

Scripture's going to tell us here, He's going to tell us to be united in mind and thought. Think about that for a second.

"Be united in mind and thought." Seems kind of like the same thing. You say, well, why should we be united in mind and thought? Because, I went to the Methodist church the other day. Or I went to the Unitarian church over there, and then I stopped by the Congregational church, and they told me that we are supposed to just come together and coexist even though we believe all kinds of different stuff.

Right? So, it's good to be in our church and have everybody believe a whole lot of different stuff, contradictory stuff, but we all coexist and we tolerate each other because that's what God wants? That's a lie. That's a total lie. That's not what God wants at all. God doesn't want us all to believe a bunch of different stuff that's contradictory to each other.

And then they'll say, "Well, you know what? We're good Christians because we tolerate all the other stuff. I think they're wrong, but you know what? They're equally as valid as me, and therefore it's all good, right?"

God teaches diversity united. Think about this. He teaches diversity like different people, black, white, purple, green, male, female, Russian, American, Venezuelan, whatever. He preached all those people, diversity of people, united by a single truth which comes through Christ. I want to explain to you the difference between that, which is what we believe as a church, okay? And what you're going to find in a lot of churches that are... Oh, okay.

Here's the difference. Just accepting everything, that's called tolerance. And everybody's yelling, you need to be tolerant of everybody, okay? I understand, I understand that, but this is what tolerance says. Tolerance says that we will accept everything as equally valid, allowing us to share a false unity based on our own will to collectively ignore the truth, okay? That's my definition that I've put together for what I think tolerance is.

Let me say it again. Tolerance says that we will accept everything as equally valid, allowing us to share a false unity based on our own will, our own desire, our collective will to ignore the truth. We're just going to ignore the truth and not enforce the truth, not demand the truth. We're all okay with living a lie as long as we all just get along.

As long as we all get along. Now, that's different than unity that we're talking about in the Bible. When we talk about unity and the scriptures right here, unity says this, though we are very different people, we are bound together because we all believe the exact same truth.

We're all different. We all come from different places, different houses, different families, different nationalities, different colors, different whatever, but we are all united not in a false unity because we're all just pretending that we all just are okay with each other, but we are all united because God has told us the truth and we all believe it. We all believe the same thing because we believe what Jesus said, and that's what unites us as a people.

So, if you've got your notes, I want you to throw this in there in your notes. Jesus says, God's people are to be united because they all follow Christ who has a true right and singular view of things. Here's what I mean by that. Jesus isn't a schizoid. Jesus isn't schizophrenic. Jesus doesn't simultaneously believe that homosexuality is good and evil at the same time. Jesus doesn't simultaneously believe that the world is flat and round at the same time. He doesn't simultaneously believe 15 different things that none of them fit together. You know why?

Because that's Coco Puffs. He's not a schizoid. If you come up to somebody and they believe that the earth is round and it's flat at the same time, you go, I'm staying away from that guy. That guy doesn't know reality. If he thinks his name is Jim and Bob, if he thinks he's a boy and a girl, you got to stay clear.

You go, whoa, stand back. Why? That's a schizoid. That's a problem, right? Jesus isn't that way. Jesus is God, which means he understands the truth completely clearly. No contradiction in what he believes. If it's blue, he knows it's blue. And you know what he tells us? It's blue.

You know what we should do? Say that's blue. I know this is complicated. I know this is complicated. The reason I think it's complicated is because 80% of the church has not figured this out. And I'm not exaggerating at all. That if you want to know the truth, you look and see what God says is true, and you follow it and you agree with him. That's all God wants. Agree with me. And 80% of the church can't figure that out. We're not going to be one of those churches.

We just will not. We follow Christ. And because you're following what Christ says, and because Renee's following what Christ says, and because Kaden's following what Christ says, because I read the same Bible as Randy, and because I read the same Bible as Jeff, and we are all agreeing not with our own ideas and what the world is saying, but, well, Jesus said this. Well, we all agree that we should agree with Jesus. Well, Jesus said that it's wrong to do this.

