

Be United in the Same Mind

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Date: 16 June 2024

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[0 : 00] And turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians chapter 1.

And we'll be reading verses 10 through 17. This will be from the ESV.

1 Corinthians 1. Verses 10 to 17. 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.

For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. 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. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?

[1 : 11] Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name.

I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. 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.

May God teach us from His Word. Well, good evening. I had a blessed time with the body of believers down in Warsaw, but really glad to be back here now tonight with you all.

So, thanking the Lord for this evening. Well, we return now to 1 Corinthians. Sometimes when you miss a Sunday morning, it feels like I've been gone for a while. I feel a little bit of that with 1 Corinthians.

It feels like we've been gone for a little while. I did a little calculating. It's been about a month. So, maybe a little bit of review of where we've been in 1 Corinthians. We looked at the first nine verses a while back, and we saw that they serve as the introduction to this book, to this letter.

[2 : 32] We saw that Paul wrote it, that he wrote it alongside this brother, Sosthenes, who likely was very much known in this church, the Corinthian church. Those to whom Paul was writing.

It was a city that Paul was very familiar with. He had lived there. He had ministered there for 18 months. And so, there was much that Paul had to say to this church that he had planted.

First, we saw that he gave thanks. Before he addressed anything else, he gave thanks to God for the grace that God had given to this church. He thanked God that God had called these believers to himself, that he had called them alongside all those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, a people who were called to be saints, called into the fellowship of the Son.

And this people who were called, he also gave his grace to. He gifted them with Christian graces. He gifted them with spiritual gifts.

He enriched them in Christ in every way. And Paul is certain that God will sustain them to the end. So, it's this wonderful introduction to this letter that should also serve as an encouragement to us.

[3 : 52] The Corinthians were called to be saints together with those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you called on the name of Christ? Have you called in faith upon him, cried out to him, the Son of God, that he might show mercy to you, that he might forgive you of your sins?

Then if you have, this letter is for you as well. For us who are also called by God's grace, enriched in Christ in every way. And God who is faithful in sustaining the Corinthians, he's faithful to sustain us as well, to the very end, until Christ returns or until we go to be with him in glory.

So this evening, we move from Paul giving thanks to Paul addressing a problem. The first of many problems that he will address in this church.

Some of the problems, the church actually, we have reason to believe, brought them to his attention. But this first one we're going to see was brought to his attention by others.

So this letter, the first problem in it, we see centers on Christian unity, or you could say the lack of that unity. There are divisions in the church.

[5 : 07] The church is splintering, and we're going to see that this theme of division, it's going to pop up a few times in the letter. We see it here in chapter one. We're going to see it again real soon in chapter three.

Our headings there, uninspired. Not the word of God. Helpful, though, for us to see the summary of what's in the section. We see in chapter one, at least in my Bible, it says divisions in the church. And then in chapter three, our translators, as they're writing these headings, weren't very creative, because they wrote again, divisions in the church. So we'll see it very soon, yet again. So here is the big idea, what Paul is communicating to us in this text tonight, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Our unity centers on the one who is central to our faith. Our unity centers on the one who is central to our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we can break down this idea into three very simple basic headings. And the first one is this, the appeal. The appeal. And we see that in verse 10.

[6 : 15] Let's read verse 10 yet again. 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.

So this is an appeal to unity. But before Paul even gets into the heart of the appeal, he's already going to sprinkle it with some unifying language.

How does he do that? What does he call these believers? Brothers. He appeals first to their relationship, to one another, and also even to him, because he says not just brothers, but in verse 11 he says, my brothers, because they're also a part of the family of God with him.

So he is appealing to them as members of God's family, members of the same household. And Paul appeals very directly to that relationship. Those of us as parents with small children in the home, this is a strategy that we will often use to resolve conflict.

We'll say things like, that's your brother, or that's your sister. And what do we mean by that? Well, you love your brothers. You love your sisters.

[7 : 32] You remember who this person is in relationship to you. You're in conflict, behaving like you're strangers, or perhaps worse, behaving like you're enemies. And so we're saying, no, remember who you are.

