

United in Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:10-17)
Farewell Sermon
Southern Hills Baptist Church
February 20, 2018

WELCOME

Welcome and happy Sunday to you. It is good to be together.

Different than the other 157 Times

Today is a bit different than any of the other 157 times I have stood before you to bring God's Word. Today marks the last time I will do so as one of your Pastors.

An Honor

It has been my joy for the past 6.5 years to serve as one of your pastors and bring God's Word to you. I have counted it an honor. I have loved what God has given me an opportunity to do here at Southern Hills. My prayer has always been that

- God would use me to **stir your hearts and affections for Jesus**
- God would use me to **point your hearts to the all-satisfying joy of knowing Jesus**
- I would be **faithful in teaching the Word of God** to you

One More Chance

That has been my prayer and by the grace of God I have one more opportunity to bring God's Word to you. If you have your Bibles open up to 1 Corinthians 1.

The Text God Gave Me

As I thought about what I might preach through today with this final opportunity my mind went to a hundred different places and passages. There are so many rich texts that I would love to share, yet God kept directing my thoughts back to one passage in particular, a passage from 1 Corinthians 1.

My First Sermon – Preview Services

Interestingly, this passage happens to be the very first passage I ever preached from at Southern Hills when we started holding Sunday services. Southern Hills started from a Bible Study that we held at Chandler Creek Apartments. We held that Bible Study for a year and after a year we transitioned from our weekly Bible Study into Sunday services. Our very first Sunday services were, what we called, "Preview Services." These services served a dual purpose. They were intended to be almost like practices services, but at the same time we wanted them to be a preview of who we were to all those who were interested.

Chapters Saturated with Gospel Centrality and Sufficiency

So in thinking about what we wanted to show others about ourselves in these preview services, Matthew and I decided that we would preach from the first couple chapters of 1 Corinthians. **These chapters are saturated with the centrality and the sufficiency of the Gospel. We could think of no better way to try to describe who we are as a church than through passages like these.**

Appropriate for Today as Well

With where we as a church stand today, with where I stand today, this is the call and the encouragement I would leave you with., I think it very appropriate to come back to this passage now and consider it's call once more.

Transition – Turn in Your Bibles

So again, I will invite you to turn in your copy of the Scriptures to 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, we will be there momentarily.

INTRODUCTION:

Let me introduce this passage with a quote I heard a while back,

“If two people think the same way about everything, one of them is unnecessary.”

This quote was used in the context of marriage and it was trying to speak to the value of diversity of thought. When I first heard it, I thought it was clever as it pointed out how differing perspectives in a marriage can be a strength and how these differing views keep life interesting.

The More I Thought, the Less I Liked It

The more I thought about this quote however, the more I struggled with it. While there are some elements of truth in it and while diversity of thought can be a strength, that is not always the case. This statement seemed to paint agreement as a boring thing. I started to think about this quote in relationship to God.

If total agreement between two people made one unnecessary,

- What would that say about **God the Father and Jesus**? Which one of them would become unnecessary? They are completely united and in harmony in all things.
- Would we classify **the relationships within the Trinity as boring** because of all that perfect unity?
- What about **my relationship with Jesus**, would it grow dull as I grew in unity and alignment with Jesus' way of thinking? As a Christian, that is my goal, right? I want to **think** like Jesus, I want to **see the world** like Jesus, I want to **talk** like Jesus, I want to **live** like Jesus, I want to **love** like Jesus. So would life have less joy if I walked down this path?
- **What of Heaven?** Heaven will be a place of perfect harmony and perfect unity of thought on life's most important issues. We will all be on the same page with the truth and meaning of life. Will Heaven be a boring place?
- **What of my marriage?** I can certainly testify to the fact that the sweetest moments of my marriage didn't arise from times when Rachel and I saw things differently. **No, the sweetest moments are when our hopes, our dreams, our plans were aligned and in unity.**

Balance: Yes, Diversity is Valuable

Now, let me pause and say, yes, I understand, different thoughts and perspectives can offer a great deal of value. Problem solving is easier when we have different approaches and angles being used to attack a situation. **Diversity of thought has great value in a number of settings and situations. However, there are some issues that diversity of thought is simply a cancer.**

This the case for Gospel issues. When it comes to the truth of the Gospel the happiest, the healthiest, the most joyful place to be is in unified acceptance and submission to these truths.

