

Sermon Series: The One Another Commands

Sermon Title: Agree With One Another

Sermon Text: I Corinthians 1:1-19

Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry

Sermon Summary: This study comes from a letter written by Paul to one of the churches that meant so much to him. It was a church that he visited on his second missionary journey, and spent around a year and a half there. It was a church that was having some serious problems. The church was the church at Corinth. They were in disunity and disagreement. Paul is going to act in some ways like a lawyer in a courtroom where he will build his case for the One another command to Agree With One Another! Paul establishes some very compelling reasons for us to agree with one another especially when it comes to the most important aspects of our Christianity and keeping the main thing the main thing!

Full Sermon Notes:

Holy, there is no one like You there is none beside You! Open up my eyes in wonder! Show me who You are and fill me with Your heart, and lead me in Your love to those around me! Folks if we will do that, I really believe we'll be able to follow our one another command for today. Let's pray and I will show you why I believe that to be true! Pray!

We've been talking the last four weeks on becoming Christ followers by obeying the "One Another Commands" found in the New Testament.

Love one another!

Honor one another!

Be devoted to one another!

Live in harmony with one another!

Do not judge one another!

Today we will add yet another one another command to our list and if we obey it we will be much closer as a church to becoming truly "Christian!" The one we add today is not an easy one, and may rank as one of the most difficult! Some may even venture to say it's just not possible! What is it? We find it right in the middle of our text for today.

1 Corinthians 1:10 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.

Agree with one another!!

You're kidding, right? Agree with one another? Where did Paul dream this one up? Did Jesus ever say we have to agree with one another? Well, He put it like this in a prayer He prayed...

John 17:11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.

Did you see that? Protect them by the power of Your name, the name you gave to me...
What name was that?

"Jesus Christ" The Messiah! The Redeemer! The Savior! God in the flesh! The Holy One of Israel! The Lamb of God!

The word Christian means to be "Like Christ," to be a Christ-follower! If we are going to be Christ-like we must be one in unity like Jesus and the Father. Listen...

John 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

John 17:21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

John 17:22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—

John 17:23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Here's the problem. The church is not a body of Christians, the church is in fact the body of Christ! When we refuse to live in unity with one another, we are in fact filleting the body of Christ! You are dividing the Body of Christ! If you want to know one thing that really hurts our Lord, it's when there's division and lack of unity within His body! "So what are you saying Brother Larry? Do we have to agree with each other on every little thing? Aren't we all entitled to our own opinion?" Well, it's going to take a sermon to answer that question, so let's get started...

Today's message comes from a letter written by Paul to one of the churches that meant so much to him. It was a church that he visited on his second missionary journey, and spent around a year and a half there. It was a church that was having some serious problems. The church was the church at Corinth. They were in disunity and disagreement. Paul is going to act in some ways like a lawyer in a courtroom where he will build his case for the One another command to Agree With One Another! Let's begin with verse one of our text and I'll show you what I'm talking about. The first thing Paul did was this...

1. He established his credentials for instructing the Church.

1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

He reminded them that He was an apostle of Jesus Christ. He stated that his call was from God!

It was not that Paul was a genius with superhuman intellect or that he was better than anyone, it was that God had called him and God had anointed him with His Spirit, His wisdom, and His knowledge. In other words, Paul had the authority to speak granted to him by God. Kids, I'm so glad you're with us today and working on your packets Lacey gave you! Sometimes we need to know that someone is really who they say they are and that they have authority to do what they do. Doctor's wear their lab coats and their stethoscopes and usually have their diploma's in a frame on the wall of their office to show that they really did go to medical school and are qualified to be your doctor. And police officers wear a badge that shows they have the authority to enforce the law! Paul had a special way of showing his credentials, which he tells us in chapter two of his letter...

1 Corinthians 2:1 And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.

1 Corinthians 2:2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.

1 Corinthians 2:4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,

So it was his testimony about God and what Jesus had done on the cross backed by the power of the Holy Spirit that gave Paul his authority to speak. By the way, Paul had also mentioned Sosthenes, who some scholars believe was the Jewish synagogue ruler found in Acts 18:17. He and other Jewish leaders had brought Paul before a Roman proconsul in Corinth accusing him of false teaching. The proconsul would not hear the case and let Paul go. The mob then turned on Sosthenes and beat him up in front of the court. Some believe God used this turn of events to bring Sosthenes to faith in Christ. Sound like anybody else you know in the Bible? How about Paul, a persecutor of Christians, but who met the Lord on the road to Damascus. It's not surprising that these two would become co-workers. The second thing Paul did to bolster his case for agreeing with one another was this...

2. He established three important facts concerning the Church.

Things we must also know if we are going to agree with one another in unity as a church...

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

Whose church is it?

"To the church of God in Corinth!" Sometimes division happens in a church when the church members, or the pastor, or the leadership, forget who the church belongs to. The Church belongs to God!!