You share the dinner table together. Maybe you share a room together. Maybe like in our household, we've got a couple boys who share a bed together. You have the same family. You have the same DNA, or something of the same DNA. You share DNA. That's something of Paul's appeal here. You share a spiritual family.

Paul is saying, you're closer than biological brothers. You're brothers in Christ. You're brothers who are brought together by the blood of Christ. So do we remember that about each other?

Do we think of each other in those ways? Siblings in God's household, brought under the same roof, spiritually speaking, you could say.

[8 : 30] Sharing the same table. Beloved by the same Heavenly Father. And so our unity with one another, it's an expression, not just of our love for each other, but of our love for our Father.

We love Him. We want to please Him. And so we seek to live peaceably, even with one another. So Paul appeals to us as well, who are in Christ. And he appeals to us.

He appeals to the Corinthians as brothers. And then we also see this. We also see he appeals by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Or perhaps your translation says, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul had some serious leverage here. Paul is an apostle.

And so he could have pointed to his apostleship. But he doesn't pull that card. He doesn't play that card. He didn't say, I appeal to you as an apostle. Though he could have.

[9 : 28] Because that would have undercut his very appeal that he's making here. He wanted this church to be united, ultimately, around Christ, under Christ's authority.

Not one of the apostles' authority. That would have undercut his appeal. It would have added fuel to the fire of some of these people. Because as we're going to see, they are appealing to these different leaders that they follow.

So can't you just imagine the Paul people hearing Paul's words saying, Aha! See? All of you Peter people were right. We listened to Paul. You should listen to Paul also.

So Paul's already going after that kind of an argument. He's trying to avoid misunderstanding. And so in essence, what he says is, I appeal to you on the basis of Christ's authority.

Not my own. It's much like 2 Thessalonians 3.6. Listen to how Paul says this. Now we command you. So he's giving a command here.

[10:30] He's not mincing words. We command you, brothers. Just like 1 Corinthians. Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul says to us here, My words only carry weight because his name stands behind them. I've been called to this office as an apostle, but I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ.

I answer to him. I speak only with the authority that he has given me. So Paul appeals to us as brothers. He appeals to us on the basis of Christ's authority.

And now we see the essence of the appeal. It's an appeal to unity. And Paul describes this unity using three different but parallel phrases.

We see that in verse 10. Paul is saying three things from two different perspectives.

[11:36] He's giving the positive angle and he's also giving the negative angle. We see the positive that we're to agree. We see the positive that we're to be of the same mind, the same judgment, the same thinking.

But then the same idea but said negatively. there's to be no division. The word there for division is getting at the idea of tearing or rending apart.

You think about the way that people were disagreeing about the identity of Jesus. Happens a lot in the gospel according to John. This word is often used to describe that.

Listen to these words here from John chapter 7. Some of the people thought this really is the prophet. And then others said this is the Christ. But some said is the Christ to come from Galilee?

And then John 7 says so there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him but no one laid a hand on him.

[12:36] So from that division what do we see happen? Nothing. There was ineffectiveness. There was immobility. The people failed to take action.

We're glad that is the case there according to God's sovereign plan. But now we see the harm that brings that kind of inactivity. We see that in the body of Christ the negative consequences.

All kinds of consequences can come from rifts in the body. They do great damage to the body. And one way in which they do damage is that we become ineffective if we are divided.

Instead of striving together for the sake of the gospel we are striving against each other for perhaps our own interests. How the devil loves to see this kind of divisive spirit among Christians.

How he loves to see us ineffective. Taking our attention off of God's kingdom desiring to see God's kingdom advanced and instead focusing our attention on rivalries and self-promotion.

[13:44] seeing my agenda become the mission instead of God's mission that he's given to the church to go and to make and baptize and teach disciples.

The great commission. My agenda in place of his. Well that's what we see the confusion the chaos that division brings. We see that at work here in the Corinthian church.

Well now let's turn from the appeal to the problem our second heading. The appeal now let's look at the problem. Beginning in verse 11.

