

*1 Corinthians 1:10*

## PREFACE

Before we return to our detailed examination of v10 and following, I need to reiterate just a few key points regarding our approach both to this passage and the following verses and chapters. To wit: the *divisions* in the church, the *cause* of these divisions, and Paul's extraordinary emphasis on wisdom (*sophia*) in the first four chapters of this letter. The interpretation of the situation we draw from the excellent commentary on First Corinthians by Gordon Fee. Let me read just the conclusion of what he writes about this.

*Fee:* Within this kind of context they were quarreling over their leaders as teachers of wisdom, boasting in one or the other, and judging them from this merely human perspective, from which perspective neither Paul nor his gospel comes off very well. The message of a crucified Messiah, preached by an apostle who lived in considerable weakness, is hardly designed to impress the 'wise,' as they now considered themselves. In any case—and this is the crucial item for these chapters—the greater issue for Paul is not the division itself; that is merely a symptom. The greater issue is the threat posed to the gospel, and along with that to the nature of the church and its apostolic ministry. Thus, in a more profound way than is sometimes recognized, this opening issue is the most crucial in the letter, not because their 'quarrels' were the most significant problem in the church, but because the nature of this particular strife had as its root cause a false theology, in which they had exchanged the theology of the cross for an ingenuous triumphalism that went beyond, or excluded, the cross.

This is important, not just to understanding the text, but to living our individual lives in Christ, protecting the integrity of the church—and in both of these, remaining faithful to the word of God. For just as the Corinthians had become enamored of impressive speakers sometimes promoting spurious "gospels," we too are surrounded by impressive voices that can lead us astray. We must remain determined to hold to the *true* gospel presented in God's word. Now let's read the passage again, then return to v10.

**Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-12.**

## v10

In our previous session I pointed out that Paul opens his argument with both a *pastoral* tone, emphasizing his appeal to family members, and with a more authoritative, apostolic tone, calling upon the full authority of Christ, using His full name and title: "our Lord Jesus Christ."

And where we ended in our previous session was establishing that the literal Greek is best expressed by the KJVs: "that you all speak the same thing." The apostle supplies his own commentary for this within v10. He begins by stating that he wants the members of the Corinthian church to "all agree"—or, "say the same thing." Of course we wonder what he means by this, and he helps answer that question by repeating "the same" twice more. In the NASB,

Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree **[say the same thing]** and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in **the same mind** and in **the same judgment**.

But we have a couple of things to examine before we get to those. First,

*that there be no divisions among you*

Our modern translations have wisely not *transliterated* this, for in this instance knowing the literal Greek can send us in the wrong direction.

**divisions** = *schismata* = from <G4977> (schizo); **a split or gap** (“schism”), literal or figurative :- division, **rent**, schism.

Our modern word “schism” comes from this word, but often refers to a party or sect or faction that is formed *by* the division. For help understanding how Paul uses this word here, let’s look at something Jesus said in the gospel of Mark.

### Read Mark 2:21.

That’s the idea; same word. The battling, argumentative opinions are rending, tearing the integrity of the body of Christ in Corinth, dividing it—which is why all our translations use “divisions.” (Another illustration would be how a plow cuts through (or divides) the soil.) And Paul stays with this imagery when he writes,

*but that you be made complete...*

This word is effectively the opposite of *schismata*.

**made complete**<sup>nasb</sup>, **perfectly united**<sup>nlv</sup>, **perfectly joined together**<sup>kjvs</sup>, **united**<sup>esv</sup>  
= *katērtismenoi* (from *katartizo*) = from <G2596> (kata) and a derivative of <G739> (artios); to complete thoroughly, i.e. **repair** (literal or figurative) or adjust :- fit, frame, **mend**, (make) perfect (-ly join together), prepare, **restore**.

Here is the opposite picture—putting back together that which has been torn apart.

### Read Mark 1:19.

Same word used for “mending the nets.” If a fishing net is torn, it is sewn back together. The letter to the Galatians gives us a similar, but slightly different picture of the same Greek word.

### Read Galatians 6:1.

Here is a picture not just of repairing that which has been torn, but restoring a person to a previous condition. Paul may be saying that he wants the Corinthians to not just *become* unified, but to restore the unity they had earlier known.

*in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

What does it mean to be “perfectly joined together” (NKJV)? What does this look like? We will be of the same “mind” and “judgment.” From the same root:

**mind** = *nous* (noose) = probably from the base of <G1097> (ginosko); **the intellect**, i.e. mind (divine or human; in thought, feeling, or will); by implication meaning :- mind, understanding. Compare <G5590> (psuche).

