

## Messes and Masterpieces: Overcoming Disunity 1 Corinthians 1:1-31

5-5-19

Ephesians 2:8-10 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith... we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works..."

"Unity" - Condition of oneness and harmony in Christ.

How we can overcome disagreement and live in unity:

I. Walk in our identity in Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:1-9)

"Identity" - A sense of our true self and worth in Christ.

### 1. Creator/Creation



Isaiah 43:1 "...thus says the LORD, I am your Creator..."

"God did not miss a stitch."

### 2. Redeemer/Redeemed



Isaiah 43:1 - "...He who formed you says.... 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!'"

### 3. Father/Child



Ephesians 1:5 - "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will..."

### 4. Shepherd/Sheep



Isaiah 40:11 - "Like a shepherd He will tend His flock...He will gather the lambs and carry them in His presence; He will gently lead His lambs."

### 5. Vine/Branch



John 15:5 - "Jesus said, 'I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.'"

~In Biblical counseling, we focus primarily on God and our identity in Christ, then our thoughts and actions.

## II. Fight for our Unity in Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:10-17)

John 17:22-23 - (Jesus prayed) "...that they may be one even as we are one... perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."

Let's fight for what really matters:

1. Core Doctrines – Absolutes of God's character and His Gospel that define the core beliefs of the Christian faith. Doctrines such as the Trinity, Authority of the Bible, Jesus' deity and humanity, Jesus' atonement on the cross, and us being saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone.
2. Convictions - While not core beliefs, they have significant impact on churches. These doctrines are not salvific in nature but are important how we live out the gospel in our context. These second level doctrines like church governance, how and when we take communion, how we baptize, our ministry strategy and philosophy; often create various denominations in God's family.
3. Choices - Biblically not as clear, issues that are not worth dividing us. Personal preferences need not hinder healthy fellowship between us in Christ. Differing views on Sunday attire, style of music, political beliefs, home-schooling, food and drink choices and much more need to be surrendered to Christ.

## III. Boast in Christ and God's grace. (I Corinthians 1:18-31)

## Areas to Boast:

Psalms 34:1-3 – "I will bless the Lord at all times...My soul makes its boast in the Lord... let us exalt his name together!"

2 Corinthians 12:9 - "...He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.'"

Galatians 6:14 - "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

1 Thessalonians 2:19 - "For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?"

Hebrews 3:6 - "...Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast...our boasting in our hope."

## Discussion for This Week

1. Why are trust, humility, and walking in common purpose necessary traits for serving in either a symphony or a local church?
2. What are some common causes of division within churches today? In what ways can they be prevented? How would you describe the difference between Christian unity and the way the culture sees unity? (See John 1:12-14, Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 2:1-8)
3. How does the gospel help us maintain unity despite being different in many other ways? (Ephesians 2:1-10)
4. Discuss the definition of identity and how our identity in Christ affects our whole life.
5. How does boasting in the Lord bring Christians together in unity? Pray for our unity of message and purpose. (Jeremiah 9:23-25)