For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you my brothers. 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.

Now Paul didn't witness this problem firsthand. He wasn't there to see the divisions but he had received this report from Chloe's people. We don't know anything else about Chloe's people.

[14:55] Not mentioned anywhere else in scripture. But they clearly were trustworthy people because Paul believes their report and it's so important to him that he then takes their report and he now brings it up in his letter.

There was a lack of unity in the church. Instead of agreement, instead of one mind, we see division. Now sometimes the Bible calls for division especially when it comes to doctrine, when it comes to the truth.

There is a place for disagreement. There is a place for division on matters of doctrine especially doctrines of what we might call first importance. Jude speaks of contending for the faith.

Think about what Paul says throughout his letter to the Galatians but especially in chapter 1 verse 9. As we have said before so now I say again if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the

one you received let him be accursed.

So there is a place for what we might call righteous disagreement. For standing for truth even when it might bring division. But that's not what we find here. We don't see Paul calling for division.

[16:07] We see him calling for unity. So the question is is Paul going soft here? Is Paul becoming wishy-washy? Is Paul saying come on everyone just get along because it's nice to get along.

Be agreeable because it's nice to be agreeable. No that's not it at all. There's good reason that Paul is calling for unity here. Because all of this division is wrapped up not in contending for the truth. What are the people here contending for? Social standing. Influence. They want to have a higher place than others. So we see here that there is no righteous stand being made by anyone.

They were jockeying for position. They were trying to boost their position in the church and they were all guilty of it. So Paul is showing us pervasive problem.

Think about Philippians chapter 4. You had a couple individuals who Paul calls to be reconciled. That's not what happens here. This isn't just one person and another. This is one group and two groups, three groups, four groups.

[17:12] This seems to be the whole church is kind of forming these cliques. Now there's nothing to suggest that the cliques that were forming around these certain well-known leaders were being encouraged by those leaders.

It's not as though Peter was saying, yeah, I want to pit myself against Apollos and if you're with me then you need to come and join my group and leave Apollos to his followers.

There's nothing that we see here to suggest that. In fact, consider Paul himself. He was told that it was happening. He wasn't encouraging it. He wasn't even aware of it.

It was something that was reported to him but it's centered around him and it's centered around these other leaders. These groups were making a point of saying, I follow this leader or I follow this leader or I follow that leader.

Now a more wooden translation. Just by wooden all that that means is it's not smooth, it's more clunky but it's a little bit closer to how it was originally written by Paul. A wooden translation would simply be I am of Paul or I am of Cephas or I am of Apollos.

[18:26] It's simply the idea of I'm with him. There's this competitive dynamic at play. I for one am a Paul person and then another might say, well I for my part am one of Cephas or Peter's people.

And so each group is associating itself with a church leader and what they're doing is they're pitting themselves against others and they're saying, you're inferior to us. Now these leaders, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, also called Peter, they would have been well-known figures.

Paul, as we've already seen, was instrumental in the establishment of the church in Corinth so he would be well-known. He would be very highly respected among the church.

Some in the church were even converted perhaps during his ministry there. So they would have looked to Paul. They would have looked up to Paul. They would have admired him and sought to imitate him.

Apollos was also very well-known. Acts chapter 19, verse 1, tells us that Apollos was at Corinth. So we know he visited the church. And we also know that the Lord used him in instrumental ways in the church because in chapter 3, what does Paul say?

[19:39] I planted, Apollos watered. God brought the growth. So Apollos was used in the church. Now Peter, we know less of his connection to Corinth.

We don't have anywhere in the scriptures that tell us explicitly that he had been to that church. But we know that he was a well-known figure in the early church, that his influence would have likely reached this church.

And that's the key to all of these different leaders that others are following. The key is influence.

What we see here is that the Corinthians, they were defaulting back to their old way of living.

Social standing was everything in the Greco-Roman world of their time. And so it was all about who you were associated with. Your standing in society was wrapped up in other people who were considered superior to you.

So who you followed said something about your own status. So this wasn't a humility on their part to say I'm following someone. There was an arrogance here to say so do you see my status?