Well, then we all agree it's wrong. What happens if we all are following the exact same guy who's always true? We become united. In what? We become united in mind and thought. Look at verse 10. Verse 10, this is our verse going into it. It says, I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, he's appealing to them and encouraging them to agree with him, and he's doing so in the name of Jesus, right? Because it's Jesus who unifies us. So, he says, I'm appealing to you, all of us agreeing with Jesus. That's how we're going to get our unity.

Okay? If you're divided as a church, it's because you don't all share the same mind of Christ. When I come to Christ, he gives me the mind of Christ, and I follow him, and I try to do what he wants me to do, and I allow him to empower me to live that. If you're divided as a church, then you don't have the mind of Christ. It says in verse 10, *"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, 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."*

Now you might think to yourself, well, that's just impossible, Dustin. How could we be united in mind and thought? Because I think some things that's different than Randy. Randy thinks some things that might be different than me. You know, different. But we have different thoughts. So how do you get Christians?

This is the point. You're a pastor. All right? Well, I'll put your pastor hats on today. You're a pastor. How do you get the Christians in your church to agree with one another in what they say so there aren't divisions to be united in mind and thought? How do you get them all to agree? Paul tells us the answer to that right here. The answer to this problem. A bit more clue.

Let's take a look. Verse 11,

*"My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household, have informed me that there are quarrels among you."*

So, there's a tattletale in the church, a woman who's the head of her household named Chloe, and she is reporting back. She sent like a text message or something to Paul and said, you know what, there's all kinds of divisions. They're all scattered. They're divided over stuff here, and that's not good. And so, in his letter, he's saying that there's quarrels among you. You're quarreling. Right? And he sends this back. It says verse 12,

*"What I mean is this, one of you says I follow Paul, another I follow Apollos, another I follow Cephas, that would be the Apostle Peter, still another I follow Christ."*

Now there hasn't been a church split in first, or in the church of Corinth yet. There's not a church split yet, but they're well on their way if they keep this up. Right? If you've got like a group over here in this that says, well hey, we're followers of this teacher, and we're really into their doctrine and this person. And so, we just always believe what that

person says, and we don't really agree with the rest of the people in the church, because they don't follow so-and-so. And then you've got another group, so they're wrong. We don't like them because they're always doing it, and we follow so-and-so. We've had that in this church too.

We've had that before. And you're dividing up things. You're dividing it. So over here you have people that are loyal to the church planter, that was Paul. Paul planted the church, so they're loyalists. You know, he planted it. He put the work in. Boy, that Paul, he set all our systems. He did the bylaws. Right? He was there at the beginning, and you know, we're loyal to him. Right? We like this guy.

But then you got another pastor comes in, named Apollos. And he has been there. He's like kind of pastor now.

Right? And we find out in Scripture, if you were to go to Acts chapter 18, verse 24, it says, *"Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus."* Watch it. It says, *"He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures."*

And so, the people that are in Corinth, there's a group that says, Well, we really like Paul. He established a church. But there's other groups like, You know, but I just love to listen to Apollos speak, though. He's so eloquent in the way he talks. He's funny. Right? I never get bored. I used to get bored when Paul would talk, but I never get bored when Apollos is talking, because he's funny, and he's good, and he keeps my attention, and he's really good with the Scriptures. He's really good at explaining it. And so, they're like, we're with him. Right?

And then it appears, it appears that Peter must have stopped in. And maybe he was a guest speaker one Sunday. I don't know. I mean, it looks, we don't know exactly, but there are some people that are saying that Peter showed up in there. And once Peter showed up, they were like, man, that's Peter, because he was talking about when he walked around with Jesus. Right? Because he's a real apostle. Paul, you're not a real apostle because you didn't walk around with Jesus. You weren't, so, I'm a Peterite. I'm a Cephas guy, because I want to follow one of the main apostles. And so, I hope he comes back, because that Peter, man, that guy's got it.

