeches them. He's lovingly urging them. He's not commanding them as an apostle. He feels that pastoral love and concern for them. And he's like, I lovingly beseech you that you be of the same mind, that you love one another. Secondly, Paul calls them brethren. Notice that in verse 10. Now, by doing that, Paul does two things. He softens the rebuke. In other words, he's going to kind of subtly rebuke them. And before he rebukes them, he actually calls them brethren. What a contrast to the Galatians when he spoke to them, he goes, oh foolish Galatians. It's interesting that the only church Paul had nothing good to say to was the Galatians. Oh, foolish Galatians. But here, at least, he calls them brethren. And he wants to win their favor. He says, brethren. And then the very use of that word, brethren, should have shown them how wrong their dissensions and their divisions were. They were brothers, and they should have been living together in brotherly love, amen? So, when Paul used that term, brethren, which by the way, you ladies don't feel left out there. It's really to convey a generic concept of the brothers and sistren of the family of God. So, it's not just the guys that he's talking to when he says, brethren, it's the term of brothers and sisters or family of God. And it should have reminded them that we are a family. Psalm 133 verse 1, "behold how good and how pleasant it is that the, what? Brethren and or sistren should dwell together in what? Unity". Behold how good and how pleasant it is. God wants us to dwell together in unity.

So, Paul does two things. He gives us the ground for unity in verse 10. Notice what it is. It is the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice how he spells out Lord Jesus Christ. The ground for unity is Jesus Christ, amen? That is what unifies the church. I love what Ray Steadman said. He says, "There is no other name big enough, great enough, glorious enough, and powerful enough to gather everybody together despite the diversity of viewpoints and the differences of background or status in life than the name of Jesus." And I say amen to that. People of all ages here tonight, people of all walks of life, people of all colors, people of all social strata, and why are we all here? Because of Jesus Christ, right? It's Jesus that has unified us and brought us together. And so, he gives them the basis for that unity. And just a little footnote here, lest I forget as we move through this text. And that is the real problem that was causing division in the church at Corinth was that their eyes were off of Jesus and on man. And I pointed out last week

that in the first 10 verses of chapter 1 of Corinthians, Jesus is mentioned in every single verse. If His name isn't mentioned, He is referred to. 10 verses, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Now, don't look right now, but check it out when you go home tonight. A little research. Jesus in the first 10 verses. And if we as a church would keep our eyes on Jesus, we would experience blessed unity, right? And that's what's so important. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus. Reminds me of the story of a church, kind of the deeper life club church. They thought they were super spiritual, so they called the name of their church Jesus Only. And they put a sign of the letters out in the front, Jesus Only on the building out in front of the church. And one day a big wind came along and blew the first three letters off the sign. When you drove by your church, all you saw was us Only. It wouldn't be long before a church like that is going to have division, right? We get so self-centered and focused on self, and we look at people and we get bugged by people and what they did and what they said, and we need to focus on Jesus Christ. He's the ground for our unity.

And secondly, notice he gives us the goals of our unity. This is what Paul wanted for them. These are the goals of unity in verse 10. First, unity of speech. Notice it in verse 10, that you all speak the same thing. You say, well, Pastor John, what does he mean by that? Speak the same thing. You mean we're all supposed to carry a little script around and we're just supposed to rattle off the same words, we're all supposed to speak the same thing. He's not talking about uniformity. Uniformity comes from pressure on the outside. God doesn't want a church to have uniformity. That would mean we're all wearing the same Revival Christian Fellowship clothes. We all have the Revival Christian Fellowship haircut, the approved Revival haircut, Revival shoes, we drive the Revival car, we wear Revival watches, and we're all like unity. We all say the same things because we're all from Revival Christian Fellowship. That's not what he's talking about. He's talking about unity, not uniformity. And the difference is unity comes from the work of the Spirit in our hearts on the inside. He's going to talk about an attitude that is manifested on the outside. It doesn't mean that those who are there should agree on all doctrines, but they should agree on the essential doctrines of the Christian faith, and they should give a united testimony to the world watching. The unbelieving world. So, Paul's appeal was for harmony, not the elimination of diversity. He's saying that we need to present to the watching world a unified front.

