

## 揭穿帮派主义的邪恶本质——哥林多前书 1:10-17

### Exposing the Evil Nature of the Party Spirit – 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

#### *Introduction and Outline*

- Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10–17; Ephesians 4:1-16

#### **1 Corinthians 1:10–17 (NASB1995)**

**10** Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

**11** For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people*, that there are quarrels among you. **12** Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." **13** Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? **14** I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, **15** so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. **16** Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. **17** For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

#### **Ephesians 4:1-16 (NASB1995)**

**4** Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, **3** being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

**7** But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. **8** Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men." **9** (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? **10** He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) **11** And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. **14** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; **15** but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

- Divide and conquer - an advanced political strategy: to conquer or rule an enemy by dividing it up. Wikipedia says this tactic "includes the exploitation of existing divisions within a political group by its political opponents, and also the deliberate creation or strengthening of such divisions." Historically, there are many examples where this tactic is used successfully.

- In the spiritual realm, one of Satan's favorite strategies for attacking the church is to divide and conquer. He's in the constant business of sowing seeds of division and conflict in genuine churches, causing the weakening of their spiritual power so they may no longer act as the salt and light of the world.
- **One of the most crucial elements of the church's corporate witness is its unity.** The Gospels (cf. John 17), Acts (cf. Acts 2:41-47), and the epistles (cf. Philippians 2:1-4) all bear witness to the importance of church unity.
- Outline:  
Title: Exposing the Evil Nature of the Party Spirit 1:10-17
  1. The Serious Exhortation (v.10)
  2. The Problem Diagnosis (vv.11-12)
  3. The Spiritual Principle (vv.13-15)
  4. The Gospel Priority (vv.16-17)

### **The Serious Exhortation (v.10)**

- “Now I, ... by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”: Paul seldom invokes the name of Jesus Christ so strongly in his exhortation. It indicates that: 1) **The importance of this exhortation needs to be given the highest attention;** 2) This is something that **Lord Jesus takes very seriously, for the name of Jesus represents His whole person, His whole character, disposition, purpose, and will.**
- “exhort you”: Exhortation (literally “to call beside” in the original Greek) is an important form of teaching. **Exhortation is usually not about a brand new truth, but rather to urge the audience to live out what they already know.**

**Ephesians 4:3** “... being diligent to preserve the **unity** of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

**John 17:21-23** “that they may all **be one**; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me...”

【Truth】 **The only people in the world who can truly have unity are those who are in the Lord.** Only those in the Lord can pursue **the Lord's will**; while those outside the Lord are all pursuing ultimately **their own selfish desires**. **If you put two people together who are pursuing their own selfish desires, sooner or later conflict will break out, and it is impossible to have true unity.**

**James 4:1** “What is the source of **quarrels and conflicts** among you? Is not the source **your pleasures that wage war in your members?**”

【Truth】 1) **When a group of people who are essentially seeking the Lord come together, there is already an essential unity in the group.** 2) **But even Christians often fail to live out this essential unity due to the influence of their sinful flesh.**

【Conclusion】 **We all need to heed the exhortation here to be “diligent to preserve” the unity we already have.**

- “all agree”: **What does it mean to agree? It means don't disagree!**

【Application】 **Don't make a habit of picking faults and disagreeing with others. All communication in the church is to be conducted in an attitude of mutual agreement, not disagreement. Don't be the stubborn bigot who opposes anyone who has a different opinion!**

【Example】 A non-Christian writer, Paul Graham, came up with a **rebuttal pyramid** that summarizes seven different ways people raise objections. According to the author, the lower down the pyramid the more vile (e.g., personal attacks) and the higher up the more noble (e.g., refuting the central point). But all seven ways are wrong according to the biblical principle for the church. If you go around in the church with a refuting spirit, even the noblest form of refutation is wrong!

【Think】 What are the things we must “all agree” on?

First, **biblical truths**. The unity of the church is to “all attain to the **unity of the faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” (Eph. 4:13).

Second, **practical decisions**. Much of church conflict has nothing to do with theological truths, but it’s all about practical life applications. We must be careful not to allow any disagreement to become a cause for infighting.

