

1 CORINTHIANS SERIES #3

"Factions" - 1 Cor. 1:10-17

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Quarreling

1. A part of life
2. Starts with toddlers and progresses
3. Wars are usually national quarrels
4. Even Christians quarrel
 - a. we divide into groups over this and that
 - b. then we guard our opinions jealously
 - c. many of us have seen some kind of a church split

B. Cults Criticism

1. Church so divided
2. A point of attack
3. They appear so united; together

C. Not New

1. Divisions in the church is nothing new
2. In fact, a problem in the NT church
3. It was a huge problem at Corinth
4. Paul spent a great deal of time in this letter dealing with it

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 10-11

***10* Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**

***11* For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.**

1. Word had reached Paul that the church in Corinth was highly fractured and divided by debates
2. Because he had started the church there, he was deeply troubled by this.
3. He knew that the unity of God's people is both a command and a necessity.
4. So he writes . . .
5. **Now I plead with you, brethren,**
 - a. Paul is earnest
 - b. "plead" = to come alongside to bring aid
 - c. "brethren" = they are all part of the same family

6. **by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,**
 - a. he invokes his authority as an apostle
 - b. also - they must remember that Jesus is their one commonality
 - c. if He is truly the one focus and priority of all of their lives, then unity will mark them
7. **that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**
 - a. they were fractured, divided over issues of doctrine & leadership
 - b. these divisions were wrong, and were hindering their witness and growth in Christ
 - c. John MacArthur, "Fractured fellowship robs Christians of joy and effectiveness, robs God of glory, and robs the world of the true testimony of the gospel. That's a high price for an ego-trip."
 - d. rather than divided, they were to be "**perfectly joined together**"
 - 1) used in tow main ways
 - 2) as a medical term
 - of setting a broken bone
 - like the body of Christ
 - 3) as a fishing term
 - of mending a net
 - to gather in the harvest
 - story of Admiral Lord Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar.
 - two English naval officers were arguing and about to come to blows.
 - Nelson, turned them around and pointed to some French ships and said, "There's your adversary gentlemen."
8. **For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household*, that there are contentions among you.**
 - a. Chloe was so concerned, had sent a report to Paul
 - b. hard to do - but often necessary to go to others and declare an unhealthy situation so it can be addressed
 - c. "contentions" in the church
 - 1) quarrels, wranglings
 - 2) not merely differences of opinion but hardened and heated exchanges
 - 3) the church was divided into camps which shot volleys at each other
 - d. just what these camps were we learn in v. 12

B. Vs. 12-13

12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."

13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1. The problem in Corinth was, "*The Cult of Personality*" and the whole church was involved.
2. There were 4 groups
3. Once we understand the climate of Corinth, easy to understand how this happened.
4. The City itself was highly fractured into various philosophical schools
 - a. different teachers, schools of thought
 - b. battle of words, eloquence of teachers
5. The church was taking on the same characteristics as the City
6. So, there was the "*Camp of Paul*"
 - a. father of the church
 - b. die hard loyalists - first converts
 - c. mostly Gentiles
7. "*Camp of Apollos*"
 - a. Acts 18 - came to Corinth when Paul left
 - b. raised in Alexandria, hotbed of philosophical activity; where early church fathers tried to merge Christianity with classical philosophy
 - c. he was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures
 - d. a great teacher!
 - e. had a strong ministry of equipping believers
 - f. gained a loyal following, specially among the intellectuals.
8. "*Camp of Cephas*"
 - a. Peter's Jewish name
 - b. no record Peter came to Corinth
 - c. probably Jews who had been to Jerusalem and converted there
 - d. they thought themselves loyal to the real roots of the faith
9. "*Camp of Christ*"
 - a. these were the real believers!
 - b. this group took a self-righteous stand and said their loyalty was to no man - it was to Christ alone
 - c. they forgot that the message of Christ is communicated through the messengers of Christ - the Apostles!
 - d. there are some today who say, "Let's get back to

