

**United in Jesus**  
**Farewell Sermon – 1 Corinthians 1:10-17**  
Southern Hills Baptist Church  
February 25, 2018

**Introduction:** There is a sweetness found in unity (Psa 133). Unity is both beautiful and life-giving and while it is rare in our culture, it should flourish in the church. The unity found in the church is particularly stunning as it is born in the midst of great diversity. The barriers that so often divide in our country are overcome by a treasuring of Jesus. This unity, however, is often threatened. Paul calls for believers to fight for this unity by living out of our Gospel identity.

**Nature of the Disunity: Following Men, Not Jesus (1:10-12)**

Paul describes the nature of the disunity the Corinthian church was facing.

• **Elevating Men:**

- The church formed factions based off their favorite church leader. They identified with specific qualifications, talents, or characteristics their favorite leader had and elevated them. This healthy following grew into idolatry, which produced pride, leading them to think themselves better for the following they were apart of.
- The problem the Corinthians faced is one we still face today. In fact, we may be even more prone to it than the Corinthians. Our culture loves celebrities. They fascinate us. This inclination has invaded Christianity in America. Do you elevate men beyond where you ought?

- **Cynicism:** Pride manifests itself on the other side of this equation as well. Division continues to be the output. While some are drawn to certain teachers or leaders, others are prone to cynicism, actively trying to avoid the influence of others, thinking that influence leads to a “heard mentality.” This cynicism can easily grow into pride, thinking less of others who benefit from the gifting of others.

**Building Unity (1:13-17; 3:4-7)**

• **Reflecting Jesus’ Unity: Is Christ Divided? (1:13a)**

- **Jesus is One:** Paul reminds the Corinthians that Jesus is one, He is not divided. He has one message, one Gospel, one mission. We are to reflect His unity through our unity with one another.
- **Reflecting Jesus’ Glory:** The church is called to testify to the truth of Jesus’ person and saving work through our unity (Jn 17:23). A great deal rides on our unity as a church, we can’t take it lightly.

• **Remembering Our Allegiance (1:13b-16)**

- **Who Died for You?** Paul rhetorically asks if he had been crucified for the Corinthian church, reminding them their first allegiance and love ought not be to other people, but to Jesus who purchased their salvation at the cost of His own life. There will be many godly people we respect in life, but they too were wayward sinners in need of a Savior. Jesus alone is worthy of our first love.
- **Who Did You Confess Loyalty To?** Paul rhetorically asks if people were baptized in his name, reminding them that when they testified to life change, that was all about Jesus, not other men. Idolizing others is a contradiction to our baptism.

• **Remembering the Power unto Salvation (1:17)**

- **Holding Back:** Paul shares that he suppressed some of his public speaking skills when preaching the Gospel. He didn’t want to distract from what was important, the Gospel. He didn’t want to receive praise, he wanted it directed to Jesus. Why? Because the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, not Paul’s public speaking skills.
- **A Real Problem:** This issue is very relevant to American Christianity. There are many churches who believe the Gospel needs help in reaching people so rather than relying on the drawing work of the Spirit paired with the proclamation of the Gospel, many churches rely on drawing people in with flash and gimmicks. The fatal flaw of this approach is that they are drawing people to their flash and gimmicks, not Jesus. What you draw people with, you draw them to.
- **It Needs No Help:** Make no mistake, the Gospel needs no help saving lost sinners. It is God who seeks (Jn 6:44), not men (Rom 3:10-12). The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16), not the cunning of men (1 Cor 1:20-31).

• **Giving Glory to Whom Glory is Due (3:4-7)**

- **God Gives the Increase:** We all play roles in the work of the Gospel, but it is God who gives the increase. He does the decisive work. He is the indispensable One. Thus He and He alone is worthy of the glory!

**Unity’s Theme: Jesus**

Paul was hard at work to build unity in the Corinthian body, but not just any unity and not just unity for unity’s sake. No, there is a theme to this unity and the theme is the supremacy and worthiness of Jesus. Our unity is intended to reflect **His** glory because **He** purchased our salvation and we confessed loyalty to **Him**. It is **His** Gospel that is the power of God unto salvation and thus we live for **His** glory. We should unite around Him.

I pray Southern Hills will continue to be a group of people united over a shared love for our infinitely supreme and forever worthy Savior, Jesus!