Who makes up the Church? Paul then reminds them the church is made up of people who have been "sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy." Not self-righteous people who think they deserve to be a part of the church because they are so good, and have superior knowledge, but sinners who have reached out to God for forgiveness, friendship and for help to live a better life, a life of right living and overcoming the sin which can easily entangle us and hurt us! A people who want to learn more and to grow in their knowledge of Jesus Christ, but not in order to become prideful and arrogant but in order to live lives that will bring glory to God and touch the hearts of people. Peter talked about being aware of false teachers and gave this advice...

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

And Paul put it this way in his letter to the Colossians...

Colossians 1:9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,

Colossians 1:10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

Okay, you know what's coming here. No matter how much we learn or how much knowledge we gain, we must never, ever forget...

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

The church is made up of undeserving sinners who have been graciously clothed in the righteousness of Christ and given access to the knowledge of God. Some would call this free grace theology. I would say it's free for us, but wasn't free for God! It cost Him dearly! So the church is not made up of self-righteous people, but people made righteous by the precious blood of Christ!! Paul then tells us...

There are many local churches that make up the one universal church! Paul reminds the Corinthians they aren't the only church on the planet! "Together with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours."

We as individuals are a part of a local group of believers, Northshore Church, who comprise a part of the larger body of Christ which includes all true believers around the world. True believers of every denomination. Paul then strengthens his case for agreement with one another as...

3. He establishes that Jesus is the source of all the resources the church needs.

1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 1:4 I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.
1 Corinthians 1:5 For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge—
1 Corinthians 1:6 God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you.
1 Corinthians 1:7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

As members of the Body of Christ, the Church, Jesus, the Head of the Church, should be our common resource! Resource for what? For all the things that make us the church. Things like, grace, peace, speech, knowledge, and spiritual gifts which are all given to us by God through Jesus Christ!

a. The source of Grace!

Can any of us stand without God's grace? Absolutely not. If we are standing on our own righteousness, our own goodness then we are bound to fall! And speaking of that grace, Paul would write a second letter to the Corinthians and listen to what he said, and he sounded somewhat like a lawyer...

2 Corinthians 1:12 Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace.

And then a few verses later he says...

2 Corinthians 1:21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us,
2 Corinthians 1:22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

b. The source of Peace!

But another resource on top of grace that Jesus brings to the table is Peace! If we are looking inside ourselves for peace we will only become fearful, disillusioned, discouraged and even depressed. In this world, our faith and trust in Jesus is the only real resource for abiding peace! Paul said this in Romans...

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Romans 5:2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

And Jesus Himself said...

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

c. The source of our Speech!

And what of this resource called speech? We all talk, we all have opinions, we all have ideas and that's not bad, but if our speech, especially within the context of the body of Christ is not resourced and motivated by the heart and spirit of Christ, then the likelihood of discord and disunity is not only probable but certain! What should our speech be like? Paul tells Titus...

Titus 2:7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness

Titus 2:8 and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

d. The source of our Knowledge.

1 Corinthians 1:5 For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge—

If Jesus is not the source of our knowledge then we are in huge trouble! In the Corinthian church there was the beginning, the seeds of a heresy that would eventually infect the body of Christ, the church, in a terrible way. It was called Gnosticism. It would cause great division and harm within the body of Christ. Gnosticism is a word that derives from the Greek word Gnosis which means knowledge. At least two different branches of Gnosticism later developed in the early church. I don't have time to get into the nuances of these two philosophies, but suffice it to say they were both heresies! Both of these lines of thinking developed because people began to be wrapped up in their own knowledge. It's not that knowledge is a bad thing in and of itself, but sometimes people get to a place in their knowledge where they become prideful and they begin to think they know everything about everything and they must make sure everyone sees everything exactly as they do because everyone else is just wrong. Folks, it's not wrong to have strong convictions and beliefs that God has led us to embrace, but for heaven's sake, let's not become prideful and let's make sure Jesus is the source. Prideful knowledge leaves little room to even acknowledge God's grace, God's kindness, God's gifts, and God's love. This kind of pride divides the body of Christ because it is not based on love! Paul would later say this to the Philippian church...

Philippians 1:9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,

Philippians 1:10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

Philippians 1:11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

e. The source of Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 1:7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

Jesus is the source of all of the spiritual gifts within the Body of Christ through His Holy Spirit. You can grow and develop the gifts God has given you, but the basic ability to have a spiritual gift is there because it was given to you by Jesus! The case continues to be built for agreeing with one another as...

4. Paul establishes that the endurance of the church is through our relationship and fellowship with Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1:8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's because of our relationship with Jesus! He has saved us by taking our blame, our shame, our sin and has made us sons and daughters of God! Our salvation is secure to the very end! How do I know this to be true? Watch this next verse...

1 Corinthians 1:9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Aren't you glad God is faithful! Aren't you glad we depend on God's strength and not our own? Aren't you glad God has called us into fellowship with Jesus? Aren't you glad that God's grace keeps us saved and secure till the very end? Aren't you glad that when we are unfaithful, God remains faithful! We depend on His strength, His faithfulness and the fellowship we have with God through Jesus because His Spirit lives within us. Paul wrote a letter to the Colossian Church in which he said...

