

Being the Church in an Unbelieving World

TAKING SIDES

INTRO – Good morning. Grace and peace!

Corinth, wicked, unbelieving culture; miracle of the church, sanctified, rich in God's Word and wisdom, gifted, awaiting glorious coming again of Christ

1 Corinthians 1:10–17 NKJV

10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of 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 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

1 Corinthians 1:10–17 (NKJV)

¹⁰ **Now I plead** with you, **brethren, by the name** of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all **speak the same thing**, and that there be **no divisions** among you, but that you be **perfectly joined together** in the **same mind** and in the **same judgment**.

Paul pleads for the divisions and strife to end because Jesus said in John 17 that the essential character of a church is unity,

- **Caused by people being one with Christ, and therefore one with each other.**
- **Resulting in believers loving one another.**
- **For the sake of people believing the gospel.**

Listen again to Jesus in John 17.

John 17:20–23 NKJV

20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Back to “Paul pleads ...”

Practiced by staff – consensus, unanimity

To be practiced by whole church – congregational, after decision made – joined together, same mind, same judgment

11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are **contentions** among you.

12 Now I say this, that each of you says, **“I am of Paul,”** or **“I am of Apollos,”** or **“I am of Cephas,”** or **“I am of Christ.”**

When we take sides,

- We are **disobedient** to the Word of God and the command of Christ.
- We **diminish** our love for brothers or sisters on the other side.
- We **damage** the **church** of Jesus Christ.
- We **dilute** the effectiveness of the proclamation of the **gospel**.

13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Christ is not divided, so we should never be divided into factions.

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.

16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

Paul is saying, "I am glad I left most of the baptizing to others so that who I did or did not personally baptize could not be fuel for the fires of strife in the church and remove the priority of the proclamation of the gospel.

I am no Paul, but I am your pastor. I plead with you, St. Andrew Baptist Church,

For the sake of Christ, for the sake of the gospel, for the sake of the lost, we in St. Andrew Baptist Church must be one with each other, as Christ and the Father are One.