The second thing he wanted of them in verse 10 is the elimination of schism. So, this is the negative. Notice it in verse 10. This is really getting to the key issue. That there be no divisions among you. Now, there he flat-out says it. Paul comes right out in verse 10. That there be no divisions among you. Now, the word divisions in Greek is the word schismata. And we get our English word, we get a word schisms from it. It's used for a rip or a tear in a garment, but a garment that wasn't totally destroyed. They wore kind of seamless robes in those days. And if you grabbed a robe and maybe hung on to somebody, it could rip or tear, but the robe would still pretty much be intact. So, it would just have a tear or a rip in it. Like if I grabbed your shirt and tore it, it's still on you; you're still wearing it, but it's got a big rip or tear in it. If I did that, you'd probably schism my face, right? You'd tear my face off. But basically, the word means to tear or to rip so that there be no schisms among you. So, in the church, there was conflict. There was internal strife, but it was not a split into two churches. Many churches today split into

groups. You go into a town, it's the first church, you know, if something, then you go out of town, it's the second church and the third church. Hear about the guy that was on this deserted island. He's all by himself, abandoned on an island, and finally, they rescue the guy when they rescue him. There were two churches on the island. And they go, what's the deal? He was the only guy living on the whole island. So, what's the deal with the two churches? He goes, well, that first church is when I started, and I had the one church, and then after a few years, we had a church split. So that's the second church I started. I mean, we just can't get away from this, right? Paul says I don't want these schisms. I don't want you to have these divisions among you. We need to all be speaking the same thing and not have divisions or schisms among us.

And then thirdly, notice in verse 10, he calls for a unity of attitude. Be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Be joined together is an interesting phrase. The word joined there is the word *kathurizo*, and it means to restore or to mend. And it's a medical word for knitting together bones that have been broken. It's used in Galatians chapter 6, verse 1. "If a brother or sister be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, listen carefully, restore" There's that word. "them in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted". The word restore means to mend a broken bone. So, the body had been broken and divided, and he wanted to bring healing to them. It was also used for a fishing net that was torn. Now, a fishing net that's torn is of no value, right? You throw the fishing net out, and you start catching the fish you're pulling in, and then one fish finds the hole, and he whistles and tells all those other buddies where the hole is, and they all make for the hole and by the time the net comes in, they're all gone, right? So, we don't want any holes in our nets. The church is to be fishing for men, and to do that, we need unity. It was also used; I find this interesting; it would be used to illustrate today, and it would be used for putting together pieces of a puzzle. Now, I'm not a puzzle guy. I see these people get these boxes of puzzles with 20,000 pieces. I'll pray for you. You know, and it's just a grassy field, and the whole, every piece on the puzzle is the same color. They're trying to make you go insane. I've met people who have it all spread out at the dining table. I go: how long have you been working on it? Six years. And it's insane. You put the whole thing together, and then what do you get? A puzzle. I mean, come on, you got nothing better to do? At least glue the pieces together, put a mat on the back, make it a picture, and put it on the wall or something. But all the pieces intricately fit together. You know, if I'm going to do a puzzle like I like to do the ones the toddlers do, there are three pieces. Boom, there it is. It's got one face of Mickey Mouse right in the middle, you know, boom, it just goes right together. I'm done. But so often, the church is like a puzzle that's just broken into pieces, and the picture that we show to the world is not a picture of Christ. And we're going to see in a minute that they were actually openly publicly arguing in their church. Can you imagine showing up at a church and everyone's arguing in the foyer? What are you doing here? Thought we got rid of you. It's like, man, I can stay home and argue. I don't need to come to church to argue. And I mean, this church at Corinth was messed up. So, he says, you need to be restored.

