

Title: Does the World See Our Problems or our Purpose?

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

It is **Worldwide Communion Sunday** – A day that we celebrate all that unites us together in Christ, as the “Church”, even when we are separated by – oceans, languages, races, generations, history, denominations, etc.

It’s true, we don’t all live in the same place, speak the same tongue, have the same skin color, live in the same era of time, share the same history, or have the same name on our sign, but **that doesn’t mean we can’t be “one”!**

The Apostle Paul declared in **Ephesians 4:4-6** – **“There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”**

That which unites us together is **far greater** than that which separates us! And when we, the Church, live with such a pursuit of unity, we will become living fulfillments of Jesus’ final prayer on earth before ascending to Heaven.

Jesus prayed in His High Priestly prayer (John 17:1-23), that they/we would be one... all whom God has given to the Son... all whom Jesus redeemed through His life, death & resurrection... all who belong to the Kingdom of God!

Vs. 21-“That they all may be one, just as you, Father, are in me, & I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

Does the world see, & believe, in Jesus’ true identity because of the way the Church is united - with Christ, with the Father, & with each other?

Unity with Christ, & with the Father, comes through repentance & faith! Unity with each other comes as a result of the transforming work of Christ in our lives, through the Holy Spirit, by the power of the gospel!

The fruit of that transforming work ought to be **visible** in us as the Church! It is why Paul says in **Ephesians 4:1-3** - **“I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”**

This pursuit of unity takes us beyond just building bridges between where we live, what language we speak, when we live, etc. This requires addressing the hardness of our hearts, the sin that still clings & the division

that results when sinners, even redeemed ones, reject the pursuit of unity!

The Church in Corinth serves as an example of this kind of pursuit of unity **gone wrong!** Where the Church forgot, or rejected, this call **“to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace!”**

1 Corinthians 6:1-8 – Being “the Church” doesn’t mean we never have problems, conflict, division... being “the Church” means we respond to them, to sin, **by pursuing the purpose we’ve been given in Christ – to seek unity, to bring glory to His name, & to advance the gospel in this world!**

- How does taking a brother in Christ to court reveal the **problem**, rather than the solution, to seeking unity in the church?
- How does turning to secular laws and courts to fix our problems reveal an even greater problem in us than the issue being brought to trial?
- How can **judging** one another, from within the Body of Christ, actually foster unity, rather than produce further division?
- How can a willingness to extend forgiveness, even when suffering wrong, rather than requiring justice, lead to the unity Jesus prayed for?
- How does how we **treat one another** in the Church reveal what we truly believe about Christ, the gospel, and who we are as “the Church”?

As the C.H.U.R.C.H. we are called to be...

C – **Christ Centered**, not “me” centered!

H – **Historically Grounded**, not swayed by popular opinion!

U – **Under the authority of Scripture**, not in bondage to our own ideas/ways!

R – **Relationally Driven**, not self-absorbed and self-advancing!

C – **Covenantally Connected**, not sinfully divided!

H – **Heavenly Focused**, not earthly justified! We will be known by our fruits!

Problems will arise in the Church... Christians will wrong each other... But we are called to seek unity, to judge one another (in the Church) with truth & love, and to extend grace/mercy, even when justice isn’t served!

This is the way of Christ... the way of the Church... the way of pursuing unity! On this Worldwide Communion Sunday, may we come to this table knowing what has been accomplished for us all - reconciliation/unity! **Let’s live it out!**

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