



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: 1 CORINTHIANS • UNITY IN CHRIST •

1 CORINTHIANS 1–2 • 5/8/2022

MAIN POINT

Christ and His gospel must be at the center of every church body.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What was your first impression of our church, either from that first Sunday you showed up for worship or an encounter you had with someone from our church?

What are some of the things that you think draw people to our church?

What people, activities, or causes does our church fully support?

A major problem in the Corinthian church was disunity. Members were divided into factions based on the personalities of their leaders rather than on finding unity in their common confession of Christ. Divisive churches neither bring glory to Christ nor represent Him well to those outside the church. If our church is going to be a church that glorifies Christ and makes a lasting impact in our community, Christ and His gospel must be at the center.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-15.

What was dividing the church in Corinth?

Why do you think the Corinthian church was divided like this?

It appears that church members were dividing over teachers and leaders in the church. We see the same things today. Some people like the old pastor, others like the new pastor, and still others like the TV preacher better than both. Taking our focus off God causes us to focus on people. When we focus on people instead of on God, we naturally begin to resent those who don't hold to our same loyalties.

What are some of the things that divide churches today?

What are the things that we should be united by as a church?

First and foremost, we should be united by our loyalty to Jesus. Paul gives two reasons why Jesus should be our primary allegiance: He was crucified and we were baptized in His name. Once people's loyalties are in the right place—with Christ—things change. When we decide to stay focused on Him, we realize that we're part of something bigger and more important than any of our own preferences. We realize the church belongs to Jesus, not to a person or committee.

What things unite you “with the same understanding and the same conviction” together with other groups in our church? What would it look like to focus on this unity and work to improve upon it?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-29.

Another cause of division in the church is pride. What is the problem with pride? Why is pride within the church so dangerous?

Pride is a regular member at many of our churches. The results of pride—hurt feelings, feeling like you're always right, and refusing to compromise on an issue—lead to division. Because of pride, we see our way as the right way almost all of the time. Because of pride, we don't allow ourselves the opportunity to see issues from another perspective and as a result, we get locked into a thought or a belief and we will not budge.

What was Paul's solution to the Corinthians' pride problem?

How do you think the proud members of the Corinthian church felt when they heard that Paul characterized them as foolish, weak, insignificant, despised, and nothing?

Mirroring Christ's example, we should exchange pride for humility. Paul wanted his readers to remember who they were before they knew Christ. This was how Paul kept

humility a key characteristic of his ministry. He saw himself as the chief of sinners. Jesus forgave him, but he never forgot who he had been in the past. The people in Corinth were learning the difficult lesson that we are nothing without Jesus. We need to learn the same thing today. God doesn't look at our qualifications before He determines if He'll use us. He looks at whether we've decided to depend on Jesus. Therefore, pride has no place in the church.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-8.

According to these verses, what are some of the distinguishing marks of the wisdom with which Paul spoke?

What difference would remembering God's power have on keeping us unified?

How can we show we are relying on God's wisdom and power when we tell others the gospel message of the love and grace of Christ?

Paul purposely kept his speech simpler to minimize the focus on him and his speaking ability and maximize the focus on the gospel. If the power of a person's words leads us to believe something, then another person's words could lead us away from our belief. Genuine faith in God is rooted in God's power to transform our hearts, which happens through the Holy Spirit's work in our lives (vv. 4-5). We should build our lives on God's power, not human wisdom. Our faith does not rest on logic, but on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Victorious faith comes not from human understanding, but only from the wisdom and power of God revealed by the Holy Spirit.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What are we doing as a group to promote unity in the church? In what ways do you think we can do a better job of this?

How can we help one another keep Christ central in our personal lives this week? What are some practical ways we can each focus our thoughts and attitudes more on Jesus?

How does embracing God's forgiveness in our own lives lead us to show grace and unity toward others?

PRAYER

Spend a few minutes in prayer with your group. A divided house can't stand. Pray that as a group and a church, you will place your loyalty in the right person, Jesus Christ. Be determined to make decisions based on Him and His direction for the church rather than on any person or group.

COMMENTARY

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-15,26-29

1:10. Paul's appeal to unity is expressed in a first-century idiom translated agree in what you say. The added phrase the same conviction refers to the shared conviction

about the centrality and importance of the gospel message—Christ crucified (v. 17; 1:18-3:4). In Paul’s mind, this central conviction was the key to church unity.

1:11-12. Paul disclosed the report from Chloe’s household about the quarrelsome, divisive spirit in the church at Corinth. In a vivid, ironic style, he repeated their party slogans which used the stock phrase “I am with so-and-so.” Slaves used this expression to identify their master. Also, anyone who slavishly belonged to a factious political party could use this phrase. Even though they said, “I’m with Christ,” Corinthian believers who followed mere men exhibited a divisive, slavish spirit contrary to the way of Christ.

1:13-15. Paul answered the rhetorical question is Christ divided by illustrating from his own life and ministry two crucial issues related to who he was and what devotion others owed him. In rapid-fire fashion, he asked: Was it Paul who was crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul’s name? The answer to both questions was clearly, “no.” Christ died for each of us, and by Christ’s authority we are identified with Him in one corporate body that belongs to Christ (12:12-13). Therefore, Christ is the One to whom honor is due.

1:27-28. Paul gave the rationale for the makeup of God’s people. Because the Lord’s people embrace the “nothing” message, the world views them as nothing. But in the next age God will shame the wise and the strong and bring to nothing the things that in this age are viewed as something (2:6; 3:18-20).

1:29. God determined to choose despised ones—those who embrace the foolishness of the cross—so that no one can boast about his human accomplishment or position in His presence.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

2:1-2. Paul reminded the Corinthian believers that his message was never based on worldly wisdom, but on the offensive message of Christ crucified.

2:3-5. Paul’s preaching was not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with power as demonstrated by the saving power of the Holy Spirit. Your faith refers to all who had embraced the gospel by faith. Their conversion and corporate identity in the body of believers were a result of God’s power.

