

I would ask for forgiveness for repeating a text in a sermon that was used in Sunday School. This evening, however, I do not ask that forgiveness, for there is a message that we as a church need to listen to and heed. Listen to and heed sounds redundant, and it is.

! Corinthians 1:10-13.

There was a conference held every two years called Together for the Gospel Conference. These are evangelicals from different denominations coming together to promote and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ without apology. Some of the names who were recent speakers include John MacArthur, John Piper, David Platt, Al Mohler, Matt Chandler.

Here is what one of the speakers shared in illustration to church life.

We ought not be like players on the NFL all-star team. Every year the NFL has the all-star selection. They choose the best players from the league, and they are appointed to their respective division's teams. It's interesting that each division team wears the same colored jersey. So the NFC has on, say, blue, and the AFC has on white. But it's striking that though they all wear the same jersey, they don't really play for that team. They all have different helmets. They wear the helmets of the team they really play for, the folks who pay them the big contract. So when they come to the all-star game, they don't really hit hard or run hard. They play gingerly because they don't want to "mess up my contract." They really play for the team they came from.

It strikes me that so often we're like NFL players on the all-star team. We wear jerseys that say "Christ," but we wear a helmet that says "Ethnic culture." That's the team we play for. That's the side we're on. "After we finish this little thing, I'm gonna go back and play with my squad. I'm not gonna run hard with those not on my squad." We need to flip that, and it is the gospel that enables us to do that.

That is a good picture of what is happening in Corinth that led Paul to address the problem. There was division that had taken place. The division took place because of personalities.

They all had the same jerseys on. They were the same color, had the same logo perhaps the cross. Each bore the person that united them in jersey—Jesus Christ. But their helmets really told whose team they were on.

Cephas – Simon Peter

Appollos

Paul

Jesus

The big question of the passage comes in striking words in verse 13. Is Christ divided? Who was crucified? In whose name were you really baptized?

So if the church is divided into different teams based on the helmet they wear and not the jersey they had put on, it is time for that to change. The only way that is to happen is through the Gospel.

Unity is grounded and rooted in the Wisdom of God

The wisdom of God is magnified the most and demonstrated best on the cross of Jesus Christ. It is the power of God resulting in salvation. Peter did not and cannot save. Paul did not and cannot save. Appollos did not and cannot save. Only Jesus Christ through the power of the cross is there salvation. Therefore, it is the ground on which each of us meet.

Listen to Paul. The Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly or foolishness to the Greeks, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Unity in Christ makes its boast only in Christ.

AW Tozer

Boasting is an evidence that we are pleased with self; belittling is an evidence that we are disappointed with self. Either way, we reveal that we have a high opinion of ourselves.

Church unifies under the Cross of Jesus, it is in Him and Him alone that we Boast

Paul puts it another way in Galatians

¹⁴ But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through ^[9]which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹

Aesop's fable on the Lion and Four Oxen.

A lion used to prowl about a field in which 4 oxen lused to dwell. Many a time he tried to attach them; but whenever he came near they turned their tails to one another, so that whichever way he approached them, he was always met by the horns of one of them. At last, however, the 4 oxen started a quarrel among themselves, and each went off to pasture alone in a separate corner of the field. Then the Lion attacked them one by one and soon made an end of all four.