

## United in Christ

**Scripture:** “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:5-6).

**Greetings:** Good morning church.

- Let me just take a moment to look at your wonderful faces.
- You know you guys are sitting in the same seats as you were 5 years ago.
- Every time we get a chance to be with you God seems to bless our lives.
- Charity and I Love you all very much and we are excited to be with you this morning to worship God.

\*The Lesson this morning.....much prayer and thought

-Let me say, I know the church has had some difficulties over the last year, my hope is to encourage you, difficulties can either strengthen or tear apart.

-whether or not I come to work here or not is not a concern during this hour of worship. Looking to God is the only thing in view.

-Let me say this, I know that because of your love for the Lord you are prime targets of Satan ....and he will do anything to destroy your work here in this place.

\*So I want to state the fundamental aim of my lesson this morning very clearly:

-for the church to be unified in order that God might be glorified.

-This sermon is not to win myself a job

-to substantiate any ones point of view

-Its certainly not to itching ears

and \*Out of great Love and respect for you as brothers and sisters in Christ most of all in obedience to the leadership of God in my life.

### **Introduction:**

A few years ago the most disturbing thing happened to me. I looked in the mirror and saw this wild rogue hair sticking out my ear. I quickly plucked it out and was disturbed by its length being well over an inch, trophy by anybodies account. Well you all know what happened from there as time went on they began to multiply till one morning I stood at the mirror again and discovered bushes growing out of my ears. This was quite troubling to me because I realized that this might distract others from listening to me. I might be talking with someone and in all probability they could drift off into a dream like state starring at my ear hair. Being the problem solver that I am and not wanting to let something indecent about myself continue I tearfully plucked them out. Later I found the growth rate to be such that twice a week plucking were to much for me to bear. So I got myself a little trimmer and now twice a week I trim up the old bushes. If they made small weed eaters I could clip them on my ears and leave them running 24 7's.

What if I didn't care? What if it didn't matter to me that other people were bothered by it? What if I took this problem and made sport of it? What if I grew my ear hair out and braided it into a pony tale and put a bow on the end of it? What if being somewhat short of hair on top of my head I grew my ear hair out and did a comb over.  
Would that break down my ability to communicate with others?

### Transitional Statement:

Church, God places a extremely high value on relationships and the care and maintenance of them. Our relationship with each other affects his glory. Here is a lesson that I would like to preach to the entire brotherhood.... And here it is “if there is something standing between you and another brother or sister in Christ....even if its an ear hair take it seriously and pluck it out”. This is the basic message that the Apostle Paul gave to the Corinthian church and will be our study this morning.

### Lesson

#### History of Corinth

- In Acts chapter 18 we see on Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey he came to Corinth
  - Meet Aquilla and Priscilla (Jews kicked out of Rome)
  - Reasoned with Jews at synagogue
    - Gave up and went to Gentiles
  - Started the Church
  
- Corinth had been destroyed in 146BC by the Romans
  - Rebuilt in 44 BC by Julius Caesar
  - Recognizing the importance of its location
    - Ordered it rebuilt
      - Corinth lies between East and west
        - Italy and Asia Minor
      - With its 2 harbors
        - Became a hub of commerce
        - Cross road for travelers and traders
  - Corinth was repopulated with people from all over the region
    - They came from different cultures, backgrounds both social and economic. Opinion**
      - It was a Melting pot of sorts
    - People characterized by words like Immoral, shameless
      - They were farmers, merchants, sailors, dock workers v vineyard workers, butchers, tent makers and many others
  
- Business ruled Corinth and it was declared the capital of the region
  - Both a Wall Street and Industrial sector
  - Businesses created work
    - Greed and loose living prevailed
  
- Entrepreneurs of everywhere came to make money
  - Homer, Greek Poet, mentioned Corinth’s wealth
  
- Corinth was a famous Game Center
  - (Olympic Like) Isthmian Games
    - Brought gamblers and athletes
  
- 12 Temples

- Aphrodite “The goddess of love” with 1000 temple prostitutes....where worshippers engaged in sexual immorality as acts of worship
- Apollo
- Jewish synagogue
- \*Greek philosophy of wisdom and power were top items in

## Corinth

TS Now that we know about Corinth lets look at Paul’s letter to them.

I. The first thing he says, and never really changes the point throughout his whole letter is

you guys are not united at all and your fighting like wild cats. (Dan’s version)

-Read 1 Corinthians 1: 10-11 “I appeal to you, brothers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.”