【Application】 When God leads the church or its various ministry groups to make a specific decision, once the decision is made, we can no longer express dissent. We must practice self-denial and trust that this is the leading of the Holy Spirit. We can't say to others afterward, “It's their decision, not mine; I never agreed with their decision.”

- “there be no divisions among you”: The consequence of not saying the same thing is that it gives birth to divided groups. Division means having separate groups that don't interact with each other, despising each other's ministry, each thinking that their own ministry is what the church needs most.

【Discernment】 It is okay to have a disagreement; but if your disagreement makes you unwilling to associate with certain groups in the church, your disagreement has probably morphed into a division!

- “be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment”: It means that unity is **not just a superficial effort**, but an effort made **from the heart, to be in the same mind**. It is not just what you say or don’t say out loud, as if unity can be achieved by simply keeping your mouth shut. True unity must begin with the heart and mind; it requires that we have the same goal, the same desire, the same pursuit in the heart — which is the glory of God!

### The Problem Diagnosis (vv.11-12)

- “there are quarrels among you”: Far from just having some internal struggle in their heart, they've been fighting openly with one another.

【Think】 What were they fighting about? Any issue in the following chapters - should women cover their heads; should singles get married; can they eat meat sacrificed to idols - can be a specific issue to fight about. But Paul here doesn't address any of these issues because the problem is not the specific issue, but the overall attitude. So, in verse 12, Paul exposes the **overall attitude behind their divisiveness**.

- “I am of... I of ... I of ...”: These words aren't their specific argument but their overall attitude. When people interact in a divisive spirit, any specific issue can spark a fight.

【Mindset Analysis】 They want to boast in the church leaders they have chosen to esteem, in order that they may appear superior to others.

【Whose fault】 Is the problem with these leaders? Did their false teaching bring about this ugly infighting? Certainly not! Any godly leader would have been deeply bothered to see their names used for boasting and for dividing up the church! The situation in the Corinthian church was not Paul's fault, not Apollos' fault, not Cephas' fault, and certainly not Christ's fault!

【Analogy】 Some godly pastors today face the same dilemma, where their sound teaching is abused by spiritually immature people to stir up all kinds of fighting in the church. Such abuse would never be approved by the pastors themselves. Some Christians get all their teachings from the Internet, and then use them to argue with brothers and sisters in their own church. They may not even realize but the message they're sending is: I am of Paul, I am of Apollos!

“I [am] of Christ”: The implication is that no other group is of Christ. Ponder the spiritual pride here, “We have no pastor but Christ. Pastors are sinners too, so we follow the Lord Jesus Christ alone!” Of course, it's not wrong to say we are “of Christ”, but they said it in a divisive spirit, and that makes it a direct abuse of the name of Christ.

【Insight】 The right truth spoken in a **wrong manner does not build up the church, but tears it down!**

### The Spiritual Principle (vv.13-15)

- “Has Christ been divided?”: What an **absurd** question! How can Christ be divided? Why even ask this? Totally unheard of ..... 【Key Point】 Do you see **how absurd** it is to divide up the church?
- “Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”: These are **outright ridiculous!** Why would you ask these? Paul's point is this: If you want to say you are of me, why don't you go one step further. Why not just stand in the baptismal pool and tell everyone you're baptized in my name, into Paul? **If you think that's ridiculous, then you must immediately stop the whole infighting thing!**
- “..... so that no one would say you were baptized in my name”: Paul had foreseen the spiritual weakness of these Corinthians. He knew those he baptized would be tempted to boast about it. After all, Paul is a big deal in our circle, and to be baptized by Paul is no ordinary honor. (Note: this line is meant to be **sarcastic**.)

### The Gospel Priority (vv.16-17)

- “beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other”: This thing that you boast about, I don't even remember much about it. Who baptized whom is totally unimportant to me. I don't care much about it at all.
- “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel”: The heart of the gospel is the cross, and the cross is a sign of humiliation, not a sign of boasting. The Corinthians may have had an **intellectual understanding** of the gospel, but they had **not taken it to heart**, for they were using it to boast. And that's the root cause of their infighting.