



# Daily Devotional

## 1 Corinthians 1: 10 – 17

<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. <sup>11</sup> My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas<sup>[b]</sup>"; still another, "I follow Christ."

<sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you

baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so no one can say that you were baptized in my name<sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

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This reminds me so much of a telephone call I received at home the other day. The caller began the conversation by asking if I believed in the First Amendment (of the US Constitution). Of course, I answered, I'm a pastor and I am passionate about religious freedom.

"Then why are you allowing your church to take away your rights," he asked. I assured him that I would rather be safe than sorry when it came to the well-being of my congregations. Methodists not meeting together in a sanctuary on Sunday mornings seems like a small price to pay to protect them.

He then shared his belief that Covid-19 was really a huge government conspiracy.

I tried to be cool – until he alluded that I really didn't have enough faith in God. Because, he said, if I had "real" faith I would trust God to care for and keep my flock safe. Well, it really went downhill from there.

I share this with you because it illustrates how Christianity finds itself tattered (or worse) during these dark, foreboding times. How are we much different from those living in Corinth all those years ago? Our belief system is muddled mess.

Like the scriptures, the basis is a combination of religion and politics and wealth and poverty and hate that is causing these heartbreaking fractures. Friends find themselves pitted against friends, neighbor against neighbor and even families find themselves at odds with one another over their beliefs. John Wesley called the divisions among those in Corinth an "alienation of affection from each other."

Paul tells us we are here to preach the gospel. Simply, effectively and with love. His message is one of unity and humility and he reminds us that true power and salvation can only come through the message of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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