Now notice two words in that tenth verse that we, I just read, perfectly joined together. Then use the word same mind, same mind, and in the same judgment, keyword, same, mentioned twice, three times in verse 10, by the way, same, same, same, same speech, same mind, same judgment. What does he mean by the same mind? It's an attitude and the same judgment that

we are on the same page. That mindset is not that we think exactly the same, but our attitudes about things are the same. We have a biblical attitude that we think biblically. One of the reasons for their division was, is we're going to see that they were carnal. So, as I pointed out, they were to have the same speech. They were to be unified in their speech, unified in their attitude, their mind, and unified in their judgment. Paul wrote to the Philippians in chapter two of that epistle, and he said, have the same mind, or attitude that was in Christ Jesus should be in you, which thought equality with God, not something to hold on to, but emptied Himself and took on Him the form of what? A servant. And prior to those verses, he said that we should consider others more important than ourselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things or interests of others.

Now, we move to verses 11 and 12, where now we get the reasons for Paul's appeal. So, in verse 10, he appeals to them, and he tells them what he wants of them, and now he gives us the reason for this appeal. Notice verses 11 and 12, "For, so, the reason, this is the rationale. It has been declared unto me, of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions, there is those open arguments, contentions among you. Now this I say that every one of you, this is the cause of their arguments. He said, I am of Paul. Another group said I am of Apollos. Another group said, we are of Cephas or Peter, and then the Super Saints said, we are of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?" Now notice in verses 11 and 12, first of all, it hath been declared, Paul says. Paul had received a report which was recorded as fact, not rumor. When he uses that phrase, it has been declared that it is an actual official word used in the court of law for a legal document. So, Paul wants to make it clear that I am not just going by hearsay; I am not just going by rumor; this is a fact, and he quotes his source. It has come to me from the family of Chloe, from the house of Chloe. So, it wasn't just a rumor.

Now, here is one of the things that divide so many churches: gossip, rumor, and people gossip and rumor, and Paul wants to make it clear: this is a fact, and I want you to catch this, and I don't want to tarry too long on this, but I want to point this out. Paul identified his source. Paul says the family of Chloe told me about this. This is how rumor goes. You know, a lot of people are saying... who are the lot of people? Well, I don't know, just people. I have heard people saying, or you know, someone told me. Oh, I love that one. Pastor John, Pastor John, Pastor John, someone told me. Who told you? Oh, I can't tell you. Well then, don't tell me, because if you tell me, I am going to quote you. Can I quote you? Oh no, no, no, don't quote me, don't quote me. That's how rumors start. Everybody, you know, people are saying, or someone told me, or I think this is what people said, or I think that's what I heard. Paul says this is a fact, and this is where I heard it from. I've learned over the years that when people want to come and tell me, and by the way, I'm not a dumping station, okay? I don't want people to come to dump on me, and I don't want you; you don't want me to dump on you; let's not dump on each other. But let me tell you this: if you are not willing to be quoted, then keep your lips shut. Don't go around telling people stuff. If you are not willing to be quoted, then don't tell somebody something. Or the people who come up and say, don't tell anybody, but. What's with that? I love Paul. Man, if Paul were in churches today, he would blow the places away. I mean, the congregations would go from 800 to 5 in a few months. Nobody would stick around because Paul is just so in your

face. Paul says, you know what? You guys have been hearing this from the house of Chloe, and I'm sure some of them ran to the house of Chloe and said, what did you tell Paul for? Why did you tell Paul that we're arguing here? And so, they probably got upset with him, but you know, Paul quoted his source; beware of a rumor in gossip.

