

19 January

 Break the ice

Write down what God is saying to you in today's message:

TOPIC: 1 Corinthians – week 3

 Let's hear your story

1. Tell of a time when you had to explain to a friend or family member the importance of church unity?
2. What was Paul's appeal in v.10? (**I appeal to you brothers by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you agree and there be no divisions among you.**)
3. What did Paul mean in v.12? (**What I mean is that each one of you says, I follow Apollos, or I follow Paul, or I follow Cephas, or I follow Christ.**)
4. What questions did Paul ask in v.13? (**Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?**)

 Let's go deeper

5. Who did Paul baptize according to v.14? (**I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius.**)
6. Who else did Paul baptize in v.16? (**The household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.**)
7. What did Christ send Paul to do in v.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.**)
8. What was Paul's answer to the division in the Corinthian church? (**Keep Jesus Christ at the centre, by preaching the gospel.**)

 Let's apply this

**9. 1 Corinthians 1:17;** 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.

The best way to have unity is to continually preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The church's main priority is to preach the Gospel.

- Share your testimony of how you heard the gospel for the first time?
- Do you find it difficult to share the gospel with unbelievers?
- Ask the Holy Spirit to give you power to share the gospel message.

SUMMARY:

**1 Corinthians:** Week 3 – Unity in Jesus

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 1:10 – 17

**vv.10 – 13a; Is Christ divided?** This means, “has Christ been divided into different parts?” No. Paul did not preach a different Christ, than Apollos, or Peter. There is only One Saviour and one gospel. How did the Corinthians create this four-way division, why were there quarrels among them? One, they looked at the gospel from a cultural point of view and was influenced by the wisdom of the teachers, philosophers of their day. Secondly, human nature enjoys following human leaders. Instead of emphasizing the message of the Word, the Corinthians emphasized the messenger, they took their eyes off the Lord, and on to the Lord's servants.

To emphasize the unity of the saints in Christ, Paul called them brothers, reminding them they belong to one family. The words perfectly united or joined together is a medical term that describes the unity of the human body knit together. Believers were also identified by the name of Jesus Christ, reference to their baptism in Christ

**vv.13b – 17; Were you baptized into the name of Paul?** Paul did some of the baptizing; but that was not his main ministry. In this section, Paul was not against baptism, but was putting it into its proper perspective, because the Corinthians were making too much of it. It doesn't matter who baptized you, because baptism identifies you with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's about Jesus, not the person who baptized you.

**v.17; Was Paul crucified for you?** This speaks of salvation. Paul says, I did not die on a cross for your sins, don't make me the focus of attention. Paul says, I was pointing everybody to Jesus, but now all you are talking about me. I didn't change your life. I pointed you to Jesus. Jesus changed your life. The point is that the leader is not the most important person in the church, Jesus is.

Paul is not against baptism, but that's not his main priority. Our main priority is to preach the Gospel. The best way to have unity is that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is continually preached. Unity is around Jesus. It's not around the church or morality or a cause. When Jesus is the centre of the church, people unite around Him, and mature because they realize it's about Jesus not about them.

**Practical examples to preach the gospel:**

**ABC's of the Gospel** – Admit you are a sinner; Believe Jesus Christ is Lord, Call upon His name. **G.O.S.P.E.L** – God, Our, Sin, Payment, Everyone, Life.

**Romans road** – Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9, 10:13. **One verse gospel** – Rom. 6:23.

Paul approached the problem of division in the church by pointing to the unity of Christ: there is one Savior and one body. Then he reminded them of their baptism, a picture of their spiritual baptism into Christ's body. Then he took them to the cross.