Colossians 2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,

Colossians 2:7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

You see, it is always a temptation for us to want to figure out a way to get the glory! We want to figure out some way we can work for and earn our salvation. Then we can brag about what we've done. The world's religions teach that it's what you do that gets you into heaven. But Biblical Christianity teaches it's not what I do for God, but what God did for me when He sent His One and Only Son Jesus to die for my sins, that gets me into heaven. So if you can't work to

get your salvation, you can't work to keep it! You are saved by grace and you stay saved by grace! We are adopted into the family of God and that's irrevocable. But once we receive that precious gift, I think we can all agree that we should be so thankful, so eternally grateful that we would want to live our lives in such a way that others can see our gratitude!

And listen to these powerful words from Peter the Apostle...

2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

2 Peter 1:4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

2 Peter 1:5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;

2 Peter 1:6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;

2 Peter 1:7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

2 Peter 1:8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:9 But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

Can you see how Paul and Peter agreed in these major and foundational doctrines and were adamant about teaching the church as a whole to do the same? In fact, Paul, in our text, has been building his case for our one another command for today and now...

5. Paul establishes that unity within the church is the motive behind the command to agree with one another.

1 Corinthians 1:10 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.

The people of the church at Corinth were arguing about everything. The church at Corinth had issues. Food issues, marriage issues, Lord Supper issues, spiritual gift issues, leadership issues, how to wear your hair issues, legal disputes, and the list goes on. Paul tells them that this was destroying their ability to be one in mind and thought. In other words, they couldn't achieve their God given purpose and mission if they didn't stop the constant bickering. This command was given because God wanted them to be united not divided! Paul then gets specific...

1 Corinthians 1:11 My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

1 Corinthians 1:12 What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

People were choosing sides and choosing leaders. Some said they were in the Apollos camp, some Cephas, some Paul. Some said, "I follow Christ!" As I said last week, that's what we all should be doing, but in this context, those folks may have been saying that just to out "Spiritual" the others! The problem was not necessarily the doctrinal differences of these leaders, it was the spirit of disunity and spiritual pride that had taken over. It's interesting that Paul doesn't go after the different factions, he even listed himself as being one of the names people were using to bolster their positions. Paul goes after the overall spirit of disunity in the church. Later in his letter he would write...

1 Corinthians 13:2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

So even if you've got all the facts straight, doctrinally, and theologically, if you're not doing things in a Christlike, loving way, God's Word says that stinks, it's sad, and it doesn't glorify God! What is the answer? How do we come to agree with one another?

6. Paul establishes the only way for the Church to agree with one another is to keep the main thing the main thing.

1 Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,

1 Corinthians 1:15 so no one can say that you were baptized in my name.

1 Corinthians 1:16 (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.)

Who was Crucified for you? When you painted the picture of your faith, was it the person who baptized you that was important or the person in whose name you were being baptized?

Raymond Bryan Brown put it this way in the Broadman Commentary...

"The basis of unity is the gospel of the grace of God, revealed in Christ Jesus. It is folly to suppose that Christians can find a basis of unity in conflicts over theological issues or human personalities when they deny the unity that is fundamental to the community Christ creates. Factions split the body of Christ and constitute a clear denial of the gospel of grace and peace. Christ cannot be divided; so when his church is divided, it denies Christ by making him a source of division among men, when he has come to men to be a source of healing."

The writer of Hebrews talked about the great heroes of the faith in the Old Testament and then gave some awesome wisdom. I shared this passage with you last Sunday night at our vision meeting. It undergirds our vision for next year to see our extraordinary God working through

ordinary people to transform lives! The way we will see that happen and the way we find the ability to agree with one another is this...

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Paul ends our text with a very strong statement about the main thing...

1 Corinthians 1:17 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.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

The message of the Cross is central to the message of the church. It always has been and should always be. The cross shows what lengths God would go to in order that we might be saved. The cross reminds us of our purpose, our mission and our vision! What Jesus did on the cross makes our salvation as individuals possible. What Jesus did on the Cross makes our unity as a church possible. As members of the body of Christ, we should rally around the Cross of Christ. We should let what Christ did on the Cross unify us. We don't have to agree on every little detail of faith, but we should gather around the Cross in awe and in agreement with one another that together we will take up our cross and follow Jesus. Let me end with these verses on the cross...

Galatians 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

Colossians 2:14 having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Let's PRAY!

Small Group Study Questions

1. What are some of the reasons people have such a hard time agreeing with one another?
2. In your experience, how many times are disagreements within a church based on major “non-negotiable” issues and how many times are disagreements based on issues of a far less important nature?

1 Corinthians 1:10 (NIV) 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.

1 Corinthians 1:11 (NIV) My brothers, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

1 Corinthians 1:12 (NIV) What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas ”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

3. Paul reminds the Church at Corinth to keep the main thing the main thing. What main thing is Paul talking about and why is it so important?

1 Corinthians 1:17 (NIV) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV) For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

4. What are some things we can do to facilitate unity within the Body of Christ?

1 Th 5:15 (NIV) Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

1 Th 5:16 (NIV) Be joyful always;

1 Th 5:17 (NIV) pray continually;

1 Th 5:18 (NIV) give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.