And then you've got, this is probably the worst group. They say, others say, I follow Christ. This is the self-righteous group. Right? This is the self-righteous group that says, you know what? We don't need any of your groups. We don't need any of your teachers. We don't need Paul. We don't need Cephas. We don't need Apollos. No, you know what? We don't even need church. We'll just stay home and watch online. Right? Because all we need is Jesus. Just give me a Bible, and I'll sit back, and I'll be more holy than all of you guys. You Jackwagons can go to church, and I'm going to be here studying scripture, because I follow Jesus. All right. Welcome to the self-righteous club.

And so, there's division among them. Now let me clarify. It's something here real quick. This is not talking about the universal church. This is talking about the local church. This is talking about a church like we have here, in a building, in Atkinson, the church in Atkinson. All right? This isn't saying you can't have teachers you prefer to listen to. There are pastors that I like to listen to.

I would hope that you like listening to me at some point every once in a while. Right? That might be part of the reason. But that doesn't mean that you can't like other preachers and want to listen to other preachers. Listening to other pastors can be really good. I want to bring more pastors in to speak. You're going to have an opportunity this year to hear some other people speaking in the church. I actually have a sabbatical this year. I'm going to have a three-week break, where I'm going to be on the East Coast for three weeks. Come to church.

Don't say, oh, well, Dustin's not here, and I'm a Dustin guy. No! Why? Why is it important that we get from lots of different pastors like that? Because I'm just one guy with a set amount of knowledge and a set type of experiences. And I can only share and I can only teach you a part of who Christ is. What I've experienced, what I've read in Scripture, what I have learned. But there are other people who are godly men who have had experiences that I've never experienced that know things that I don't know, that have been through things and lived stuff I didn't ever live. They have speaking styles and they have stories that I don't have.

They've gone to colleges and learned from books and read books that I haven't read. There are lots of people. And if you don't listen to all, if you just say, well, we just are going to listen to a Paulist, we're just going to follow a Paulist, then you're missing everything that Peter and everything that Paul and everything that all these other people have to offer you. The fullness of the gospel is not only contained in a single pastor or in a single teacher. And so that is causing a lot of problems within this church. And so, look at verse 14. It says, I think God that I did not baptize any of you except Christmas. Now, who was Christmas? Remember him?

We learned that a couple of weeks ago. Crispus was the synagogue leader. When Paul was, Paul got mad and he jetted out of there, right? He was in the synagogue and none of the Jews would listen to him. And finally, he just dusted off and went next door and they had a church next door. And Crispus decided he wanted to be a Christian and he left and went next door and he became a Christian. And it says here, it says,

*"I thank God, I did not baptize any of you except Crispus."* So apparently, Paul baptized the synagogue leader, which had to have been really fun to do. And Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. Yes, I also baptized.

Now he's thinking to himself, wait a second, did I baptize anybody else? Hmm. I can't remember. Maybe he's getting old. I can't remember if I baptized any of you. I remember I baptized Gaius. Let me think here for a second. I baptized him, baptized Crispus. No, Bob, Bob wouldn't let me baptize him. Trying to think of who else I might have baptized. You know, I don't know. And then he's thinking to himself, it says, yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanus, beyond that I don't remember if I baptized anybody else.

Some of you are like, well, wait a second. This is awesome. This shows us, really gives us a picture of what the Bible is. The Bible is fully inspired, but it has the personality and thoughts of real human people. Think about it this way. Why are there four Gospels in your Bible? Why is there Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? Why? And people will argue with that and they'll say well there's four gospels and they're all contradictory to each other and therefore the Bible can't be true. Not true! Not true! No, what you've got is you've got four different people that experience the same events and they're giving you different details to the story because if you just had Matthew or You just had Apollos or you just had Paul or you just had Luke and you didn't have the others, there's so much you miss out on.

If you just had the gospel of Luke and you didn't have the gospel of John You don't even know that Jesus ever turned water into wine. You don't know that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. There's a bunch of stuff you don't know. You don't know details about what happened on the cross that only one person maybe recorded.

Well, you know what we only read the book of Matthew in this church, right? Because that's our guy, Matthew. Forget that! We don't believe that! And here's what Paul's concerned about. Why is he saying I wish you know, I didn't baptize anybody except Crispus? He's saying that because first of all he's concerned somebody might put him in some kind of exalted position He's nervous that one of these Christians in his church is gonna say, you know what? He's up here. We're putting him in this exalted position, that's worthy of us dividing over as a church to show our loyalty to this particular pastor This particular leader this particular teacher Someone might put him in a in some exalted position worthy of dividing over because he was instrumental in an important aspect of their spiritual life like baptism.

