

1 Cor. 1:10-2:5—The Church: Team Jesus

- **Intro:**
 - **Matthew 16:18**—I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
 - Jesus made a PROMISE to build his church
 - **John 17:11**—Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.
 - Jesus prays to the Father for unity inside that church that looks like the unity of the Trinity.
 - Why? Fighting for unity would be harder than simply bringing the church to be.
 - Starting a church is relatively easy. Building that church in gospel unity and gospel maturity is extremely difficult.
 - Jesus then dies on the cross for our sins.
 - Reconciled to God as CHRISTIANS
 - Reconciled to one another as The CHURCH.
 - In the book of Acts we see Paul going to Corinth and starting a church among this wild, depraved people and then he moves on into Ephesus and Antioch and elsewhere.
 - However, after he leaves Corinth, the people begin to fall apart and craziness breaks out.
 - PAUL GETS WORD OF THIS AND THAT IS WHY HE WRITES CORINTHIANS.
 - **MIT**—In the midst of a crazy and Christ-less culture, we fight for unity around Christ and his gospel for his glory.
- **A Great Appeal—Be Unified in Christ!**
 - **Fight for Gospel Unity (v.10-18)**
 - Paul's first point to the Corinthians is they needed to realize they were NOT unified and great, painful, harmful fragmentation was coming into the church.
 - Some of you have lived through church splits, nasty breakups, situations where teams form and people are against one another.
 - **What Unity Is Not:**
 - **Tolerance**—Unity is NOT simply erasing morality, truth, Scripture and putting every principle and every belief on the same level.
 - Unity does NOT mean we tolerate sin, error, false teaching, immorality etc.
 - “by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ”—Christ and his Word and his gospel form the guardrails of unity. They allow us to stand firmly on the revealed will and truth of God and also enjoy the freedom to be different within those guardrails.
 - **Uniformity**—we agree on the essentials and are charitable on the nonessentials
 - Harmony, not homogeneity, is the goal!
 - We agree on core principles, we differ on methods
 - Parenting styles, type of music, political party, school choices, etc, etc.
 - **What Unity Is:**
 - **Theological Unity**
 - There are things we must fight for and about and there are things over which we must be able to live peacefully in disagreement.
 - Closed Handed Issues—what we will fight for
 - Authority of Scripture, The Person and Work of Christ, Eternity, Salvation by Grace Alone, etc.
 - We aren't changing our minds on these things. We aren't open to new views!
 - Open Handed Issues—issues over which many people who love Jesus disagree
 - Tongues, When Jesus will Return, Worship Style, Philosophy of Ministry
 - Ultimately there are differences but not division...there is unity but not uniformity.

- We have the ability to be different and discuss but not the right to be divided!
- Application—are you walking in this type unity? Are you holding tightly to the essentials but showing grace in the non-essentials? Are you stirring division over preferences?
- **Relational Unity**
 - We have a relational unity wrapped around the fact that, in Christ, we are now family.
 - Community Groups; doing life together; walking through things with one another.
 - A unity that is more than can happen if this is an event that you come to and leave. This is a unity that knows one another, loves one another, prays for one another, etc.
 - Fruit bearing happens when we move from PROXIMITY to one another and the mission of God into ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT with one another and the mission of God.
 - This is why CG is so important here—all the data shows that as people get connected into smaller environments things like Scripture reading, praying, evangelism and giving increase. Essentially, INVOLVEMENT IN GROUPS = INTENSIFIED SANCTIFICATION
 - Application: Are you walking in this type of sharpening, pruning relationship here? Are you a ninja? Are you a grabber rather than a giver here?
- **Missional Unity**
 - Lastly, we have a unity around the common understanding that we are all here for Jesus and that we are on the planet to love and serve on behalf of him.
 - Ultimately, the gospel creates community but not for the ultimate end of community rather for MISSION.
 - John 17:21-24—the unity that Christ prays to the Father to supply to his people is for the SAKE of God’s glory as people come to know Jesus.
 - Good relationships is NOT the end goal of community...MISSION is the end goal.
 - Unity and Mission CANNOT be separated.
 - v.10—“divisions”=a tear/rip
 - “united in the same mind” = lit. knit together
 - Used in Mark 1:9—mending or restoring nets
 - Division paralyzes and cripples mission...unity supports and empowers mission!
 - Application: Is mission a part of your life at all? Are you testifying to grace/telling people about God’s work in your life? Are you investing in people?
- What is unity?
 - Literally—Everyone saying the same thing—ultimately, at Harvest we are all about one thing—Jesus! If someone asks us what we are about here, the answer is Jesus!
 - Paul is saying, the thing is, people are asking about your church and you aren’t all saying the same thing. You all have crazy, wild, different answers and you need to get unified!
- **Fight for unity in Christ, not your leaders (v.11-17)**
 - v.12-13—“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?”
 - There were teachers, philosophers, thinkers and they offered spiritual guidance, thought, philosophy to the people of the day. These people gathered followings because of their “WISDOM” and all the groups were at odds with and didn’t like one another and fought.
 - Think ACC v. SEC, Fox News v. NBC, Jonathan Stewart v. Sean Hannity, NC STATE v. UNC.
 - What was happening was everyone was showing up to church and small group with a jersey on for who followed which of these guys.