There were contentions in verse 11. The word contentions literally means open quarrels. These weren't private; they became public. Everybody knew about it. Look at chapters 3:1-3, and you will see the reason for their quarreling and their divisions. And we will get there in several weeks, but Paul says, "And I, brethren, cannot speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat for hitherto up to now you are not able to bear it and neither now are you able. Why? Because you are still carnal whereas there is among you envying, strife, divisions, are you not carnal and walk as men?" Now, I want you to notice in verse 1, he calls them in Christ, carnal even as babes in Christ. A lot of people say, well, there is no such thing as a carnal Christian, and I disagree. I believe that here at Corinth, it is very clear that Paul is writing to people who are in Christ, and he calls them carnal. That means that you can be born again, you can be saved, but you are controlled by and motivated by and living by the flesh. And what that causes, is division in the church. It causes quarreling, and that is what happens in our relationships. Strife, division, and quarreling come from carnality.

Now, I want you to notice also in verse 12 that their eyes were on men and not on Christ. Paul says in verse 12 that they were in these little groups, they were in these personality groups. For one says, I am of Paul, another said I am of Apollos, another group said I am of Cephas which is a reference to Peter, Simon Peter and another group said I am of Christ. So here, in verse 12, Paul moves from the general to the specific. Notice he goes, this I say, or this is what I mean, or this is what I mean by the schisms and the quarreling. The contentions were over personalities, not principles. Now catch that; that is what happens today. People argue and divide and quarrel over many times personalities and not over principles, or they will argue over things that are petty rather than things that are essential doctrines. The Bible says, "We earnestly contend for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints." But let us not argue over what kind of music we play, okay? Let us not argue over what color the carpet is. Let us not argue over the order of service. Let us not argue over things that are not essential that are petty issues.

So, they had four parties. Someone described them like this: the loyalist, which was the party of Paul. I am of Paul. For Paul started the church at Corinth and no doubt they were loyal to him. Well, he is the founder of our church; he started the church, and we are committed to him; we are loyal to him. Very, very, very, very dangerous. Listen to me carefully. It is very, very dangerous when our allegiance is to a man and not to Christ. Our allegiance needs to be to Christ. We need to be careful that our allegiance isn't to a denomination or an organization or a structure, but it is to Christ. We need to keep our eyes on Jesus Christ. So, they were loyalists committed to Paul. We are of Paul. Paul is the theologian. Paul is the Bible teacher. Paul is the scholar. Paul preaches the grace of God. We are in the Bible study. We are in a deeper life. And so, you know, we are into Paul.

And then there were the stylish. We are into Apollos. Apollos was from Athens or Alexandria, a Greek city. And he was a Jew. But he was known to be an eloquent speaker, great orator, and to be an intellectual. And he was probably influenced by philosophy. And so, these were the stylish. And they liked Apollos because of his style. And this is where a lot of people get into this today. They like preachers not because of the content but because of the delivery. It's not the content; it's the delivery. And oh, they're funny. Especially if they're funny. Oh, I really like them, and he makes me laugh, and he's really cool. He's really funny. Or if they dress cool and hip and they walk around and tell jokes, man, I like that preacher. Skyscraper sermon, story on top of story, kind of a thing. And they're in the style. And they group behind their different preachers.

And then there were the traditionalists. We're of Cephas, which is Peter. Peter's our man. He was one of the original 12. Perhaps the Jews that were following Peter were the legalists. They were the conservatives. They were the legalists. Or people today that are, you know, into the Reformation theologians. If they're not dead, they're not read, you know. They want to go back, back, back to the Reformation, you know. And that's where the truth lies. And they don't like or accept anybody else that's not in their club. Us four, no more, shut the door, kind of a thing. Now, it's fine to like certain preachers. But don't become a groupie. Don't worship a man. Don't pledge allegiance to a man. Pledge allegiance to Christ and to His Word and be committed to His Word. I meet people all the time who are following things that they ought not to follow for silly reasons. Whether it be on the radio or on the television or some new movement, some new group, you know, they like their personality. And they don't think about the truth. And they just go after the style or what is it that ever appeals to them or maybe it's the emotion. Oh, he makes me cry. Or he gets me excited. Or he gets me pumped. And that preacher gets me pumped, you know. It's like a high school pep rally when he preaches. Give me a J, give me a E, give me a U, give me a S, give me a J. Yeah, what's that spell? Jesus. Whoa, that's good preaching. What did he say? I don't know, but it was good. I don't know, but it was good. And all he cared about was getting goosebumps and jumping up and down and getting all excited.

