

The night before Jesus Christ was crucified he prayed this about the Church. “May they be one as I and the Father are one.” That is a powerful statement. Jesus Christ was one with his Father in heaven in a profound sense, sharing a relationship with him in perfect unity and diversity for all eternity together with the Holy Spirit. This prayer shows his desire that the church on earth may share that same kind of deep other worldly unity.

Unfortunately it did not take very long for divisions to creep into the church based on social status, ethnic group, or which celebrity pastor was preaching on that particular Sunday. This is what Paul speaks about in his letter to the Church in the city of Corinth. Over the next 4 weeks we will be looking at the church and why we go to church. We will be doing so by looking at the first few chapters of 1 Corinthians. This first meditation will focus on 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, and hopefully answer the question why a Christian goes to church. Let’s read these verses together.

He tells them v. 10, “I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, 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.”

The church is not about preferences, or social status, or ethnic background. The church is a place where you will find a profound unity among people that you will not be able to find in any other place on earth. Not because they share hobbies, or are the same age, but because they share in the death and life of the one person that gives all of life meaning, the answer to every single one of life’s deepest questions, the person that showed us what it was to be human – to be made in Gods image. To love selflessly.

Unfortunately we are sinners. And sinful humans are naturally terrible at putting our own preferences aside. This is especially true of a celebrity driven culture. That is why you will often hear someone say, “I go to Church because I love that pastor.” Or “I go to that church because I just love their music.” Or, “I go to that because I just love their history,” or the best one when it comes to not putting any of your own preferences aside, “I to got that church because they accept anybody.” If everyone goes to church based on what they prefer, then there is not gonna be a whole lot of unity in the church, because there are as many opinions as there are people. For true unity to remain we must die to ourselves and find our live in Jesus Christ.

Sadly, the church has bought into the consumeristic society, as if worship of an infinite triune being is there to perk our interest and tickle our fancies. What happens when the church serves the consumeristic mind is that it becomes divided according to interest group. We have the music interest group, we have that or this pastors interest group, we have the historical traditional interest group, etc.

This may even be one of the reasons why you have never stepped into a church building. Because as you drive through your neighborhood you see ten different churches that all have a different name and never talk to each other. But the Bible is unequivocally clear that this is not what the church

should look like! It is due to our own selfishness. The church is about Christ, in him and only in him will unity ever be achieved. He is the cornerstone, and Capstone. The one who holds the whole body together and the head.

We read in 1 Corinthians 1:12-13, "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." Then he goes on to ask a series of rhetorical question, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?" The answer is of course Christ is not divided! Of course Paul was not crucified for the salvation of all who would believe; of course no Christian is baptized into the name of Paul, but in the name of the Triune God – Father, Son and Spirit.

The apostle is asking the church, why are you acting like Christ is divided?! The church is not about this or that preacher, it is not about music, or worship style, or for a certain ethnic group it is about Christ. When we make it about anything less than that we have emptied the gospel message of Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins of all its power. We think that somehow God needs help, that the power of Jesus Christ death and resurrection is not sufficient.

Dear friends although the church in our day may look like sometimes, ultimately the church of Christ is not about advertising, or gimmicks or consumerism, selling what you want. It is in the business of offering you what you need: Hope, purpose, and meaning now and eternally. The church is a demonstration of Gods power to this earth through the simple preaching of the Word of God. The Church must preach Christ and him crucified, raised, and exalted as Lord. That is the central message of the entire Bible. In the person of Christ you will find every question answered maybe not in the way that you expect. But if God is God, would we not expect him to answer your questions in ways that we do not expect. In ways that we may not even understand.

You have to be willing to submit yourself to the gospel and put your own preferences aside. For this Gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing or the ones clinging onto their own ideas, and preferences, and idiosyncrancies. But for those who are willing to lose their life for the sake of Christ, they will end up finding their life in him. The gospel is the power of God for those that believe.

So next time you talk to a Christian ask him or her why they go to church. If they gush about their worship that it is so entertaining, contemporary, and loud and that their pastor is so funny, entertaining, dynamic beware. It is not that any of these is wrong but it should never be a reason why any Christian goes to church. If they say because my church and pastor worship and preach Christ I encourage you to go to that church and experience a place where you will find a community united in faith forgiving each other as Christ has forgiven them, standing on the unshakable promises of God, and finding joy in the midst of suffering, looking forward to life eternal. A place where the true love of God is manifest in Jesus Christ.