Well, you know what, Dustin baptized me and therefore I just believe whatever Dustin says and I don't want to listen to this guy because he sometimes disagrees. No, here's the second reason because someone might think that they're superior Because Paul baptized them. You get some people in a church over here and you know, they were baptized by Apollos. You know, yeah, you were baptized, but you didn't get the real baptism because Paul when he baptized people, he dunked the snot out of them, right? He really brought the holiness in, and your baptism wasn't nearly as good and so we're superior because Paul did our baptism.

That's Paul's concerned about that Paul's point is that all the change and transformation is not the result of Paul or Apollos. The transformation that happens to us when they get saved, it's not because of Paul, not because of Apollos.

It's not because of Peter. It's not because of Dustin. It's not because of somebody else. It's the result of Jesus and his power not any physical act of a human dunking a person underwater or someone thinking or speaking especially eloquent like Apollos.

That's not what changes people, Jesus does! And it's the power of God. We just preach the gospel and God alone draws us all to follow him in unity Jesus leads us we follow him He transforms us and as we all follow him. That brings us into unity, because we all have our eyes on the back of one head- Jesus.

Okay, that's unity. So, I want to go back to the beginning here. Paul said, *"I appeal to you brothers and sisters in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree with one another and what you say, that there be no divisions among you that you be perfectly united in mind and thought."* Now, what is the one? Mind and thought. What does that mean when it says mind and thought one mind and one thought? How do you get one mind and thought? The one mind and thought is supposed to be the mind and thought of Jesus.

Okay, so what does that look like? It's very clear in scripture what that looks like if we as a church are going to be united Okay, it's not because I'm gonna be real eloquent or a good speaker or some kind of great leader. It's gonna be because I am gonna point you to Jesus. Okay, and I want you to think and to live like him not like me Live like him.

I want to point you to Him. I want you to have the same attitude I want you to have the same mind as Christ and if we all have that same mind will be all be united. What does that look like?

Turn to the book of Philippians chapter 2. It says,

*"Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the spirit",* right? So, we're all sharing in the spirit if you have that how's that gonna come that we're sharing and we have the spirit of sharing and of love together? How do you get that? *"if any tenderness and compassion"* We want that right we want tenderness. We want compassion in the church.

*". . .then make my joy complete by being like-minded"* Did you hear that? You're gonna be like minded you're gonna have the same mind. *"having the same love, Being one in spirit, and one (what) mind."* So, he's gonna tell us what that is. *"do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit"* So, in other words, this isn't about you. You don't live about you. You live about others. You don't live vain conceit, right? I'm good. I'm best. Selfish ambition.

What can I get for me? Jesus didn't do that he let that go. Okay. *"rather in humility value others above yourselves"* Jesus valued others above himself and so, if we're gonna have the same mind as Christ, if we're gonna have all of us have the same mind, and it's gonna be the same as Christ, we have to value others above ourselves. That's what the scriptures teaching. *"rather in humility value others above [their selves] not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of others"*

Think about that that means for a second. I'm not looking to my own interests. What's best for me? I'm willing to not get what I want. I'm willing to not always have for me. I'm willing to maybe sacrifice a little bit, because I care that that other person is okay. I care that that other person that's in the pew next to me has what they need and they're taken care of. That is Christian love. That's the way Jesus lived. We're supposed to all live that way. If we all live that way, we'll be united in mind and heart and we'll follow him, having the same mindset as Christ.

All right. What does his mindset look like? Here's what his mindset is. who? Being in very nature God. That's code for I'm really really really really important and powerful and nobody is anywhere even close to being as good as me. *"being in very nature God"* having every right to say I don't care about anybody else because I have everything. The extreme of those who feel comfortable and have it all. *In humility value others not looking to your own interests "But each to the interests of others in your relationship with one another have the same mindset as Christ who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage"*

So, though he has the ability he has by his strength and by who He is the ability to just not worry about anybody else. Because He's sufficient in Himself, many of you are that way. Why do I have to worry about anybody else in the church, anybody else in the community? I have what I need. I have mine. I'm fine. That's the way God is why would I have to worry about anybody else? I'm God. I'm self-sufficient.