And then most scholars, New Testament Bible teachers, believe that this fourth party was the Jesus-only party. I am of Christ. Now, I'm not convinced that that's the case. I don't know, but it could be that these were the hyper-spiritual. We don't follow any man. We get our messages directly from God. We don't need a pastor. We don't need a teacher. We don't need a commentary. We don't need to... We just, you know, kind of like sit in a lotus and contemplate the Bible. And we get our messages directly from God. We're the deeper life club. Wow, can I touch you? Woo-hoo-hoo. Do you glow in the dark? This was the super-spiritual, the self-righteous, the deeper life club. I heard of a Quaker who could never find a church that was spiritual enough for him. And he went from church to church to church to church. And he could never find a church that was, you know, spiritual enough. And so, finally, he started his own. Finally, someone visited his church, and there were only two people there. He and his wife. And they talked to this Quaker, and he said, yeah, it's just me and my wife. And I'm even kind of concerned about her. I wonder if she's really saved. I mean, it's really sad when we get this hyper-spiritual kind of idea. I meet people that, you know, I don't need a church. I don't need a pastor. I don't need to listen to anybody teach the Bible. I get my word directly from God. The Bible says that God's given to the church pastor-teachers. That doesn't mean that you only

learn from the pastor. This is just kind of the icing on the cake. You have to take your Bible, go home, study, and learn. And I hope the teaching that I give here just whets your appetite. To dig deeper, to know the Bible. And I hope it's kind of developing you a palette for the Word of God and a hunger for the Word of God. That you, you know, want to study the Word and learn the Word. That you become a Berean and search the Scriptures to see whether these things be so. That you're not just spoon-fed, but that you go deep and get the meat of the Word.

But these things haven't died. There are the same kinds of divisions, problems, and carnality that happen in the church today. The list could go on and on and on and on. Some of the things that churches divide over today divide over leaders. They divide over the subject of the King James only controversy. We're the King James only. And so, I've met people that say it's got to be the 1611 version. Have you read the 1611? I mean, you can't even tell it's the English language. I mean, they walk around, how art thou doing, brother? How doest thou today? I mean, I like the King James Bible. I read, study, and teach from the King James Bible. But that's just because I'm familiar with it. I grew up with it, and I know it. And that's what I teach from. But if you want to study and read from an NIV or a different Bible, go for it. They're great translations. Some call it the Nearly Inspired Version. I don't agree with that. But let's not fight over versions or translations, okay? Let's not think that we're more spiritual because we have a more spiritual Bible than you do. Or people fight over music. And you know, we can't have drum music or rock and roll music or what kind of music we're going to have in the church. And you know, if we have music with a beat, then there's demons in those beats. Churches have been divided over music and dress. Oh, how crazy it becomes when a church becomes legalistic and fights over the dress code. Or they fight over the gifts of the Spirit. Or they fight over baptism. I've heard of churches that have split over how to baptize. Face forward or face backward. What does it matter? I've always thought it'd be cool to get a super soaker. Just spray him, you know. Father, Son, Holy Ghost. Hit him right between there. Who cares? I'm being a little silly, right? And what does it matter? You go backward or forward or straight down or turn them upside down and hold them around. Throw them off the pier. I don't care. But I've heard of, you know, we're the baptized forward church, and we're the baptized backward church. So silly. How are we going to win people to Christ when we're fighting over those non-essential issues?

