

Team Jesus

Introduction:

Local churches are supposed to be united in common purpose and common trust in a common savior, and they are assisted in that unity by servant leaders.

Today's Scripture Text

1 Corinthians 1:10-17 & 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Sermon Points

#1. Local churches are supposed to be united

Throughout his letter to the Corinthians, we see that Paul celebrated and encouraged diversity in the church. He did not want them to be uniform, but UNITED in their diversity. The church in Corinth were arguing about the different Christian leaders they were following, and it was causing division among them. Their desire to elevate different leaders was not only damaging them as a community but would also have had a negative impact on the leaders themselves. This happens all over the world today, and our obsession with celebrity pastors causes so many problems, and often leaves large numbers of people disillusioned when these leaders inevitably do not perform to standard, leave the ministry or fall into sin. Paul is not criticizing a desire to follow and submit to church leadership, because he commends that in his other letters. Instead, he is condemning their immature dependence on *personalities* rather than on Christ, who is the true head of the church.

- ♣ Why is it important to distinguish between uniformity and unity here?
- ♣ What were the Corinthians arguing about, and what do you think their motives were?
- ♣ Why do you think that following personalities, rather than submitting to church leadership, is such a common human issue?
- ♣ Why do you do think that our pursuit of popular personalities in the church can cause so much harm, not just to the followers, but potentially to the leaders as well?
- ♣ Why does Paul see this pursuit of personality a sign of the churches immaturity?



#2. Local churches are supposed to be united in common purpose and common trust in a common saviour

- Read Ephesians 4:11-14

Common Purpose - Paul makes it clear that our goal as believers is to mature in the faith. The church is gifted with people to help lead us towards that end. Therefore, for us to be united as a church, we all need to accept the primary goal, and submit to the process of growth in the Lord. This in turn means that we will need to put away our childish expectations that the church is there primarily to entertain us, or just facilitate great community gatherings, and start seeing the church as the place where we intentionally grow and help others to grow too. This is what it really means for us to be disciples of Jesus, who make more disciples of Jesus.

Common Saviour - The church is primarily about Jesus. Though we may disagree with certain things, we must be unified on Christ. Other things such as baptism or good preaching are important, but they are not the main focus. As a unified church we need to be believing Jesus, trusting Jesus, obeying Jesus and loving Jesus.

- ♣ What is the main goal/purpose for us as a church?
- ♣ If you are on board with purpose of the church, are you actually growing in maturity or are you expecting it to just happen? If you are growing, how is this process happening?
- ♣ As you mature, are you helping others to mature alongside you? If so, how? If not, why not?

#3. Local churches are supposed to be united in common purpose and common trust in a common savior and they are assisted in that unity by servant leaders

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:5-7 & Ephesians 4:11-12 & Matthew 20:26-28

Paul was confident in his role as a leader in the church, and that people came to believe in Christ through his and Apollos's ministry. He rightly saw his role in part of God's plan to rescue people, and that his leadership was significant, but he saw it in the right perspective; that there was a larger process at place, and that there were other roles involved in bringing people across the line of faith, and into maturity in Christ. But more than that, he understood that ultimately, the work behind the gospel rescuing people, was done by God himself.

The gifts God has given to leaders in the church are given to shepherd people into maturity, so that they can continue the work of the ministry. Leaders are not gifted so that the church can sit back and let them control all of the ministry, or attempt to do it all themselves. Everyone in the church should be involved in, and own, the work of the ministry. The role of the leaders in the church is to serve others, and equip them to lead others. Leadership is not about domination or seeking respect and affirmation. Our model for church leadership is Jesus, who came to lay his life down and serve his followers. As a church we want to continue to build and multiply leaders so that we can continue to do the work of the ministry faithfully, and equip the rest of the church.

- ♣ What is the main role of the leaders in the local church?
- ♣ Up until being confronted with this passage, did you have a healthy and biblical view of church leadership?
- ♣ Why is it crucial that leaders in the church have the dignity of a life that is worthy of imitation and the responsibility for growing others?