[20:53] Do you see that I follow this person? So think how highly you should view me because of my association with them. So they were looking to these ordinary though godly men and saying I follow him.

And we can get caught up in this kind of thinking as well. Can't we? We can become overly enamored with people and with their influence. There are pastors and teachers and authors that I highly respect.

That I'm sure many of us highly respect. People well versed in the scriptures. Godly lives that they've lived. People like Paul and Peter and Apollos.

And yet the problem is that we can begin to look to them first and foremost instead of looking to the Lord. We can look to the members of the body and we can fail to look to the head.

Now of course there is a healthy sense in which we should look to godly examples. Paul later in this letter is going to say follow my example.

[22 : 03] That sounds a lot like follow me. That sounds a lot like you would then say I follow Paul. But what are the next words that Paul says? Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.

So look to me but don't stop by looking to me. Look to me only in so far as I then look to Christ. That's the example that Paul gives us.

That's the model that we ought to follow. But the church in Corinth wasn't following that. These factions they were putting this undue emphasis on the godly leaders and they were stopping full stop at the godly leaders whether it be Paul or Apollos or Peter.

Except for the last group. The last group we see said something different. The last group said I follow Christ. That's what we're supposed to be doing right?

Following Christ. But it seems that they were saying this with the same spirit, the same heart attitude as the other groups.

[23 : 14] We see that Paul lumps them all together. Paul doesn't say to us now three of you groups, you're getting it wrong, you need to be more like the I follow Christ group. No, he gives them just straight in a line to us.

Just one, two, three, four. And that fourth group, that fourth group had the same one-upmanship at work, the same sense of superiority at work, the same sense of smugness at work, something almost akin to virtue signaling in our day.

I'm saying the right thing. You're saying the wrong thing, I'm kind of glad you're saying the wrong thing, because it makes me look good. Kids, think about when your parents ask you to clean up.

Let's say that you've made a mess, which I know is rare, but let's say that you made a mess, and your parents say, all right, I want all of you with your siblings to all go clean up this mess, and you go to clean it up, or maybe you're with friends, and your friend is supposed to clean up as well, and you start cleaning up, but your brother or sister doesn't, and you're kind of glad for that, because you're thinking, mom and dad are going to be really pleased with me.

They're going to be pleased with my obedience, but I'm kind of glad that my siblings are really failing. In fact, they're playing right now, which is probably rare, right, that they would play instead of clean up.

[24 : 36] They're playing right now, and I want to keep it that way. Instead of saying, hey, we should clean up together, help me out, help me clean this, because you want them to obey with you, you like that they are disobeying, because you know that it will make you look better.

That's what's going on with this group who says, I follow Christ. Their goal wasn't Christian unity. Their goal was a sense of worldly competition.

They weren't thinking, come on, everyone, we all follow Christ, so we need to follow Christ together.

They were thinking, you follow those other men, you can keep doing that. We follow Christ.

We're going to get the gold star. We're going to get the first place ribbon. So there's a sense in which this group was rejoicing in the wrongdoing of others. So what's the solution?

That's what we want to consider now. We've seen the problem of divisive quarreling. We've seen the appeal to unity. But a general appeal to unity is not enough to produce unity.

[25 : 44] Don't we see that all around the world today? Fruitless efforts to unity and yet that unity is not produced. We hear calls to be at peace with one another, calls to love one another.

We talk about things like being kind to one another and yet it's all rather vague and general and that unity isn't achieved. In fact, there's lots of conflict in its place.

So why is that? In part because a general appeal to unity doesn't produce unity. unity is achieved when there's something or someone that we unite around.

Now that can be for good, righteous purposes. It can also be for evil, disobedient to God purposes. Think of the Tower of Babel. They were very united because they had a very common purpose to

do something that was against God's ways, to gather together rather than to spread.

So now we're going to see Paul appeal to unity but then go to now the focus. What is the focus of our unity? Who is the one that we are united around?

[26 : 55] So we've seen the problem, we've seen the appeal, now we see the solution. We see the solution beginning in verse 13. Is Christ divided?

Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. So Paul gives us the solution in the form of three questions.

And they're rhetorical questions because the answer should be clearly obvious. So let's look at these questions. Question number one, is Christ divided?

And the resounding answer is no. But then it's as though Paul is whispering, so why do you live like he is? Why do you live as though the body can be divided?

[27 : 57] And we're going to get into this a lot more later in the letter, but this is kind of a foretaste of chapter 12. Think about how Paul talks about Christ and his body in chapter 12.

Think about the unity that he speaks of even in the midst of great diversity within the body. A diversity of functions and abilities and yet one body. And so he says in chapter 12, verse 20, as it is there are many parts yet one body.

Or Romans 12 echoes the same thought. For as in one body we have many members and the members do not all have the same function. So we though many are one body in Christ and individually members one of another.

Do you hear that at the end of that verse in chapter 12 of Romans? We're members individually one of another. So imagine almost this mental picture of Christ is at the center and we all should have a tie-in to Christ around him.

We all should tie into him but also there should be a tie around each of us to each other. Members individually one of another. So there's unity among us as Christ is central to our faith.

[29 : 16] So is there diversity within the body? Yes. Is there division of the body? No. Who designed it that way?

God. 1 Corinthians 12 verse 18. But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose. So God designs and God assigns.

So it's true that there are many members, there's many parts, but one body. No division of the body. No competing interests within the body.

No vying for influence and power and control over the body. All of these parts work only as they work with one another, not against one another.

That's why Paul says in chapter 12, beginning in verse 15, if the foot should say, because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body.

[30 : 18] And if the ear should say, because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body would be an eye, where would be the sense of hearing?

If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? And so this extended metaphor is addressing the divisive spirit within the Corinthian church.

And it's a spirit that can fester in our own hearts, puffing ourselves up, comparing ourselves to our spiritual siblings, competing against a brother, instead of cooperating with him for the good of the body and for the glory of the head.

And that brings us to one more thing we should mention about this first question. It's an assumption that Paul makes. When Paul asks, is Christ divided? He assumes the body belongs to Christ. It's his body. He's the head of his body. Not Paul, not Apollos, not Peter, and not any beloved, wise, learned men of our day either.

[31 : 24] It's Christ's body. And there's no division of his one body. So don't live as though there is. That's question number one.

Let's look at question number two. Was Paul crucified for you? That strikes at the very heart of the gospel. It's the very message that Paul came preaching to the Corinthians.

We'll see it in chapter two. He says, I decided to know nothing among you except Paul, and him crucified. No. Except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Paul came preaching that message. And perhaps that's where the Corinthians are getting this a little bit mixed up. They're substituting the one who preached the gospel about Christ for Christ himself.

They are treating Paul as though he were the one who was crucified for him. Though they would know theologically that's not true, but they're looking to him as though he were the one who was crucified for them.

[32 : 31] They're treating Paul as though the substance of their faith is wrapped up in him. It's the same principle in the third question. Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

And Paul is glad that he didn't baptize many of these people. It's as though he's counting on his hand as he's writing this. Now I baptize you and you and you and more and more. But nobody else, as far as I know.

Nobody else. Because he doesn't want them to look to him and say, we were baptized by Paul. And then to perhaps substitute in their own subtle way, we were baptized in Paul's name.

No, no you weren't. So what does Paul say in verse 17? For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel. And then he adds, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

What does Paul mean by that? He means that even his preaching wasn't in a compelling way from a human perspective. He didn't preach with eloquent words that would wow the crowds because he didn't want the crowds to be wowed by him.

[33 : 46] He wanted the people to hear Christ and Christ crucified. He didn't want the people to be enamored with him as the preacher. He didn't want people to be enamored with him as one who baptized them, looking to the bearer of the message instead of the one that the message was about.

So can we relate to that sinful tendency getting wrapped up in people that God has used in wonderful ways in our lives and then suddenly becoming a disciple of that person in place of the Lord.

