**Sermon Title: The Fracturing of the Church in a Christ-less Culture**

**Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to the importance and necessity of unity in the church.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 4 aspects addressed in this text related to unity in the church.**

**Introduction:**  Virtually the entire letter of 1 Corinthians, beginning with Chapter 1:10, deals with wrong doctrine and wrong behavior. It comes across to be that every serious doctrinal and moral error one can think of could be found among the Corinthian congregation. Whenever Christians are not acting like Christians they must be corrected. One commentator states, “The most serious problems of the Corinthian Church was worldliness, fleshliness, and an unwillingness to divorce the culture and sin around them.

 Disunity in a person, family, culture or church will result in frustration, friction, and fracturing of the institution. How should the church respond? (**1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Timothy 4:11-16**)

**2 Corinthians 2:4** For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

**Titus 3:10** Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**I. The reproof of the fracturing of the unity in the church. V.10**

**II. The report of the fracturing of the unity in the church. V.11**

**III. The response to the fracturing of the unity in the church. V.12-16**

**IV. The relief to the fracturing of the unity in the church. V.17**

**I. The reproof of the fracturing of the unity in the church. V.10**

 As Christians, one of the strongest reproofs we can have when we sin is to be reminded of who our Father and our Lord is. Reminding ourselves of who and whom’s we are should be one of the greatest sanctifying and purifying aspects of our Christian walk.

 A. The reproof of stop being **divided**. V.10a

 Christian unity is destroyed and disrupted when believers and churches sinfully begin to prefer different Christian labels and teachers, or develop attitudes of spiritual superiority to others in the church.

 One of the reasons cults thrive is because unlike the church, disharmony is not tolerated.

 **James 4:1-2** Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members? **2** You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yetyou do not have because you do not ask.

 Their inability to break with the culture, and crucify their fleshly based desires made them carnal and immature.

 B. The reproof to be perfectly **joined** together. V.10b

 They are to be united in what they are saying doctrinally and gospel wise. This phrase is a 1st century idiom. The idea is that of putting back together something that was broken or separated, so that it is no longer divided or broken.

 1. Be joined together in **understanding**. V.10c

 This refers to unity in doctrinal thinking in the local church among all the members, based on Scripture.

 **Acts 2:46-47** So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

2. Be joined together in decision making. V.10d

 There are to be shared convictions about the centrality and importance of the gospel message – Christ crucified, and its resulting sanctification.

 In Paul’s mind, this central conviction was the key to maintaining unity in the church. Unified in truth by beliefs, convictions, standards, and behavior by applied biblical principles of living. (**Ephesians 4:17; 1:18-3:4**)

 **Acts 4:32** Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

 **Ephesians 4:3** endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**II. The report of the fracturing of the unity in the church. V.11**

 Paul disclosed the report from Chloe’s household about the quarrelsome, divisive spirit in the church at Corinth. In vivid terms he repeats these party slogans which used the stock phrase “I am with so – and – so.”

 Slaves used these expressions to identify their masters. Also anyone who slavishly belonged to a factious political party could use these phrases.

 The true source of unity is Jesus Christ and the Word of God which establishes the standard of truth on which unity rests.

 (**Psalm 19:7-14; Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 3:16-17; Joshua 1:8-10; Acts 2:42-46**)

 **Proverbs 3:5-6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; **6** In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall directyour paths.

**III. The response to the fracturing of the unity in the church. V.12-16**

 A. Human affiliations does not save people. V.12

 This leads only to divisions, contentions, disputes and a divided church.

 B. Christ is not divided within the body. V.13a

 **1 Corinthians 12:12-13** For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. **13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-- and have all been made to drink intoone Spirit.

 **Ephesians 4:1-6** I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, **2** with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, **3** endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

 Christ is the one who deserves total allegiance.

 C. Baptism is not the ultimate purpose. V.13b-16

**IV. The relief to the fracturing of the unity in the church. V.17**

 A. The relief is found in understanding the **purpose** of ministry. V.17a

 B. The relief is found in understanding the **priority** of ministry. V.17b

 C. The relief is found in understanding the **principles** of ministry. V.17c

 1. This principle emphasizes what the world sees as the gospel of foolishness, that being the message of “Jesus Christ crucified.”

 (**vv.18, 23; 2:2**)

 2. This principle emphasizes the message of the cross, should never be diluted in our evangelism and preaching, for in doing such, means we risk voiding it of the power to save and transform!