Why would I have to do that? Because he says, *"being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage."* So, in other words though. I'm God and though. I don't have to I'm not going to treat myself and use my Godhood as an advantage to make me not have to or desire to help somebody else. That makes sense. See what I'm saying? Rather *"he made himself nothing"* Now, it took a dreadful turn. It's not that he just said well, I'll give a little oh I'll You know I have everything I need and out of that I'll just kind of give a little bit so it looks good.

Rather, He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant. Well now he's gone really low from that right? He's gone lower than the people he's going to help. For *"the nature of a servant being made in human likeness"* so nice not even God I'm gonna be a human *"and being found in appearances man of man He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross"*

Here's the point. What keeps us from being united as a church? What is it that will keep us from being united? What kept the church in Corinth from being united? What allowed all these divisions. I'm gonna I follow so-and-so, I follow so-and-so. What caused that and what's the solution? What caused it is that people are selfish and they've got big egos. What causes division in the church is people who think that they're too important to help or to be a part and belong with everybody else. I Think well, I want to be a part of this, but you know, I don't want to serve I'm better.

I'm really better than everybody else here, right? Because you know, because I when Dustin says something I do it when Paul says something I do it, when so-and-so says something I do it, you know. I'm in that camp' What keeps us from being united? Selfish desire. I want for me I want for myself. My goal in life is me being happy, being liked, being powerful, having money, having friends, not experiencing pain, not experiencing heartache. I don't want to experience any of that, therefore I will live in a false unity and pretend like I'm united even though I don't really want to be a part of that.

I don't want to be a part of that. What causes disunity? James chapter 4 verse 1. We did James not too long ago. It says this, *"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?"* We have to, as people, get a hold of our own desires and we need to evaluate our desires and we need to order our desires.

I talk about this all the time.. Ordering your desires Okay, We're not Buddhists who say who say, you know what? I don't like having angst in my life or problems in my life, so I am going to eliminate the desire. Therefore, I won't have any kind of displeasure from not receiving what I had a desire for. I Just won't desire it and therefore, I won't. That's how Buddhists get through life. The world today in America, their solution to desires is I just desire and I go Indulge in every desire that I have so if I have thirty dollars on me and I need a cell phone I'll take from somebody else and I'll buy a cell phone because I have to have a cell phone. If I want this if I want sex I doesn't matter. I'll just go find sex, Right? I'll indulge in it. It doesn't matter, because I just have to fulfill the desire.

That's not how God does it. God says order your desire. *Seek ye first His kingdom.* So, what is it that God desires? What is it that Christ as? We all file in single file behind Christ and he says this is true. This is how you should live as we all file in behind what does he say we should desire? I should desire the best for Renee and for Justin. I should desire the best for Frank and I should desire what's best for the people that are in my family. I should desire that and seek that. Even though that means that I have to empty myself of some of my pride and empty myself of some of my own desires. Being in very nature God, He emptied himself and he became obedient to God. Died on a cross.

Let me pray for us. Let's pray for our unity together. God. I pray for this church's unity. God it's important that the community see a united church in Atkinson. When they look at SonRise, they need to see a united church because if

they see a church divided they're seeing a picture of Christ that is not accurate. They're seeing a schizophrenic freak show Jesus and we don't want to proclaim a schizophrenic Freak show Jesus that's all divided into a bunch of things and believes all kinds of weird stuff. We want to be a united Jesus that's all following Christ. So, when people look at us they say they love each other and they're all following Jesus and I want that. I want to know that united Jesus. I want to know the Jesus that they're representing, the one who brings unity to all these different types of people, the one who protects them, the one who causes them to love in a way that I haven't seen in the world. God, I pray that you would grant us this by your grace and I pray it in Jesus name this morning. Amen.