The Sweetness of Unity

We see in the Scriptures that unity around the Gospel, the truth of God, is not boring but rather it is sweet.

Psalm 133

[1] Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity [2] It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! [3] It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

As David writes this Psalm he is rejoicing in how precious and beautiful unity is. He brings up the anointing of Aaron with precious oil. The anointing oil used for priests in the OT was a special oil that was incredibly fragrant and enjoyable. **Just as this oil enveloped Aaron in a sweet-smelling fragrance, our unity will also bring the sweet joy of fellowship. Unity is also something that refreshes us just as the dew that falls on the mountain of Zion and runs down in life-giving streams.**

Confirmed in Life

The idea here is that unity is something that is sweet, wonderful, enjoyable and even refreshing. We see this in our life experiences as well. I am sure if we went around the room and asked for **the best memories you have with your spouse, kids, family and friends all those stories would carry the common theme of unity. The deeper the agreement the deeper the joy and power of those moments.**

Unity Threatened

This kind of unity is something that should characterize the church, yet it is often threatened. It is threatened by attacks on the Gospel, some subtle, some glaring. The church in Corinth was experience attacks on their unity. Paul gets reports on this and quickly writes to address it, which is what we start to see in our passage. Paul's heart is to see this church united, not just for unity's sake mind you, but united in Jesus for the joy of the people and the glory of Christ.

LET'S PRAY

With this set up in mind, let's pause and pray, asking God to use His Word in His way this morning, that we might be encouraged, challenged, and changed.

Opening Prayer

OUR TEXT

Let's read our passage...

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

[10] I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. [11] For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. [12] What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." [13] Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? [14] I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, [15] so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. [16] (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) [17] For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Isaiah 40:8

[8] The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Road Map

We can see Paul urging the Corinthian church to be unified. With our time we will...

Describe the disunity that was hurting this church

Look at how Paul seeks to build unity in within the Corinthian believers

Look at the theme Christian unity should carry

NATURE OF THE DISUNITY - Following Men and not Jesus (vs 10-12)

Paul describes the nature of the disunity the Corinthian church was facing in verses 10-12.

1 Corinthians 1:10-12

[10] I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. [11] For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. [12] What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."

The church was forming factions or groups based off their favorite church leader. **They were identifying with specific qualifications, talents, or characteristics their favorite leader had and elevating them.** As they elevated these leaders they began to form pride over who they were following. We still see this in Christianity today. It generally plays out in 2 ways today...

1. ELEVATING MEN

The first way this kind of pride plays out is through elevating men to places only God should occupy. For example, maybe you may pick up a book on spiritual growth and really benefit from it so you look for other books from this pastor/teacher. You also begin looking for their weekly sermons and get on their mailing list. You also find their website so you can follow when they will be in your area or keep up with their latest works.

Assessing Others by Your Teacher

And there is nothing wrong with any of this, however, we have to guard our hearts. We have to guard our hearts b/c we can easily find ourselves in a place where we begin to assess other teachings, not by the standard of God's Word, but by the standard of this idolized teacher. Rather than going to the Bible to search out what God has for you, you look to this teacher.

A Fertile Ground for Pride

This kind of fixation can often be a fertile ground for pride. If others don't follow Pastor So and So's take on this issue like you do then they just don't get it. They don't know God like you know God and pride digs in deeper in your heart. This is the kind of pride that quickly produces factions within a church.

This is where many of the Corinthians were, right? Some liked Paul's leadership, others liked Apollos', others liked Peter's. **Were these men teaching different Gospels? No, not at all.** The idolatrous hearts of the people elevated these men.

We Love Celebrities

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. We follow their ever move, and this inclination has invaded Christian culture here in America.** The world has their celebrities, and so do we. Technology has only compounded this problem by making it beyond easy to follow these men and women to make sure we don't miss anything they say or do. We can listen to all of their sermons or teachings online and social media gives us unprecedented access.

