

Sermon Title: 1 Corinthians, Is Christ Divided?

I wanted to share with you that being a pastor was not my first choice of profession as a kid, or my second. **I started college on track to be a math teacher.**

Today division has a very different meaning for me.

How many denominations do you think there are today in the world?  
Your guess \_\_\_\_\_ **Right Answer 47,000**

But, if I have any good news, it is that division is not a new problem.

### **1 Corinthians 1:10-17**

Three little words come to us in verse 13, is Christ divided?

Because of Paul's follow-up questions, we know that the answer is no to all of them.

We know that we are supposed to follow Christ, so why do we get so divided? What causes division?

- **The major reason for division in most places is sin.**
  - The 2 most common ones are pride and self-centeredness.
  - They take a small division and make it a big one!
- **Another major cause of division is spiritual or emotional immaturity.**
  - "Maturity helps a person understand that differences in perspective broaden understanding. Mature people learn to disagree without being distressed. Mature people are self-aware and seek to improve their weaknesses."
  - "Immature individuals have not learned to avoid disputes over a person's personality or style. Likewise, maturation helps a person understand the futility of fighting over things that cannot be controlled."
  - **The goal is not to compare your maturity to someone else's, it is to compare your maturity today to what level you were at 1, 5, or 10 years ago.**
- Other causes of division:
  - too much change and not enough flexibility
  - abuse of power by those in leadership
  - church politics

- What does division look like in a church?
  - Spreading rumors, sowing discord, creating cliques, and causing rifts are just some.
  - **Conflict itself comes out in many ways ranging from full on physical altercations to little passive-aggressive ways of showing one's discontent.**
- What does God think about division and discord?
  - Paul brings up division first in this letter, even before he brings up many other problems in Corinth.
  - **Titus 3:9-11**
  - **Proverbs 6:17b-19**
  - **Psalms 133:1**
- How do we solve the problem of division in our lives?
  - **The first solution is humility.**
    - **James 4:6**
    - **Matthew 23:12**
    - **2 Chronicles 7:14**
    - Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less.
    - Humility is not always thinking that you are wrong, it's the ability to ask yourself "what if I'm wrong?"
  - **The second solution is to focus on Christ.**
    - Divisions come when we focus on pride and ourselves, so it makes sense that the solution would be to focus on others and on Christ.
- Challenges to contemplate and put into practice.
  - 1. 1 Corinthians 13:11**
    - Two personal stories to help us understand.
    - In your youth, tragedy or crisis might have robbed you of your ability to mature, but as we get older it is a choice we make whether we are going to continue to act like a child in certain areas of our life, or we are going to do the work to grow.
  - 2. Matthew 7:3-5**
    - We are all so quick to point out the flaws in others, but Jesus here tells us to take the log out of your own eye first.
  - 3. Philippians 2:3-5**
    - Because in his humility, Jesus loved us more than he thought about his eternal paradise, and he is the model we are called to follow.

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  3. **Philippians 2:3-5**
    - Because in his humility, Jesus loved us more than he thought about his eternal paradise, and he is the model we are called to follow.

Scripture passages to go up on the Screen:

1 Corinthians 1:10-17 - <sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. <sup>11</sup> For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. <sup>12</sup> 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." <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup> (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) <sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power."

Titus 3:9-11 - <sup>9</sup> But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. <sup>10</sup> As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, <sup>11</sup> knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

Proverbs 6:17b-19 - haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, <sup>18</sup> a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, <sup>19</sup> a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

Psalms 133:1 - Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

James 4:6 - <sup>6</sup> But God gives more grace. Therefore, it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Matthew 23:12 - <sup>12</sup> Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

2 Chronicles 7:14 - <sup>14</sup> if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

1 Corinthians 13:11 - <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways."

Matthew 7:3-5 - <sup>3</sup> Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Philippians 2: 3-5 - <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus