Unity

Intro: There have been many lessons taught on unity. We see the beauty of it with David’s statement: Psa. 133:1 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” It’s importance is seen in Jesus prayer for it: John 17:21 “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” I want us to consider it from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthian brethren.

I. Based Upon the Word; The Wisdom of God

A. God’s Inspired Word is the wisdom of God.

B. Notice the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians:

1. 1 Cor. 1:19-21 “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

2. 1 Cor. 1:24-25 “But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

3. 1 Cor. 2:6-10 “Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

C. Yet so often today man tries to live by his own wisdom instead of the wisdom of God.

1. Pro. 14:12 “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

2. Jer. 10:23 “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

3. Col. 2:8 “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

D. 1 Cor. 1:10 “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

1. Speak the same thing: God’s Word; 1 Pet. 4:11 “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

2. Same mind: God’s Word; 1 Cor. 4:6 “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”

3. Same judgment (actions)
   a. God’s Word
   b. The entirety of the New Testament
II. Based Upon A Proper Estimation Of Preachers

A. They were dividing over their estimation of preachers
1. 1 Cor. 1:11-13 “For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”

2. 1 Cor. 3:4 “For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?”

3. 1 Cor. 4:6 “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”

B. The preacher is simply a laborer in the vineyard, but God is the one who adds.
1. 1 Cor. 3:9 “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.”

2. 1 Cor. 3:5-8 “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.”

C. The preacher of value is one who preaches the Word.
1. 1 Cor. 1:17 “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

2. 1 Cor. 1:23 “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;”

3. 1 Cor. 2:2-5 “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

4. 1 Cor. 9:16 “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”

5. Sadly, so many preachers are no longer preaching the Word of God, but now preaching the wisdom of men.

D. We should not follow men, but the Word.
1. There is no telling how many divisions in the church have resulted in following preachers instead of the Word of God.

2. How often do we hear things such as: “I take brother so-and-so’s position”?

III. Based Upon A Proper Estimation of Every Member

A. 1 Cor. 12:12, 14-18 “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ…. 14For the body is not one member, but many. 15If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”

B. Each member is necessary
1. 1 Cor. 12:22-25 “Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24For our
comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: 5That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."

C. All together:

1. Feeling together
   a. 1 Cor. 12:26 “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”
   b. Rom. 12:15 “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”

2. Loving one another
   a. 1 Cor. 12:31 “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”
   b. 1 Cor. 13:4-8a “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8Charity never faileth”
   c. 1 Cor. 16:14 “Let all your things be done with charity.”

Conclusion: When we have a proper estimation of God’s Word, preachers, and one another, then true unity will result.