Could you even do such a thing in a church that has multiple elders, like we do here? You could.

The example of the Corinthians is still so very relevant for us and as we see the problems that they experience, we must watch our hearts as well, lest we fall into the same trap.

2. CYNICISM

There is another side to this coin that pride loves to hide under and cause division though, cynicism. Consider this, you may read a book or hear a sermon and really learn and grow from it. You will want to share this with someone else. When you do they reply very directly with their tone of voice, body language or even with their words that "I don't have a herd mentality like you seem to. I don't jump on bandwagons like you do." They have determined in their heart they are going to be unimpressed by others b/c they will figure out life and faith on their own. Others who rely on pastors or teachers are weak and don't have the same spiritual strength they do.

Proud Bookstore Clerk

I remember being a seminary student and going to the Christian used book store in town. It was a great store that had all kinds of old, used commentaries and books so when I had a few extra bucks I would go down and see what I could find. One time I came across a commentary series and author I was unfamiliar with. The commentary was on a book I was studying and it looked to be pretty good. Nevertheless I was hoping for someone's take on it so I asked the one of the clerks in the store. She promptly replied to me with much condescension in in voice that she didn't use commentaries, she simply read the Bible. She didn't need others telling her what the Bible said, she could read it herself.

Pride is the Root

As you can see, pride is at the core of this reaction. This pride not only denies oneself the blessing of benefiting from God's gifting in others, as we all play different roles in the body, but like all other forms of pride **if left unchecked it will also lead to divisions** and factions within the church.

Summary

Both of these forms of pride destroy unity in the church. They both lead to an elitism that puts others down for not agreeing with them, all the while they are both shortsighted. There is no room for this in the church. **While they look different, at the core they are the same. They are both fueled by the desire to be better than others** by getting what no one else can. Rather than having a heart for others and wanting to see all people grow into the image of Jesus, this pride is more interested in having people recognize, "I am right and others should grow into my image."

The Corinthian church found itself with the first kind of pride that we mentioned. They boasted in their favorite church leader and looked down on those who "did not get it and followed someone else."

Now that Paul has called out the issue, he goes to work in addressing it and reminding the Corinthians how they might rebuild unity within their body.

BUILDING UNITY (vs. 13-17)

Paul attacks the disunity and division that has arisen in the Corinthian church with the Gospel. The truth of the Gospel provides for us the source of our identity in Christ and in this truth we can find an unrivaled unity. Paul shares 4 Gospel truths that build unity in the body of Christ.

1. REFLECTING JESUS' UNITY: IS CHRIST DIVIDED? (VS 13A)

Paul opens by reminding the Corinthians that Jesus is one, He lives in perfect unity, and He has but one Gospel.

Is Jesus Divided?

In verse 13 Paul asks the question, "Is Christ divided?" Obviously the answer is "No, Christ is One!" Paul is trying to remind the Corinthians that the **division that is present amongst them is inconsistent with who they are in Christ.** Listen to Paul describe the body of Christ to the Corinthian church later in chapter 12...

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

[12] For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. [13] For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

One Jesus, One Gospel, One Church

Do you hear how Paul equates the unity of the body to the unity of Jesus? The Church is to reflect the unity of its Savior. We are to be one, just as Jesus is one. **And Jesus is one. He has one message, one Gospel, one mission. He doesn't speak out of both sides of His mouth.** He does all He does in passionate pursuit of the glory of God. His life, His actions, words, priorities, everything about Him, was unified around this mission. We are to reflect this unity with our own.

Reflecting Jesus' Glory

Through this reflection of Jesus' unity we are testifying to the truth of who Jesus is. Listen to Jesus' prayer from John 17...

John 17:23

That they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Do you hear the importance that Jesus places upon unity? Wow! Our unity matters. Jesus says that it is our unity, the way that we come together for a common purpose, over a common meaning, our unity, that will show the world that Jesus is the Son of God and that God the Father loves them.

