

TOGETHER 4 THE CITY #3

Churches Unified 4 The City

Open:

- * The church located in the town of Corinth had its issues ... the city was known for its immorality and drunkenness ... the folks in this church were a work in progress.
 - Paul confronted their spiritual immaturity and set them straight on several issues. (Here's one)

1 Corinthians 1:10-13 NLT ¹⁰ I appeal to you (plead/beg), dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose. (united ... joined together = to mend a net/dislocated joint) ¹¹ For some members of Chloe's household (member in the church that shared w/Paul this problem) have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹² Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow only Christ." ¹³ Has Christ been divided into factions? Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not!

- It is human nature to relate better to different personalities and leadership styles.
 - It is wrong to put a man (a church) in the position that only Christ deserves.
- The only one worthy of our worship is Christ.
- In an effort to show our love, express our gratitude ... notice what can subtly happen:

1 Corinthians 3:3-7 NLT ³ ... You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world? ⁴ When one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos," aren't you acting just like people of the world? ⁵ After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. ⁶ I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. ⁷ It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow.

– Salvation is God's work of grace, and He often uses several different believers/churches to bring a person to Him.

✓ A soul rescued is reason to rejoice regardless of who pulls them out of the fire.

→ Different people and churches will be used by God to get the lost to Christ, and that is what we celebrate.

– So what is the lesson?

1 Corinthians 3:21-23 NLT ²¹ So don't boast about following a particular human leader. For everything belongs to you (you will inherit all that Jesus has promised) — ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Peter, or the world, or life and death, or the present and the future. Everything belongs to you, ²³ and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

→ What is important is that Christ is in us, and we are in Christ.

* That being said: Christ is the central issue.

– In Him only can one be made right in the sight of God.

– And so Peter's declaration becomes the foundation for the church:

Matthew 16:15-18 NLT ¹⁵ Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”
¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”
¹⁷ Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.
¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter (Petra, little rock), and upon this rock (Petros, boulder) I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

- ✓ Christ is the Foundation and head of the church.
- ✓ Our responsibility is to display His glory by communicating what He did to make salvation available to mankind.
- While we cannot and should not join hands with every religious institution or cause ... we will want to cooperate with those who preach Jesus the son of God/Godman who came and laid down His life to pay sin’s penalty and rose from the dead conquering sin and the grave.
- ✓ Basic truth we must embrace if we are going to work to accomplish spiritual goals:

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NLT ³ I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. ⁴ He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.

- We must be in agreement concerning salvation ... we may have differences as to the method of baptism, who can take the Lord’s supper, how a church does missions, what the proper attire to church is ...
 - ✓ We may have our opinions, but if we can agree on how a person is made right with God ... we can and ought to work together.
 - ✓ And if we do, we will impact more people.

Psalms 133:1-3 NKJV ¹ Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! ² It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. (This was a joyful occasion, pictures spiritual blessing.)

→ We might say: what oil is to an engine ... unity is to the work of God.

³ It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing— life forevermore.

√ Mt. Hermon stood 9,700 feet high, it provided the major water supply for the Jordan River; the snow would melt and Jerusalem would be supplied with water.

→ Unity is like a refreshing drink of water.

* This is true for our church and our community – we will get more done and we'll have more fun when we cooperate.

→ In football terminology: run the play, complete your assignment, contribute to the team ... this isn't badminton where you play solo ... team effort required!

* Concerning our mission – put God's glory on display in our community .. I find three things we must do:

Philippians 1:27 NLT Above all (of most importance), you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News (integrity, consistency ... we live out what we say we believe) about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose ...

(1) Stand Together:

- We need a genuine concern for one another ...
- We need to be there for one another ...
- Involves tenderness, listening ear and at other times tough love ...

→ If our nation has a prayer ... believers need to stand together ...

- This is a military term ... soldier, stand your ground and don't shoot others who belong to God's army.

(2) Fight Together:

Philippians 1:27-28 NLT ²⁷ ... fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News. ²⁸ Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself.

- **NKJV** says: **striving together** - the metaphor changes from that of a soldier standing at his post to a team working together to win a victory.
- What are we working for? To bring people to faith in Christ.
- The imagery would suggest we will have opposition.
 - √ In team sports, there is another team on the field trying to stop you.
 - √ Our enemy Satan will oppose the spread of the Gospel.
- One believer (church) plows, another plants, but God brings forth the produce.

(3) Struggle Together

Philippians 1:29-30 NLT ²⁹ For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. ³⁰ We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.

- It will not be easy ... are we willing to be inconvenienced? Willing to go through some hard times?
- Contrary to the teachings of some ... suffering is a part of the package.
- As it relates to unity ... sometimes it will be a struggle.
 - √ We have to put our egos aside for the greater purpose ...
 - √ So what if I don't build the biggest church, baptize the most people, support the most missionaries ...

√ The question is: Can I be faithful with the responsibilities God has given me, cooperate with and applaud others who are accomplishing a work for God?

* To do this: **Philippians 2:3-4 NLT** ³ Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

Close:

- Our loyalty and love belong to Jesus ... He alone is worthy of worship.
- The central issue is the Gospel ... God's son died, was buried and rose again, and all who repent and trust Christ as Savior are forgiven and adopted.
- Let us stand together, fight together and struggle together so others may know Christ.

Next Week: 4 Week Series – “*Generosity*”

Message Notes
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