

# FINDING UNITY IN DIVIDED TIMES

## 1 CORINTHIANS 3 - 4 (ESV)

- I. The unity that Christ intends for local churches is less about \_\_\_\_\_, busyness, and \_\_\_\_\_ -- and more about getting things \_\_\_\_\_ for the Kingdom.
  - A. The devil loves it when Christians get distracted by..
    - 1. Bad things that lead to \_\_\_\_\_ or schism and
    - 2. \_\_\_\_\_ things that lead to no redemptive action.
  - B. The unity that Jesus calls us to is an active unity: the leaders and members of the church together spreading the message and effects of the Gospel.
- II. To have unity in our church, we need humility about our own minds, beliefs, and perspective.
  - A. Doubt your own objectivity. You can deceive yourself – others can deceive you – you can be wrong!
  - B. We tend to think of ourselves as wiser and more foolproof than we realize. We need to be humble in our own self-estimation.

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Philippians 2:3 (ESV)*

- III. To have unity in our church, we need to be individually living out the humiliation of Christ.
  - A. Thinking like the world – \_\_\_\_\_ people based upon their “wisdom” is foolish.

B. Meanwhile, to live according to God's wisdom will make you look like a fool to the world, because it'll land you on a cross.

*Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Philippians 2:4-8 (ESV)

C. The \_\_\_\_\_ Christian is the one who willingly lays down *their* own life for *their* neighbors – they \_\_\_\_\_ it all for *their* neighbor's redemption, sanctification, and holiness. (cf. 1 Cor. 1:30-31)

IV. To have unity in our church, we need to humble ourselves when we are tempted to celebrate and associate with people, leaders, and organizations that threaten to divide us.

A. When we are tempted to celebrate anything or associate with any people, leaders, or organizations that are not Jesus, we need to be real careful.

B. As Christians, we do draw lines in the sand on moral and social issues that are addressed in Scripture.

V. To have unity in our church, we need to humble ourselves and remember who owns what and whom.

A. In eternity, followers of Christ will rule unilaterally over God's Kingdom on earth.

B. Paul's real question is this: what are you allowing to define you – the things that will own you one day, or the one who owns you forever?

VI. To have unity in our church, we must be constantly boasting in the One who has given us everything.

*Thus says Yahweh, "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am Yahweh who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight, declares Yahweh." Jeremiah 9:23-24 (ESV), cited in 1 Cor. 1:31 and 2 Cor. 10:17*

A. As we humble ourselves, we exalt Jesus through

1. The message of the Gospel: Christ and him crucified / 2:2.
2. The effects of the Gospel: Christ's reign brought to bear on us (1:30-31) and the earth (4:18-20).