

It's easy to mess up relationships. Just act a little selfishly. Don't apologize. It's not your fault, after all. He started it. And of course, you have a right to carry a grudge. Why forgive when you can get even?

It's easy to mess up Christ's Church with the very same attitudes. And it's impossible to bring people back together - unless the Holy Spirit gives us unity. By God's grace, we are the Lord's people, drawn by the Spirit's power through the Gospel to build our faith and life on Christ's Word. Christ holds His family together, and the closer we are drawn to him, the closer we are drawn to each other. So let's not be part of the problem. Let's be part of the solution as we "**Promote Peace in Christ's Church.**"

(v. 10) Christian humility had given way to human ambitions in Corinth. Factions had arisen within the church. God wanted the people united in Christ, but His apostle doesn't offer a false unity. "**I appeal to you, brothers, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.**" He doesn't say, "Let's just agree to disagree on certain truths of Scripture." He doesn't tolerate unscriptural teachings or practices and then claim, "But we're still united." Be perfectly united in mind and thought! Literally, he is urging them, "Form your thinking and your judgments in agreement with God's will."

Jesus desires inner harmony, based on His Word. Here is true unity. Here is true brotherhood. Here is true peace in God's family. When the church is united on the basis of God's Word, we have a great blessing and a sure weapon against Satan.

Some today might say, "It's OK to disagree on non-essential doctrines, as long as we agree on the important truths of eternal salvation." Is this true? What is "non-essential?" Didn't Jesus say, "**The Scriptures cannot be broken? Your Word is truth? Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away?**" When the cornerstone of a certain church was laid, it bore the inscription, "We Preach Christ Crucified." But in the course of time creeping ivy covered a portion of the cornerstone and now you could read only the first two words, "We preach." Meanwhile, the message proclaimed in that church had also changed. To make Scripture more appealing to human reason and to try to win more members, they no longer proclaimed the virgin birth of Christ, His miracles, His death as the only payment for sin and His literal resurrection as the guarantee we're saved by faith in Jesus alone. Can you imagine trying to soothe the tears of a grief-stricken mother, mourning the loss of her only child, by handing her a rag doll? Is that any different than trying to save sin-burdened souls with a lifeless message emptied of Christ's death and resurrection.

Be united in mind and thought! Continue to search and learn the Scriptures! We only know the true God by what he has revealed about

Himself to us in His book, the Bible. Shouldn't this make Bible study and spiritual growth valuable to you? What gave you comfort in the hour of sickness? What bound up your wounds when you laid a loved one in the narrow grave? What gives you strength to carry on from day to day? What removes your guilt and shame when you think of your sins, spawned in your selfish heart? What removes fear -- of living with out God and dying without hope? Isn't it the facts of Jesus' holy life, His death, and His glorious resurrection for you, to forgive your sins? What has fixed those glorious principles of right living in your heart so that you are able, even though weakly at times, to make god-pleasing decisions and walk the path of righteousness? Isn't it the Holy Spirit who has planted these convictions into your heart through the Word of God? If we ever depart from Scripture, we're letting Satan unleash His powerful delusions. Promote Peace in Christ's Church. Be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Unfortunately, at times Christians become more concerned over earthly matters than eternal truths. Look what had happened in Corinth. Factions had arise, each claiming to be better than the other on the basis of whom they followed, whether Paul, Peter, Apollos, one of the pastors, or simply Christ.

Most congregations and church bodies today can also provide examples of quarrelling and division based on petty human pride. The result, of course, is bickering and arguing over matters God hasn't commanded or forbidden in the Bible. What's the solution? The cross! There God deals with sin, for we're all equally sinful. He offers forgiveness, for Jesus died for all. God's message, repent and believe the good news Jesus died for you, brings us forgiveness and true life. We no longer boast. We walk together with all whom the Holy Spirit humbles to believe in Jesus, receive His forgiveness, and thankfully submit their faith and life to all of His holy Word.

Paul demonstrates that the Lord sent Him to preach **the Gospel - Not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.**" Our human nature gets bored so easily. It wants to replace "old" ways of thinking with supposedly "New and improved" ways. But you can't improve on Jesus. The gospel of Christ crucified for our sins is the power of God, the final Word of salvation for all mankind. To be saved it is necessary that we continue to hear the Gospel for by it the Spirit gives keeps us trusting Jesus has died for our sins. No other message, no matter how attractive it may sound, can give us eternal life!

Why do you come to worship & Bible study? Is it to hear new and interesting ideas? Is it to listen to impressive theatrics? Is it to be mildly entertained? Is it to socialize with your friends? Is it to grade the quality or style of music? Is it to feel better than others? If it is, I can guarantee you will be disappointed, if not today, perhaps next week or the week thereafter.

But if you come to hear Jesus, if you come to know His peace as you confess your sins and hear Him pronounce, "I forgive you," if it's to worship Him in spirit and truth, if it's to pray to God in Jesus' name, if it's to encourage others with the gospel of Christ crucified, and if it's to grow in grace and knowledge and strength to serve Jesus and witness His Word in your daily life, the Holy Spirit will bless you and make you a blessing!

During Vacation Bible School one year, about an hour before dismissal, a new student entered the room. The teacher noticed that the little boy was missing one arm, but she didn't know any details why. Naturally, she was nervous that someone would say something insensitive.

As class time came to a close, she asked the children to join her in their usual closing ceremony. "Let's make our churches," she said, putting her hands together to form the church. "Here's the church, and here's the steeple, open the doors and..." Suddenly the awful truth struck her. As she stood there speechless, the little girl sitting next to the boy reached over with her left hand and placed it up to his right hand and said, "Josh, let's make the church together!"

Let's make the church together. Promote Peace in Christ's Church today! Be united in the Gospel truth Be united in the Gospel proclamation for your salvation and that of others. Amen.