**judgment** = *gnome* = from <G1097> (ginosko); cognition, i.e. (subject) **opinion**, or (object) resolve (counsel, consent, etc.) :- advice, + agree, judgment, mind, **purpose**, will.

Though from the same root (thus related), there are subtle differences between these two words. The venerable J. B. Lightfoot gives us the difference between the two: "Of these words *nous* denotes the frame or state of mind, *gnōmē* the judgment, opinion or sentiment, **which is the outcome of *nous***" (emphasis added). John MacArthur refers to this as being "'made complete' both internally and externally. In our individual minds and among ourselves we are to be one in beliefs, standards, attitudes, and principles of spiritual living."

What does such unity look like in the church? I can do no better than to quote MacArthur on how this is to play out in the local assembly—beginning with how Paul's definition of unity (i.e., same mind and judgment) effectively eliminates hypocrisy.

*John MacArthur:* Being of the same mind and...the same judgment rules out grudging or hypocritical unity. Unity must be genuine. We are not simply to speak the same thing, while keeping our disagreements and objections to ourselves, making a pretense of unity. Unity that is not of the same mind and judgment is not true unity. Hypocrites will add to a congregation's size but they will take away from its effectiveness. A member who strongly disagrees with his church leadership and policy, not to mention doctrine, cannot be happy or productive in his own Christian life or be of any positive service to the congregation.

It is not that believers are to be carbon copies of each other. God has made us individual and unique. But we are to be of the same opinion in regard to Christian doctrine, standards, and basic life-style. The apostles themselves were different from one another in personality, temperament, ability, and gifts; but they were of one mind in doctrine and church policy. When differences of understanding and interpretation arose, the first order of business was to reconcile those differences. Ego had no place, only the will of God.

Pastoral elders should make decisions on the basis of unanimous agreement. Not even a three-fourths vote should carry a motion. No decision should be made without total one-mindedness, no matter how long that takes. Because the Holy Spirit has but one will, and because a church must be in complete harmony with His will, the leaders must be in complete harmony with each other in that will. The congregation then is to submit to the elders because it has confidence that the elders' decisions are made under the Spirit's direction and power. Because they believe the elders are one in the Spirit, the congregation is then determined to be one with the elders. There may be struggle in coming to this kind of unity, as there was in Corinth, but it is here mandated by the Spirit Himself through Paul.

The apostle Paul did not invent this idea of unity in the assembly. This is not a new covenant construct.

### **Read Psalm 133.**

Even part of the ubiquitous Hebrew word *shalom*, or peace, means wholeness, oneness. Throughout Scripture there are calls for brothers and sisters to live together in peace, in unity. And there are two sources for this unity:

## *The Word*

What does unity look like? First, it looks like the word of God! Our unity is not just based on the *doctrines* revealed in the Bible—the literal words written there—but on the unity of the Bible itself. In the sixty-six books of our version of the Bible ([within Christendom there are many different canonical versions](#)), with its many authors ([again, not all agree, but somewhere in the 35-40 range](#)), there is perfect unity, or agreement. You will not find one or two writers who abruptly veer off in a left-hand turn when everyone else goes right. It is a cohesive, coherent, unified package from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22.

Paul exhorts the Corinthians—and us—to agree with each other, to be made whole by being of the same mind and judgment. Agree about what? Same mind and judgment about what? The weather? Politics? Which corn hybrid to plant? No, the basis for our agreement, that which it is imperative we all agree upon, is the eternal word of God.

- That we all accept it as God's holy, written word to man.
- That it is perfect, inerrant.
- That within this body we have general agreement on its doctrine, precepts, interpretation.

For us, today, this word consists of printed words on a page; in the first century and earlier, when our printed words were still being recorded for the first time by the power of the Holy Spirit, this word included the words spoken by the prophets and the apostles. But it was *all* the word of God—and the sure foundation of faith.

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13.**

## *The Lord*

Just as the members of a human family share one or more common ancestors, the members of the spiritual family called the church *must* share the common 'ancestor' of "our Lord Jesus Christ." We follow Christ Jesus, and no other—no other god, no other man.

Paul's gospel was "Christ crucified."

### **Read 1 Corinthians 1:22-24.**

There is only one throne in the church: the one on which sits our Lord and Savior. Chloe's people reported that some in the church were following Paul, some others Apollos, others Peter. Paul rebuts these followers of men in v13.

### **Read v13.**

Our faith is in Christ Jesus, Messiah, Son of God—the One who suffered and died for our sins. Our faith is based on *His* life, *His* gospel, and the written word of God. Thus the unity and integrity of each local church must claim as its foundation—its *only* foundation—these two authorities.

Anything else will only cause—as it did in Corinth—division, corruption and, ultimately, that church's demise—or worse, a corrupt, adulterated testimony to the world.