

## **Introduction**

- Last week’s study: “The Universal Church”, “Spiritual Riches”, “Strength by the Lord”
- Today’s theme: The problem of factions in the Corinthian church
- Key questions: Why is unity difficult? How can we achieve it?

## **1. The Problem in the Corinthian Church: Division**

### **(1) How the problem was discovered (1:11)**

- While in Ephesus, Paul heard from Chloe’s people about strife in the church

### **(2) Nature of the conflict (1:12)**

- Church members were divided by leader affiliation:
  - “I follow Paul”, “I follow Apollos”, “I follow Cephas (Peter)”, “I follow Christ”
- Issue: Their eyes were on people instead of on Christ

### **(3) Root cause of the division (1:13)**

- Taking eyes off Christ and focusing on humans
- Only Christ was crucified; baptism is in His name alone

## **Modern Application**

- Examples of church divisions today:
  - Building sanctuaries without prayer
  - Leadership transitions causing conflict
- Lesson: We must see Christ through our leaders

## **2. The Evangelist’s Desire: Union with Christ**

### **(1) Paul’s gratitude (1:14–16)**

- Thankful he baptized only a few
- Reason: to avoid human boasting over “who baptized me”

### **(2) The true desire of gospel ministers**

- Believers should be united with Christ, not with individuals
- Examples:
  - o Dependence on a former pastor
  - o Attachment to a favorite preacher

### (3) Paul's mission (1:17)

- Focus: Preaching the gospel (message of the cross)
- Avoids relying on human wisdom so the cross retains its power

### (4) Central truth (1:18 – next week's theme)

- “The message of the cross” is the power of God

## 3. How the Church Can Be United (1:10)

Paul gives four principles of unity:

1. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
    - o Always act in Christ's name, not focusing on problems or people
  2. Speak the same thing
    - o Stand on the same faith and confession (e.g., Apostles' Creed)
  3. No divisions among you
    - o Avoid gossip, splinter groups, and divisive actions
  4. United in the same mind and same judgment
    - o Be one in both heart and thought in Christ
- Reference: Ephesians 2:14–16  
Christ broke down the dividing wall and made the two one

## Conclusion

- True unity is not superficial reconciliation, but unity in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
- Look up to Christ at the cross, not to people
- Continue forgiving one another and striving for unity in heart and thought
- Even in diversity, keep walking toward unity by fixing our eyes on the cross of Christ