

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

11 October 2026

The Church in Unity and Diversity

Text: "I appeal to you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought." *1 Corinthians 1:10* from *1 Cor. 1:10 - 17*.

Strength in unity.

Weakness in division.

No wonder Satan has the world coming apart.

Divide and conquer.

He is!

And why is the human race so ignorant that it allows him to do so?

Just like Israel who had God working in their behalf for generations but could not be faithful to him, we would rather do our own thing than live in the blessing of God.

Sad isn't it?

They say that *1 Corinthians* is Paul's special delivery letter to the twenty-first-century church.

The factions that riddled that local body have increased exponentially in the fragmentation of contemporary Christendom.

Perhaps no passage in the entire book speaks more to our day than these eight verses comprising our Scripture reading.

Paul's thesis statement is this: The church finds unity in its Lord.

When I was moderator and wanted to pull our District together, I began our time together by saying that if Jesus is Lord then we are in unity in our purpose it is just the way we accomplish our ministry that varies.

Each Sunday morning at prayer time I emphasize that we, here at the Empire Church of the Brethren, are united in our love of God and our love for others.

Good things happen in a church body that is in unity.

Nothing good can happen when a church body is divided.

Explanation.

Paul wrote to a church familiar with quarrels.

Paul's choice of words suggests the presence of rival factions gathered around favorite leaders.

Apparently the factions had not yet resulted in the break-up of the church along party lines, but Paul feared this as a real possibility.

In *verse 10* Paul calls the Corinthians "brethren," as he does again in *verse 11*, and encourages them all literally "to say the same thing," so that no divisions might develop among them.

The picture behind the Greek word is that of a tear or break.

Mark 2:21 uses the word to describe the tear resulting from sewing a new patch on an old garment. Paul urges the church to be united.

He uses the same word here that *Mark 1:19* uses of Peter and Andrew's mending their fishing nets, a word used elsewhere to describe the setting of a broken bone after a fracture.

Paul sees the congregation in danger of unraveling if things continue to deteriorate and urges it to mend its fellowship, to be knit together.

Interpreters “spill a lot of ink” trying to identify the thinking of the four factions mentioned in *verse 12*.

Paul tactfully does not even mention the faction that is the real culprit, and he identifies four groups that are more or less his friends to make his point.

Our only certainty is that factions existed in the congregation at Corinth.

We should note that Paul is not concerned in this passage to take sides with one group or another and to rebut the others.

Instead, he attacks the spirit that allows such groups to form in the first place.

Paul responds pastorally to this conflict-charged situation by taking the Corinthians straight to the source of Christian unity.

Christ and the cross.

The humility and self-sacrifice that led Christ to Golgotha comprise the antithesis of and antidote for self-assertion, Self-righteousness, and rivalries that manifest themselves in a factional spirit.

Christ and his good news constitute the foundation of Christian unity.

Whenever we attempt to substitute any other foundation for that one, trouble comes quickly.

Application.

Contemporary evangelicals are a diverse lot, even within any particular denomination.

This diversity includes such things as church organization, worship styles, leadership styles, ministry emphases and theological stances.

Can we find an integrating center?

Yes, we can.

We will find it in exactly the same place that Paul recommended for the Corinthians over nineteen centuries ago: in Christ and his cross.

We cohere in Christ.

No other foundation for unity except this one will endure.

The churches' one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord.

We will not find lasting unity in our views of baptism or the Lord's Supper or in some special theory about the end of the world.

Our unity is in Christ and in nothing less.

Today's text reveals a primary cause of factions.

We have conditioned ourselves to think that the reason for most factions is a difference in beliefs. But it isn't that simple.

Apparently the disunity in Corinth grew out of the personality cult that was emerging there.

Whenever disunity divides Christian ranks today, as often as not, personalities are as much at the root of the problem as any other factor.

We may unintentionally fall into the trap of following a favorite pastor, Christian celebrity, or revered teacher.

Our call is to follow not the proclaimer but the one proclaimed.

Paul's remedy for disunity among brethren is a summons for all concerned to submit themselves to the church's crucified Lord.

God calls us to live in oneness in Him and Him alone. You might say: In Christ alone!

Because: In Christ alone our hope is found, he is our strength our light our song.

He is our cornerstone, our solid ground.

He is our anchor in drought and storm.

He is our heights of love and depths of peace.

He calms our fears and strivings.

He is our comforter, our all in all.

For here in the love of Christ we stand.

For he took on flesh began as a babe and was scorned by the ones he came to save.

Till on that cross as Jesus died the wrath of God was satisfied.
For every sin on Him was laid, here in the death of Christ we live.
There in the ground his body lay light of the world by darkness slain.
But up from the grave he rose again, and he stands in victory.
Sin's curse has lost its grip on us for we are his and he is ours.
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.
No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in us.
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands our destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck us from His hand, till he returns or calls us
home here in the power of Christ we will stand.
We will stand
We will stand for all other ground is sinking sand.
All other ground is sinking sand.
Is sinking sand, is sinking sand
So let us Stand!
Now and forever more!
Amen? Oh yes Amen!