-We witnessed Division among God’s people all through the Old Testament, and saw God’s wrath against his stiff necked people.

-God Hates division

-Paul says in

-Eph. 4:3 “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

-Jesus spoke on the matter in a prayer.

John 17:23 “May they be brought to complete unity to let the

world

know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

-You see the churches unity has an effect on the community

-God gives us a stern warning about division in:

(Titus 3:9-11) “But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.”

**I don’t want to be in this group...do you?**

II. Then he Corinth’s specific problems

1. Corinth your divided because you follow people instead of God

1:12-15 “What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”, another “I follow Apollos”; another “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ”. Is Christ divided? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius

so no one can

say that you were baptized into my name.”

**-Picking sides**

**-Drawing lines in sand**

**-Problems Yes but no sides**

**-Work thru problems together**

**-You’ve got my back and we never split apart**

**-Is Christ Divided?**

2. Corinth your divided because you look to man’s wisdom instead of God’s power

2:4-5 “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.”

**\*Chapter 2 tells us how God uses the simple things of this world and how the only wisdom we need to look to is God’s.**

**\*Knowledge puffs up 1 Cor. 8:1**

**\*Man should take heed lest he fall**

3. Corinth your division shows spiritual immaturity

3:1-3 “Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly - infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?”

**\*Lead to worldliness**

**\*Immaturity**

**\* Jealousy, and strife**

**\*Mere men without influence!**

**\*\*Need to Grow in Lord**

4. Corinth your divided because your judging others

4:1-6 “So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God. Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying “Do not go beyond what is written.” Then you will not take pride in one man over against another”.

**\*Thinking your right doesn’t make you right!**

**\*God’s place is to judge**

**\*God will expose all things**

**\*Don’t take sides one against another**

5. Corinth's division lead to a breakdown of the Lord's Church

4:18-20 " Arrogant & Boasting 5:6

- "I hate pride and arrogance" Proverbs 8:13

-boast in lord 1 Corinthians 1:31

5:1-5 Not mourning sin

-sin without shame

-conscience seared as with a hot iron 1 Timothy 4:2

6:1-7 Taking brothers to court

-Verse 7 says "Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?"

6:18-20 Immorality

-Desires of the flesh overcomes

6. Questions from Corinth

Chapters 7-9 Paul answers some questions from them

-7 Marriage and divorce

-Heart matters need addressed.

-8 Eating meat sacrificed to idols

Abuse of rights----what best If we abuse a right it becomes a sin

-9 Paul's right for pay as a preacher

What can we get away with attitude

III. Jesus' conclusion

-House divided against self cant stand Matt 12:25

IV. The answer is Unity

1. Every one is important.

1 Cor 12:12-26... all members of one body

-Verse 25 "so that there should be no division in the body, but its parts should have equal concern for each other."

that

Each can bring down the body or make it great

2. The basis for unity is Love

Ch 13 Love is ultimate

3. Subjection 16:16

-Life of a Christian isn't wild and free, whatever we want, whenever we want it.

\*One of responsibility to each other and God.

**Conclusion:**

**HOW SERIOUS IS GOD ABOUT UNITY**

- In the letters to the 7 churches of Asia he tells Ephesus:

- "...If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place."

**-GOD HOLDS THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH IN HIS HAND**

## GOD GIVES US SOME 1<sup>ST</sup> STEP BASIC SOLUTIONS

1. If you have a problem with a brother or sister go to them. Matthew 18:15-17
  - Not my fault they need to come to me.
  - Tell them what wrong
    - Not judging
    - How you feel
2. Leave sacrifice at altar and repair relationships first. Matthew 5:23-24
  - 1<sup>st</sup> priority
  - Before worship to God
3. "...Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry" Eph 4:26b
  - Problem might need more work
  - But God doesn't allow you to carry anger with you from day to day.
4. Let God rule.
  - His Church
  - He is the judge we are not in control
  - He knows the hearts of men
  - He is more than able to guard what you have entrusted to him
5. Build each other up
  - Romans 14:19 "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification".
  - Hebrews 3:13 "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

## YOU SEE WHAT GOD WANTS IS:

- Psalms 51:17 "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart..."
- Can't always change circumstances but can change our heart.

## SATAN WANT:

Us to fight against each other instead of fighting for each other

## OUR PURPOSE AS A CHURCH:

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen" Ephesians 3:20-21

-If we are not unified God won't be glorified