Testifying with our Lives

Yes, we are called to testify to the Gospel with our words, but we are also called to testify to the truth of the Gospel through the way that we live together, through our unity. If we have factions and divisions, if we have infighting and gossip, if we form cliques and develop outsiders, we are telling the world that Jesus isn't who He says He is and God doesn't care much for them.

How Our Unity Glorifies Jesus

Now how does our unity communicate all of that? Here is how. Unity is something the world desires, but doesn't know how to attain. It can't attain it because everyone is running after something different. Not so with the church, however. We have encountered something so wonderful in the Gospel that we are willing to submit our lives to it, we are willing to conform ourselves to it, and that something is the

person of Jesus. **Thus, Jesus does what no one else can, He brings together a people from an incredibly diverse background, from all ethnicities, all nations, all socio-economic backgrounds, all vocations, all languages, and He makes us one. Who could do such a thing? Only God,** which is who Jesus is. And if God sent Jesus, His Son to come rescue us, then He must truly love us!

All of this is being communicated through our unity. This is powerful.

So Much Is On The Line

So ultimately, our unity is a living testimony to the truth of Jesus and His Gospel! So much is on the line. Hopefully as we see this we recognize how petty our divisions can be! When we allow things to cause division in the body we are actively hindering the spread of the Gospel. Again, we need to know what is on the line with our unity. This isn't just a matter of having a comfortable social setting when we gather together, there are Gospel implications.

2. REMEMBERING OUR ALLEGIANCE (VS 13B)

As we press on in our passage Paul continues to try to rebuild the unity that was eroding by reminding the Corinthians who their allegiance was to. He does this through 2 questions.

- Was Paul crucified for you?
- Were you baptized in Paul's name?

Let's consider these questions in order.

Was Paul Crucified for You?

Using himself as the example, Paul goes to work reminding the Corinthians that their allegiance wasn't to him, or Apollos, or Peter, as none of these men died for their sins. Even had they laid down their lives for folks, it would have been useless against their sin. Only Jesus was the spotless Lamb of God come to take away the sins of any and all who believed. Only Jesus was fit for this.

They are Great, But They Can't Save

Look, I get it, Paul was very accomplished. He is the greatest missionary the world has ever known, maybe the greatest evangelist. Apollos was an incredible orator. Peter was a man of stature as the pastor of the church in Jerusalem. **I get it, all of these men are talented, accomplished, and doing huge things in the name of Christ, BUT none of them can save you from your sins.** Jesus, and Jesus alone can do that. It was His work on the cross that purchased your freedom and forgiveness. Thus, why would we elevate these men to a place that only Jesus should be?

Boast in the Lord

This is why Paul tells us that if we are going to boast in anyone, it should be God. If you skip down to verse 31 Paul quotes Jeremiah 9,

1 Corinthians 1:31

[31] so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

They Needed a Savior Too

Another truth Paul reminds us of with this question is that no one is above the cross. **While we should always be thankful for the teachers that God has put in our lives we should also remember they are people who needed a Savior as well.** When Paul brings up the death of Jesus let's make sure we remember that Jesus died for Paul, Apollos, and Peter as well. So, if these men were so hopelessly lost on their own they needed Jesus to lay down His life for them, why would we exalt them? They need the same grace and forgiveness we all need. Paul brings up the cross b/c it is the great equalizer. No one is

above their need for Jesus' death on the cross, not even these esteemed teachers. So again, why boast in them?

Paul's point with this question is that our allegiance is to Jesus above all else, it was His work that brought us salvation.

Were You Baptized In Paul's Name? No, In Jesus' Name! (vs 13c-16)

Paul continues to make this point to help restore unity in the church of Corinth with yet another question, asking if people were baptized in his name.

A Question Fueled by Boasting

This question was likely fueled by boasting from people in Corinth as these various factions took pride in who performed their baptism, as if that added validity or power to their spiritual state.

What is Baptism About?

