



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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JUMP START #505

1 Corinthians 1:10 *“Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*

Agreement. Unity of heart, mind and purpose. On the same page. These are common expressions to define oneness and unity. Being of the same mind is the first step for success in any venture. A sports team, in which the players and coaches are not in agreement, will not win many games. A business which has upper management disagreeing with each other about plans, policy and function, will not do well. The same goes for a church. When the eldership does not agree among each other, or the preachers and elders and not on the same page, disaster awaits.

The Corinthian church was an example of a church in the midst of terrible problems. Page after page illustrates the multiple layers of issues, hurts and problems facing that church. The root of those problems was a faith issue and division among themselves. This lack of unity kept coming up in issue after issue. It affected how they treated one another. It affected their worship. The problem seemed to be growing worse instead of better. Problems do that. They don't fix themselves nor do they ever really go away on their on. They have to be addressed and dealt with.

This ancient lesson is not one left to history. It is repeated in every generation and churches today suffer from this same problem-folks, especially leadership, not being on the same page.

How do we become one in mind, heart and voice? It's not easy. It wasn't easy then. Back in the first century world you had massive differences between Jews and Gentiles, masters and slaves and even men and women. The differences were ethnic, social, political and spilled over to the religious. Today, many of the differences are theological, different mindsets as they see the Bible. Some want to be sure and safe and take a very careful, conservative approach to

things. They tend to think things out, consider every possibility and fall on the safe side the of things. Others just don't think that way. They are more progressive in their thinking. They are influenced by the way things are done by others and they tend to want results and are more comfortable with risks. They view their more conservative brethren as slow and doing nothing. The progressive thinkers are viewed as being careless with the word and modeling the world too much.

Different thinkers...different approaches...different ways. Is there any hope for these folks to be one in mind, heart and voice? Is the only practical solution dividing into two different kinds of churches so each can have their own way?

Across the county many congregations are at that crossroads. Often the leadership is older and the younger members want change and to do things. Without coming to one mind, trouble brews and storm clouds build on the horizon and Satan smiles-for he anticipates a mess coming.

How do you become one? It starts with each person becoming one with Christ. Discipleship demands that we deny our self and follow Him. That works in discipleship, it also works in fellowship. Expressing what we want and having our way is a sure and fast way to division. Through this there must be an atmosphere of open, honest and fair communication. That is the only way this will work.

What happens at home? Husband and wife have a disagreement. Maybe they leave the room mad. Feelings hurt. He doesn't care. She doesn't listen. Those feelings won't leave until apologies, forgiveness and an understanding of the commitment to each other is understood and expressed. The couple must talk things out. If they can't, they may have to go to counseling.

So, among brethren, we must have an avenue to discuss and talk. We must affirm our commitment to stand upon the word of God. Our differences, desires, and thoughts must be expressed and understood. An atmosphere of wanting to be one must prevail. Shouting, threatening, name calling, accusing, finger pointing only widen the differences.

God wants His people to be one. It was one of the final things Jesus prayed about. The spirit and tone set by the leaders will determine how serious they are about being one. Folks will see. Follow the leader is generally the way we do things.

Page after page, Paul hammers out the differences that the Corinthians faced and suffered with. Christ is the theme. Christ is the way. Christ is the hope.

One mind is a wonderful thing and blessing when it's there. Husbands and wives thinking the same. Brethren thinking the same. The disciple thinking the same as His Lord. It is here that true peace is expressed. Joy abounds and good things happen.

Be of one mind...is it possible? Yes. Is it easy? Never. It begins with communication. It begins with you and I taking the first step. It begins with wanting to be one. It begins with Jesus.

Roger Shouse