- Paul is saying, WE ARE ALL TEAM JESUS SO STOP IT!
- Apollos was a great preacher. Peter was a great church leader. Paul had founded the church. All were people worthy of honor but the church had over elevated them.
 - Example—Calvinism v. Armenianism; Contemporary v. Traditional worship; Premillennial v. Amillennial; pews v. chairs; the list goes on and Paul is saying NO!
- The last team was team, “I follow Christ.”
 - It’s coming in this corrective moment so this CANNOT mean just that this group of people gets it and are following Jesus.
 - This group completely undermines and disrespects Christian leadership altogether.
 - These are the “me and Jesus” people and they can DIVIDE as bad as anyone
 - Are you a member of a Church? Nope, its me and Jesus
 - Do you have anyone speaking truth into your life? Don’t need it, I have Jesus.
 - Is there anybody whose authority you respect to correct and lead you? Nope, Jesus is my homeboy and we are tight!
 - We need community, we need local churches, we need authority and to be accountable!
 - “Is Christ divided?”—Jesus loves everyone who believes in him without distinction! We don’t own Jesus, he owns us!!
 - “Was Paul crucified for you?”—don’t worship a sinful man, worship Jesus, the God-man who died in your place and rose again! A cross, not a man, is at the center of church!
 - “Were you baptized in the name of Paul?”—Your allegiance is not to man but Jesus!
 - Application: we aren’t team Drew or Team Matthew or playing the game, “whose your favorite CG leader. Are you here more because of a leader/relationship or because of Christ and his Kingdom moving forward? Are you a member of a local church where you can love and serve others, speak into people’s lives, have people who can do the same?
- **Flesh Out Unity in Christ by Proclaiming the Gospel (1:17-25)**
 - v.21—Christian unity fleshes itself out in undiluted gospel proclamation. Preaching, in whatever form, is the outflow of unity.
 - Big theme of “wisdom”—what appears to be attractive, flashy or appealing.
 - Paul’s aim is to show how the gospel FORCES us to find new ground for unity.
 - We find ULTIMATE wisdom in a gospel that, on the face of it, looks like complete foolishness.
 - v.22-23—People WANTED flashy signs and impressive wisdom..what they got was Christ Crucified.
 - Harvest, we want to be these people. Not giving our neighbors, culture, etc what they want but giving them what they need—Jesus!
 - v.21—it PLEASED God...to save those who believe.
 - We proclaim the gospel because we have a God who is PLEASED TO SAVE!
 - v.25—“for the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”
 - The church in Corinth had forgotten that the gospel is the foundation of their own lives and their church. They had been allured by the voices of “wisdom” and culture.
 - Paul starts the book talking about the cross and ends this book talking about the resurrection—he knows that the way to fix a messed up people is the GOSPEL! The answer is JESUS!

- Fully enjoy unity around God's glory, not your awesomeness (1:26-31)
 - v.26-28—The CAUSE of our unity is not our quality but his calling.
 - “For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are.
 - Caution—there is both DIVINE INITIATIVE and HUMAN RESPONSE here.
 - It is God's glory that he both CALLS us by grace and CAUSES Christ to become so beautiful that we respond in repentance and faith.
 - v.2 and v. 21—there is HUMAN ACTION in relation to DIVINE initiation (calling upon the Lord and believing the gospel)
 - v.29—“so that no human being might boast in the presence of God”
 - Therefore, we don't boast in our power, prestige or wisdom but in the grace and glory of God.
 - There is an empowered humility that arises as we see God's glory in the gospel on display.
 - Charles Spurgeon: How can we be proud? Stand at the foot of the cross, and count the purple drops by which you have been cleansed. See His thorn-crown; mark His scourged shoulders, still gushing with encrimsoned rills; see His hands and feet given up to the rough iron spikes, and His whole self to mockery and scorn; see the bitterness, and the pangs, and the throes of inward grief, showing themselves in His outward frame; hear the horrid shriek, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me!” If you do not lie prostrate on the ground before that cross—you have never seen it! If you are not humbled in the presence of Jesus—you do not know Him. You were so lost that nothing could save you—but the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son. May the Lord bring us in contemplation, to Calvary. Pride cannot live beneath the cross! Let us sit there and learn our lesson—and then rise and carry it into practice!
- Find encouragement from Paul's example (2:1-5)
 - Paul is essentially making a case for his apostleship by showing that all that he has appealed for the Corinthians to believe and embody is what he believed and embodied as he preached the gospel to them and planted this church.
 - Notice what adjectives he uses: not lofty speech or wisdom, weakness, fear, much trembling, not plausible speech.
 - The beauty of the way God has ordained his gospel to go forth is that it is NOT dependent on amazing, polished, extremely cool and attractive people to do the work.
 - It is dependent on the complete sovereignty of God to display his glory and power as weak, unattractive, un-amazing people hold out to a lost, confused and crazy culture the wonders of the gospel of the Lord Jesus who became man, lived a perfect life, died the death we deserved and rose again from the grave to give LIFE FOREVER to all who believe!