Paul responds to this kind of thinking in verses 14 and 15. **What he says in these verses is that it really doesn't matter who baptized you. What does matter is what he originally asked in verse 13. Whose name were you baptized in?** Remember baptism is a public profession of your faith. It is an opportunity to make a public declaration of the inward change that has come about as you repented of your sins and placed your faith in Jesus for new life. You associate yourself with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So who are you associated with in baptism? The one who baptized you, no! It's Jesus, the One who changed you!

Bragging Contradicts Baptism

When a teacher or a leader in the church begins to define you, you are contradicting the meaning of your baptism. Baptism is a statement that we have aligned ourselves to Jesus, He is who defines us, we are dying to self and living for Him. Thus bragging about the one who baptized you, rather than bragging about the One whom you were baptized into contradicts the very act and declaration of your baptism. Remember your baptism and remember who your allegiance is to.

3. REMEMBERING THE POWER UNTO SALVATION (VS. 17)

The third argument that Paul makes in seeking to restore unity in the Corinthian church is to remind people of the power of salvation. We see this in verse 17...

1 Corinthians 1:17

[17] For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Don't Distract from the Cross

Paul is saying that those who teach/preach the Gospel should be careful to not attract so much attention to themselves that they distract from the cross or the Gospel. This statement was probably taking aim at the group who followed Apollos. Apollos was a very gifted speaker, which was a very valued skill in that day and age. We see this in Acts 18.

Acts 18:24

[24] Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures.

Drawn to the Skill, not the Savior

That passage goes on to say that Apollos spoke powerfully and boldly. **The issue here is that many were likely drawn, not to the Gospel of Jesus, but to the powerful oratory skills of Apollos.** Now, there is nothing wrong with powerful oratory skills, there is nothing wrong with the use of humor or being entertaining when teaching God's Word, I do it every other week, am I right? Joking, joking.

What Would Be Wrong

- What would be wrong would be a teacher being **more concerned with entertaining than proclaiming the Word of God.**
- What would be wrong would be a teacher being more concerned with **what people thought of him and his presentation than what they thought of Jesus** and His Gospel.
- What would be wrong would be **listeners coming and looking for someone to entertain them rather than someone to teach them from the Word of God** and exalt the glories of Jesus.

A Real Problem in American Christianity

Brothers and Sisters, this is a real problem in American Christianity. We are a nation obsessed with entertainment and so many of our churches have begun to cater to this. **The thought that many pastors have is that if they can't make the Word of God entertaining then they won't be able to bring people into the church.** This church growth methodology is known as being "seeker sensitive." The idea is to build your service with the outside world in mind and construct it in such a way that it is attractive and the world wants to come in to be a part of it.

There are No "Seekers"

Here is the major flaw in that line of thinking, no one seeks after God. "Seeker-sensitive" churches are churches built for audiences that don't exist. Listen to what Paul writes in Romans 3...

Romans 3:10-12

[10] as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; [11] no one understands; no one seeks for God. [12] All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

God Does the Seeking

No one seeks after God. As we learned back from John 6, it is God who does the seeking.

John 6:44

[44] No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

In Conjunction with the Proclamation of the Gospel

No one comes, unless God first draws. It is God who takes the first step in salvation, it is God who seeks. And God does this work in conjunction with the proclamation of the Gospel.

Romans 10:13-15

[13] For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." [14] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

The Power of God unto Salvation

So you see, it is the Gospel that is the power of God unto salvation.

Romans 1:16

[16] For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Paul's Concern: Following the Wrong Man

Paul's concern with these divided Corinthians was that many were not following Jesus, but rather they were following a man of inspiration, Apollos, a man who skillfully spoke. This is why Paul goes on to say that he didn't come with eloquent words of wisdom. Paul was no slouch himself. He was an educated man who was brilliant. Could he have wowed people with his teaching, yes! Paul, however, made the conscious choice to dial it back when he spoke. He didn't want people impressed with him. He wanted people impressed with Jesus.

Draw with = Save to

I've heard it said before, **that what you draw people with is what you draw them to.** This is full of wisdom. If you use gimmicks and flash to draw people into church you have not drawn people to Jesus, you have drawn people to gimmicks and flash. People who are drawn to gimmicks and flash will often come back for more gimmicks and flash.