So, here's Paul's closing correction in verses 13 to 17. He closes with this kind of admonition. He says, in verse 13, "Is Christ divided?" He asks three questions, rhetorical questions, all expecting "no" answers. Is Christ divided? No. Was Paul crucified for you? No. Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" No. Paul says, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I baptized in mine own name. And if I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to do what? preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. Now, this will introduce our topic for next week, but Paul closes with this thought of why God called them to preach on the cross. the wisdom of man. But Paul closes with this thought of why God called him to preach the cross. Now, three questions, no answer. Christ is not divided; they were dividing Christ up. Maybe they thought, well, Paul preaches this Christ, and Apollos preaches this Christ, and Peter preaches this Christ, and they're into this Christ. Christ is not divided. You weren't baptized in the name of

Paul or in his authority. Paul goes on to say that Christ cannot be divided.

Verse 13. Is Christ divided? No. The church is the body of Christ and cannot be divided. Let me repeat myself. The church is the body of Christ and cannot be divided. Any more than your body? I wouldn't invite you over to my house and say, I want you to come over, but leave your feet. I'd love for you to come over, but I just, you know, you got ugly feet. Could you leave your feet? Come on over, but I don't want your arms. I mean if I invite you over, I get all of you, right? You don't leave your arms or your head or your leg or whatever. Your body comes with you. You can't divide Christ, and the body is one. Paul says that in Ephesians 4:4. One body. And then he says faith in Paul cannot save. Verse 13. Was Paul crucified for you? The answer is no. Paul, a sinful man, cannot save anyone. But Jesus can. Paul was not crucified for them. Notice how the first statement focuses on Christ. The second statement focuses on Christ. And then the third, men cannot be baptized in the name of Paul. Verses 13-16.

Now it's interesting that Paul says there, I thank God I baptized none of you but Christmas and Gaius. Lest any should say, I baptize my own name, which is the idea of authority. I baptize the household of Stephanus. But besides that, I know not whether I baptize any. Now, the fact that Paul says, I thank God I baptize none of you, would lend support to the truth taught in the New Testament that baptism is not essential for salvation. You don't have to be baptized to be saved. Should you be baptized? Yes, you should be baptized. Is baptism important? Yes, it is important. You should do it out of obedience to Christ. But if you have not been dunked in water, if you've been born again, you are saved, saved, saved, saved. You got that? When the thief hanging on the cross said, Lord, remember me when you enter in your kingdom, Jesus didn't say, I'd like to, but you haven't been baptized. If you get one of these Roman soldiers to take you down and baptize you, then you're cool. I'll take you to heaven. Baptism doesn't save anyone. And it's not essential for salvation. And Paul says, God sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel. He didn't want people to think that he was baptizing in his own name. Jesus didn't baptize anybody. John the Baptist baptized people. And people started following him. He had his little John the Baptist groupies. When people left John and started going to see Jesus, they got all upset. They said, John, we got to do something here. They're leaving our club, and they're going down to Jesus to get baptized. And His disciples were baptized. They're leaving our church. They're going down to the Jesus church. And I love what John said. Love what John said. It's so important for a pastor and everyone to serve the Lord. John said, no one can receive anything except to be given to him from above. If they're going down there, then, you know, that's God's thing. And then John said these words. He said, He must increase, and I must decrease. That's what every servant of God should say. He must increase, and I must decrease. So, we don't want people to be, you know, Millerites or, you know, Paulites or following their little group and people thinking that, you know, I got to be baptized by the senior pastor. You know, I believe anybody can baptize somebody else. You don't have to be ordained. You don't have to be a pastor. You don't have to be a clergyman to baptize somebody. People get hung up on who does the baptism. Men cannot be baptized in the name of Paul.

