1 Corinthians Chapter 1 Verses 10 – 13

* It’s been said that ***division*** is the counterpunch of the flesh when the spirit moves to lead. It’s an interesting ploy because *polarization, separation, division* will undermine our ability to collectively face and overcome complex and important challenges. What can be accomplished through unity is **immeasurably more** in quantity and **immeasurably more** in each person’s advantage *specifically* than what we are capable of on our own. ***If the flock is huge so is the challenge for the wolf.*** But separate the flock into smaller divisions and the probability of a successful attack increases. Get a sheep on their own, ***check mate.***
* The Corinthian church had divided and now there were the *Paulists, the Apollo Chapels, the Cephasterians* and so on… There were some saying, *“We don’t need anyone, we don’t need the church, we are of Christ.”* **What a heart break for the Lord!** If someone is truly **that** spiritual then you will DEFINITELY find them in church…serving and loving others…and listening to horrible yet entertaining jokes while being taught the Bible! Want to hear one? What kind of cellphone did Delilah use? A Samson! HA! Ok one more? Why is it so terribly hot in Hades? Because there’s no PRAYER CONDITIONING!! HA!!
* *If you say you’re only of Christ and therefore need not be in church, is Christ divided? If you say you are of Paul, was I crucified for you or were you baptized in the name of Paul?* He pulls this thread a bit more…

1 Corinthians Chapter 1 Verses 14 – 17

* This is ***clear*** and this is **foundational!** There are some that believe that if you are not baptized then you are not saved but if that is the case then Paul is the **worst Christian that has ever walked!** He’s thankful that he did not lead you to Christ!? *Inconceivable!* That is not Paul’s heart at all! In fact he wrote to the church in Rome that he’d rather be cut off, doomed to hell, then to see his nation NOT saved!! (Romans 9:3) And so we have a ***conclusion*** here. An observation. ***A truth of good doctrine***…that if baptism were essential for salvation then Paul here is blaspheming by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Absolutely impossible. Here is the truth of ***good*** doctrine…
* Ephesians 2:8-10, *“By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast…for we are HIS workmanship (masterpiece), created in Christ Jesus FOR good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”* There is so much division over issues such as baptism, but you can be dunked 100 times and if you have not received the grace of God, ***placed your faith and life and heart and all in His hands***, then you’re just a wet sinner! It is a symbol, an act that is **outside of this world**…*along with communion, along with circumcision, even in the same family as prayer and worship*…because it is something you do not find naturally on this earth…its origin is heavenly. And that’s why we do it. To identify outwardly with the God who has now taken up residence within us inwardly.
* G. Campbell Morgan once said, *“I have noted that the more spiritual a person becomes, the less denominational/divisional he becomes.”* Paul says that the importance is not who you like to hear preach, or that you were baptized into this church membership this specific way…God didn’t send His apostles to do or push any of that…but He has sent us to (and the important thing is – with the power to save)…to **simply preach the Gospel.** The good news of the free gift of salvation!
* Now, since this is baptism Sunday, I just want to give you a **few points** on baptism. Although it is not required, it is ***ultra-important!*** We could swing the *entire other way* and just leave it behind or devalue the thing…which would be an error. **First** thing I want to tell you which I believe has greatly contributed to the scandal we have today around baptism is that it really has nothing to do with YOU! *Baptism saves you, baptism doesn’t save you, you should be baptized, you should be sprinkled, you should be fully immersed*…**all of that is focused on you, on self.** ***Baptism is all about, 100% about, Jesus!***
* This is so interesting. The word in the Greek, *baptizo*, before Jesus was used predominantly as a cooking term and specifically for ***cucumbers being marinated in vinegar!*** Pickles!! HA!! Then the Holy Spirit moves on a man right about the time Jesus was to begin His public ministry who was doing this thing out in the wilderness. His name was *John the Baptist.* And Jesus came to him and made baptism a **whole new thing.**  The skies opened, a miracle happened, and everything changed. ***I add nothing to baptism but baptism is nothing without Jesus.*** If we can get there, then the clouds part and clarity enters.
* Second. It’s all about going public! Jesus was known as the *Son of the carpenter* until His baptism…and then after that He was known publicly as the **Messiah!** ***Baptism is all about identifying publicly with Jesus!*** Third. It is pleasing to God. When Jesus arose out of the water in Matthew 3:16-17, God the Father couldn’t restrain His joy saying, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* Fourth. We should participate in this rite. Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus commanded this…and if you study baptism in the early church…it immediately follows faith.
* Acts 8:35-38. Philip said to him, *“If you believe with all your heart,”* **that is the very definition of faith** and man Ephesians 2 would prove that this Eunuch ***was saved***…and so baptism follows faith, it is the primary act of faith…it is going public.
* And so, have you yet gone public after you believed? Should you be baptized? Yes! But just as Paul said and we read this morning, the important thing is that you have received the ***free gift*** of salvation. Auto correct said, *“free gift”* is incorrect…because free and gift mean the **same thing.** And it’s true. What God has provided in Jesus is simply a gift…meaning it is free to you and to me because the cost has all been paid…