

A united community (1 Corinthians 1:10-18)

Paul echoes Jesus' prayer for his disciples: that they may be one.

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In his message to the Corinthian church, Paul echoes Jesus' prayer in John's farewell discourse: that the believers may be one with the Father and with each other (John 17:20-21).

Jesus knows that the only way we can face the challenges the world presents us is by being united in love. The unity Jesus desires for us is part of God's salvific plan for humanity. What better way could there be to experience abundant life here on earth? It is not just about God's promise of eternal life; it is also about experiencing the kingdom of God here on earth by experiencing unity with others, like the unity of the Father and the Son.

If a community truly seeks to be one with God and with each other, its members can find healing and transformation. A united, empathetic, trusting, loving, and supportive community can provide what we need to cope with the devastating situations we are vulnerable to experiencing in this fallen world.

Indeed, as Charles Campbell explains in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, "The entire letter represents Paul's theological wrestling with the deep wound of division in the Corinthian church." This wound was created both by social and economic divisions in the community and by philosophical differences. Furthermore, as Campbell argues, the Corinthians' assumptions about social and economic hierarchy

and spiritual knowledge also created divisions in their understanding of spiritual gifts.

Thus, knowing that only if the believers are united can the proclamation of the true gospel advance, Paul appeals to the Corinthian church in the name of Jesus Christ to “be knit together in the same mind and the same purpose.”

Jesus’ prayer and Paul’s message to the Corinthian church speak to denominations and churches experiencing divisions today. Jesus’ and Paul’s desire for the church of Christ is clear: unity. Only by being united can we truly be the church of Christ.