Factions Grew Along Preference Line

This is where division was occurring. As people's opinions and preferences varied so did the faction they followed.

- Some were drawn the flash of Apollos' public speaking skills.
- Others were drawn to the flash of Paul's missionary resume.
- Others were drawn to the status Peter carried with him.

None of those things are bad in and of themselves, but **they are bad saviors.**

Jesus is Better, Unite in Him

Paul's goal in visiting this issue is to close division and build unity by reminding people that **skill and talent is good and fine, but**

- it is the Jesus that saves
- it is the Jesus that should "wow" us
- it is the Jesus that brings real and lasting hope
- it is the Jesus that can satisfy the longing of our hearts

And this is what we should unite over. We can all carry different preferences over teaching and leadership styles, but those are secondary issues. The primary issue is Jesus and His Gospel, it is what saves, it is what we will unite over.

4. GIVING GLORY TO WHOM GLORY IS DUE (1 Cor 3:4-7)

Paul picks up this issue in 1 Corinthians 3, turn over there with me. Paul gives us one more uniting truth to consider.

1 Corinthians 3:4-7

[4] For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human? [5] What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the

Lord assigned to each. [6] I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. [7] So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

Assigned

Do you see what Paul says in verse 5? Yes, Paul and Apollos came and shared the Gospel with the Corinthians and many believed, but God was behind it all. He was the one who sent Paul and Apollos. This was no accident. Verse 5 says God assigned this to happen the way it did. **Paul, Apollos, Peter, they are all tools God uses, but God is the Author, He is the Architect, He is the One who sought you!**

God Gave the Increase

In verses 6 and 7 Paul says that he and Apollos both were faithful to share the Gospel, but it was God who gave the growth. **Salvation is a supernatural work that can only come from God.** Remember what we read in John 6? No one comes to God unless God first draws them. Salvation is His work. **The decisive work in salvation is God's work.**

These verses make it abundantly clear that Paul and Apollos were faithful to the calling God has given them, but it is God who is ultimately responsible for your salvation, not these teachers. **Thus, God gets the glory b/c He is sovereignly working in the hearts of sinners! He is the one who is worthy of our adoration and loyalty.** We are His children and thus we should love the brothers and sisters He has given us.

UNITED IN JESUS – CONCLUSION

Jesus is the Theme

Throughout this passage Paul has been working to build unity in the Corinthian church. Not just any unity though, not just unity for unity's sake. No, there is a theme to the unity that Paul wants to build, I hope you picked up on it. **The theme Paul drove home was the supremacy and the worthiness of Jesus.**

- It is Jesus' unity that we are to reflect through our own unity with one another.
- It is Jesus who purchased our salvation through His sacrificial death.
- It is Jesus' name we have been baptized into.
- It is Jesus' Gospel that is the power unto salvation, not our cleverness or schemes.
- It is Jesus' glory we are to live for, knowing our salvation is all His work.

Therefore, it is Jesus that we should unite over, it is Jesus that we should rally around.

Southern Hills wants Unity in the Gospel

So you might be asking yourself, "Why this message?" **This is the passage we opened Southern Hills with almost 6 years ago, and its the passage I leave you with now, as I believe it informs us of who Southern Hills set out to be and who 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.**

A People Founded on Jesus

Today, Southern Hills is making some transitions in some of its leadership, but not in its ultimate leadership. **Southern Hills was never founded on Matthew or I, it was founded on the saving grace and the supremacy of Jesus Christ. He remains unchanged. He remains forever worthy. He remains the Great Shepherd of this church. It was He who died for you. It was His name in**

which you were baptized. It is His Gospel that saves. It is His glory you live for. Southern Hills, continue to follow Him and be united in Him.

God will use many people in your spiritual growth, but know that they are His tools, for His working, and that He might be given all the glory for the great things He hath done.

May we be able to utter the words of Paul in Philippians 3 in unified voice...

Philippians 3:7-8

[7] But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

Let's Pray