

“Is Christ Divided?”

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“Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor 1:13)

Read 1 Cor 1:10-17

There are many profound and penetrating statements made through the revelation of God. One of the most penetrating in today’s individualized, autonomous culture is the question, “Is Christ divided?” Well . . . is He? We have so successfully celebrated individualism that personal wants have become immutable rights. Our culture lacks any sense of community. People wish to come to church without having any contact with or commitment to the “community of Christ.” We slide in and out without interaction or obligation, yet what is the body of Christ?

Paul makes his appeal for unity “by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 10). **It is because of whom He is that we have become what we are.**

“At what cost must unity be maintained?” Perhaps the most penetrating question is, “At what cost was unity secured?” Paul’s appeal is that we all agree and that there be no divisions among us (v. 10). He desires that quarreling cease (v. 11). It would appear from what is said that many were beginning to follow individual leaders at the expense of following Christ (vv. 12-16). Paul shows how ludicrous such thinking is and how divisive it can become.

Division happens when people put their own personal preferences and positions over the collective needs of the body. How many people do you know who are unique with idiosyncrasies that would drive any “sane” person over the edge? How many people have personal quirks that might make them socially unacceptable or perhaps excluded from your own social clique? Yet none of these “things” should ever divide the body of Christ.

Even in 1 Cor 5 where the apostle speaks of having to put an individual out from the fellowship of the body, the issue is one of moral failure and a non-repentant spirit.

Everyone wishes to divide through identification. What identifies us as a fellowship? We are first and foremost Christians. The issue is, “What think ye of Christ?” I might not be able to have a working relationship with another individual because we are both working from a finite and fallen (though redeemed) position. However, that individual, if they know the person of Christ for the saving of their immortal soul, is a part of the same body and I have no reason to be separated from him.

Let the body of Christ rise up as one. Let us cease our striving against each other and let us celebrate who He is and what we now are in Him. We are the body of Christ. Grace is what unites us. Disagreement, division, disunity, and debating are the results of “un-grace.”

When all is said and done and the dust settles about us, we will find that our own worst enemy was to be our very best friend. Perhaps one of the most heartbreaking elements of

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vocational ministry has been to find those who are my brothers have, in some twisted way, become my greatest opponents. It is not the world, the flesh, and the devil, but the body of Christ . . . my brothers and sisters in Christ . . . who have often been my attackers. I will not raise my hand or my voice in opposition to him who is my brother. This does not mean I will agree doctrinally with everyone in the body of Christ, but it does mean there is something bigger than you and me and it is Christ.

As people are added to our fellowship, let us make sure that they encounter a love without condition, an acceptance without requirement, and a forgiveness that is without limit. I am not asking for the impossible . . . I am asking for grace. And I believe when it is all said and done, we will in the midst of such a ministry find that it was all about Him anyway.