- Jesus only," and what they mean is to neglect the teachings of the Apostles. They would like to stick with just the gospels and discard the rest of the NT.
- e. protesters at Costa Mesa
 - f. the exclusive denomination and a splinter church.
 - 1) gold letters - "JESUS Only"
 - 2) wind blew, blew off first 3 letters
 - 3) more accurately = "US Only"
10. Church divided into these groups, based on loyalty to certain leaders
11. Today: Swindoll, Smith, Reis, Hayford, Hagan, Christ
12. **Is Christ divided?**
- a. "NO!!!"
 - b. if we are truly "in Him" can we be divided?
 - c. no!
13. **Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?**
- a. No!
 - b. Christ was crucified for them.
 - c. they were baptized in His name
 - d. so there was no place for all their foolish and petty loyalties to mere human personalities
14. Their problem was this:
- a. they were not walking in the Spirit.
 - b. they were walking in the flesh
 - c. in ch. 3, Paul deals with the same subject and calls them carnal, minding the things of their fleshly desires.

C. Vs. 14-16

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

- 1. Baptism was held in much higher esteem in the early church
- 2. It was not an act which saved, but was used as a declaration of a person's joining the community of Christ's people
- 3. Rather like an initiation rite
- 4. Some of the people in Corinth were lining up their loyalties to whomever had baptized them
- 5. So Paul is glad that he baptized only a handful of people in Corinth
- 6. This way, there would be few who would feel their first allegiance was to him.
- 7. Their loyalty belonged to Christ ALONE!!!

8. ASIDE: What this says about Baptism and salvation!
 - a. it does not save
 - b. if it did, you can be sure Paul would have baptized a lot more people
 - c. he would have carried around a portable baptistry
 - d. baptism is a fruit of repentance, a result of being born again
 - e. it is a good work - and we know works cannot save - they flow from salvation, not lead to it.

D. V. 17

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

1. Paul's prime mission was to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ
2. And notice how he describes his preaching
3. "Not with wisdom of words."
 - a. in Corinth, the philosophical schools tried to outdo each other by eloquence and wisdom
 - b. tried to out reason each other
 - c. overwhelm each other with a barrage of terminology
4. Paul simply proclaimed the truth, with clarity and simplicity, and trusted the HS to apply it to his hearers hearts
5. More on this next week . . .

III. CONCLUSION

A. How To Be Together: V. 10

10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1. We must all speak the same thing
 - a. not as mindless clones
 - b. but we must be agreed about the necessity of our unity in Christ
 - 1) we cannot allow a break in our fellowship with one another to go unresolved
 - 2) we must be diligent to approach one another and be perfectly joined together
 - 3) they may be painful, as setting a broken bone
 - 4) but if it is not set, it will cripple us
2. That unity will come from having
 - a. "the same mind"
 - 1) what mind is that?

- 2) the mind of Christ
- 3) Phil 2:5 - "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal to God, but made Himself of no reputation, and taking the form of a servant, He humbled Himself"
- 4) The root of almost all divisions is selfishness
- 5) the mind of Christ is the mind of selflessness
- b. "The same judgment"
 - 1) we must have the same priorities
 - 2) First and foremost = the interests of the kingdom of God
 - 3) Matthew 6:33
- 3. When Christ becomes our all, for all - then the ground of division will shrink to the vanishing point

B. The Need

- 1. When we are divided, we are weak and ineffective
- 2. When we are united, we can accomplish much
- 3. John 17:20-23 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 "that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.
- 4. Story of African tribe and the lost Child

The story is told of a time when a little child in an African tribe wandered off into the tall jungle grass and could not be found, although the tribe searched all day. The next day the tribal members all held hands and walked through the grass together. This enabled them to find the child, but due to the cold night, he had not survived. In her anguish and through tears, the mother cried, "If we had only held hands sooner, my son could have been saved."

How many are being lost because we are so fragmented and divided, more concerned with guarding our interests and pet hobby horses, than we are with joining hands in the great work of bearing testimony for the grace of Christ?