

Scripture References:

United with Christ

Romans 6:5-8

United with Church

1 Corinthians 1:10

Psalm 133:1

1 Peter 3:8

Body as Temple

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

1 Corinthians 9:27

Ephesians 3:16

Bodily Discipline

1 Corinthians 9:27

1 Timothy 4:7-8

Hebrews 12:10

1 Corinthians 11:32

Church Body

1 Corinthians 12:12

INTRO Question(s):

As in most competitive sports, the best defense is usually a good offense. Josh’s childhood basketball team ran the **same** play every game – “BLUE”. His opponents figured out the play and whipped their team repeatedly. Unfortunately, the coach was unwilling to change, despite the players knowing they were in desperate need of a new game plan.

And similarly, the schemes of the devil (our enemy) possess only one game plan – **to divide**. The power to create division is strong among four areas: 1) God, 2) ourselves, 3) with one another and 4) twisting God’s good gifts into evil. Do you feel the power of division in your life? If so, in what areas: division with God? Division within your own self? Division with others? Division related to a gift given to you from God?

Background:

Fortunately, God has one game plan – **to unite!** God’s infinite love and sovereignty has the ultimate power to create union in all things through Christ. In the reading passage, Paul describes the "offense" in vv. 1-2 in which he issues two commands – “**be** imitators of God”, “**walk** in love as Christ **loved** us”, both of which we are enabled to obey by depending on the power of the indwelling Spirit (Eph. 3:16).

Paul also issues a warning that violators of these sins in vv. 3-5 “has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God”. The tension between the desire to sin and divide and the desire to love and unite is the difference between our former “darkness” (v. 8) and our condition now as “children of light” (v.9).

Paul reminds us to “look carefully then how you walk” (v.15). Using God’s wisdom through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit as our guide, we are to be wise with respect to 1) our bodies, 2) our time and 3) our good gifts given by God.

Once the transparency of the enemy’s game plan is exposed, we are awake (v.14), disciplined, and equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 18) to whip the enemy when shouts of “Blue” attempt to create division in our own lives. Through the resurrecting power of Christ, we are dead to our former self and now alive in Him. Union prevails against the enemy’s only game plan, conquers death and secures eternal life. Amen!

Read the sermon Scripture text (next page) and the scripture cross references (margin)

Discuss:

1. **Body:** Do you view your body as a temple for God’s Holy Spirit to dwell within? Are you nourishing your body with proper food, rest, exercise and discipline? Do you view your body as the image of God and is it being used in life giving ways?
2. **Time** is a gift from the Lord. Is time a precious resource to you? How can what Paul exhorts in v.16-17 shape the way you steward your time?
3. **Gifts:** Are there gifts in your life that are being abused or celebrated? Disciplined living produces thankfulness in receiving these gifts? Is the Lord’s table a gift and a standard for all the other “tables” in our life?
4. **How serious is immorality, drunkenness, idolatry?** Paul’s rhetorical question indicates the consequences can be eternally serious. “Or do you not know that the unrighteous **shall not inherit the kingdom of God?**” (1 Cor 6:9-10). Instead make application of v.18 to be “filled with the Spirit”, leaving no other room for other sins to occupy any part of you.

Conclusion/Application:

Father, remind us your church body is not a place of division. As Christians, teach us union is on display in our lives daily. Convict us of our own sin in areas that create division and give us courage to repent to You and to others we have hurt. Please help us address one another in psalms and hymns making melody and thanksgiving to You with all our hearts.

Ephesians 5:1-21
English Standard Version (ESV)

¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

⁷Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁸for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

John 3:16-21

¹⁶“For God so loved the world,^[a] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

¹⁹And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”