Instead of looking to them as they look to Christ, we just look to them. We want to hear what they have to say more than what the Lord has to say from his word.

And especially, at least this is me, especially when we have questions that we would like to be answered, and God's word doesn't seem to answer those questions as specifically or maybe as neatly as we'd like.

And we can be too quick to then turn to others and say, well, what do they say about this? Or to then hold too tightly to what they do say about that as though it is gospel truth.

[35 : 04] So it is a blessing to have godly people in our lives. We are immensely blessed to have godly wisdom available to us in books, online, podcasts, videos.

But there is a danger to become overly dependent, to become overly attached to people, and to set the Lord aside. I have read your word. Now, what do they have to say about that?

That is the kind of mentality that was at work in the Corinthian church. And what is the result of that? It created division. And so Paul's solution was simple. Keep the person who is central to our faith at the center of your unity.

So all three questions that Paul poses here, they strike at the same reality. Jesus Christ is central to your faith. And if Jesus is central to our faith, then he must be at the center of our unity.

Who else would belong there? So the desire for unity is good, but we must know the one that we are united around. So at the heart of Paul's appeal, Christ is put forward.

[36 : 11] In every rhetorical question that Paul raises, Christ is the only answer. Paul is living by the words of John the Baptist, another leader that could be easily, mistakenly followed over and above Christ.

And what did John the Baptist say? I must decrease and he must increase. Our unity centers on the person who is central to our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the question for us this evening is, who are we following? Who are you looking to? Who was crucified for you? And to whose name were you baptized?

Who is the author and the finisher of your faith? Who is your rock and your redeemer? Who is your Lord? Who is your Savior? Now maybe the answer to all those questions is so incredibly obvious.

It is Jesus Christ. So then we have to ask maybe another question. Whose name are you most excited to drop? You're in conversation.

[37 : 15] Who do you want to talk about? Who do you want to say said something that you've taken to heart? Is it first and foremost Jesus Christ?

Is his name on our lips or do I find myself fancied with lots of other godly wonderful people but forgetting Christ? Setting him aside?

Is it Jesus Christ? Are you bursting with joy to share of him? So don't hear me wrong. I love talking about preachers and teachers and authors.

Many who have been great helps to me. Many who have had great influence in my life and I think we could say that for many of you that's true as well. But we can't get the priority of persons wrong. Like the Corinthians did. We should be enamored with Jesus Christ and grateful to the Lord for all of those who help us by pointing us to him.

[38 : 14] So who do you follow? Is it Christ? And then the next question. Am I helping others to follow him? Am I helping my brothers and my sisters?

Am I being one who encourages and exhorts and spurs other parts of the body on to look to the head? Or am I maybe being a little bit like a kid who's cleaning up his room and doesn't want his siblings to join in?

Jesus is the central person of our faith. It all hinges on him. There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Or elsewhere. He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

Our unity centers on him. And what sweet unity we have as we keep him at the center. We're delighting in Christ together.

[39 : 18] We're maturing in Christ together. We're exalting Christ together. So we aren't ultimately united, around human leaders. We're not united around the latest trends in ministry.

We're not united especially around a man-made philosophy or way of living. We're united around Christ. We are to all agree. We're to be of the same mind, the same judgment.

We, not I, we follow Christ. Let's pray together. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Heavenly Father, I confess how easy it can be for us to drift from keeping Christ at the center of our faith, of seeing Him as central to our faith, and then letting that impact the wonderful unity that You give.

Father, we pray that Your Spirit would keep us united around Christ. We pray especially for those who don't know Christ, that perhaps are even here tonight hearing of Christ.

[40 : 24] We pray that they would look to Him and live, that they would see Him as the only hope of salvation, and that we would see Him as the only one who sustains us in this life, who keeps us to the end.

Father, help us to keep Christ first, to look to Him, to find our greatest delight in Him, and we pray that that love would not grow stale, but that You would keep it afresh.

Thank You, Father, that we can live for Him. We pray that even as we go into this week, that we would do just that with those around us, that we would speak of Christ, that He would be on our lips, and we pray all these things in His name.

Amen.