And then, fourthly, lastly, Paul came to preach Christ. Verse 17, and that's what it's all about. So, in each one of these arguments, it's Christ, Christ, Christ, Christ, Christ. Christ cannot be

divided. It's Christ who saves, not Paul. Men cannot be baptized in the name of Paul but in the name of Christ. And Paul came to preach Christ. Verse 17: for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach, what? The gospel. And not to preach it with a wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. If the church is focused on preaching Christ and winning the lost, they won't be fighting among themselves. It's one of the big problems of the church. We start getting comfortable. We start enjoying the fellowship. And we forget that people are going to hell. And we're going to heaven, and so we don't worry about that. Let's just have a potluck, sanctified potluck. We don't want any heathen to come. We don't want cooties on our food. And we forget that we're saved to go out and share the gospel. May God have mercy on us. May God help us as the church never to lose sight of our purpose. And we're blessed to serve. We're blessed to be a blessing. That when you leave, as I said the other day, you leave this church, you go into the mission field. You're all missionaries. And when you go out, you preach Christ. You live Christ, you speak of Christ, you preach Christ, and you focus on Christ. And if we all set our affections on Christ and look to Christ, there will be harmony and unity in our church. You know, if you take ten pianos, if there were ten pianos on this stage, and you take the first piano and you tuned it by a tuning fork, and then you took that same tuning fork and you went to every one of those pianos, and you tuned each piano by that one tuning fork, and then you hit the chord on the piano, hit the keys, they would all be in tune. Because they've all been tuned to one tuning fork. But if I tuned the first piano with the tuning fork, and then I tuned the second piano to the first piano, and then the third piano to the second piano, by the time I got down to the last piano, the pianos wouldn't be in tune. So, we all need to be in tune with Jesus Christ. And when we do, there'll be harmony in our church. There'll be unity in our church.

The purpose of the church is to exalt Jesus Christ, to evangelize the lost. It's the edification of believers and the expression of service. But we are called to preach the gospel as Paul was called to preach the gospel. Not with the wisdom of words. Keep it simple. The gospel is so deep and so profound, but it's so simple a child can understand. God loves you. He sent His son Jesus Christ to die on the cross in your place. The heart of the gospel is the subject or the theme of the substitutionary death of Christ. That His death was a substitute for us. He took our place. And that when you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you trust Christ, that His righteousness is given to you as a free gift. And your sin is placed upon Christ and paid for in His death. And there you died with Christ and you rose with Christ, and you are forgiven and free in Christ. And anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. If you're here tonight and you don't know Jesus Christ, you haven't trusted Jesus Christ; you haven't put your faith in Jesus Christ. If you put your faith and trust in Him tonight, He'll forgive your sins. He'll give you eternal life, and He'll give you the hope of heaven. But we're all called to do the work of an evangelist. Not all are called to be evangelists. But we're all called to tell people. Did you know that God loves you? Did you know that God gave His son to die for you on the cross? Did you know that He paid for your sins and that if you will believe in Christ and trust in Him, He will forgive you of your sins and give you eternal life? That's the gospel. And we should all work together, join hands together for that common goal of getting out the gospel to a lost and dying world. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for this exhortation from the pen of Paul. That there be no schisms among

us. I pray for this church that we would all be in tune with you, Jesus. That we would all be in harmony with you, in love with you, devoted to you, and committed to you, and preaching Christ and the simplicity of that cross. There's power. And the cool thing about the cross is we don't only come there for salvation, but we come there for humility, to die to self. It means the death of self. And the ground around the foot of the cross is all level. We all come the same way. The sinner is lost and desperately in need of a Savior. If you're here tonight, you don't know Jesus Christ. The Bible says, call on the name of the Lord, and you will be saved. Say, Lord, forgive me. Come into my heart. Forgive my sins. Be my Savior. I trust in you. Cleanse me. Give me that hope of eternal life. Make me your child. If you call upon the name of the Lord, you will be saved. Lord, help us. We pray to glorify as one voice, one mind, one judgment as a church. The same voice, same mind, and same judgment help us to have that unified witness to this world. In Jesus' name, we pray. And everyone who agreed said, amen.