

What's the Difference? 1 Corinthians 12.1-13 CTW Eph 4.1-6

One day, Bobby Joe went walking across a bridge when he saw a man standing on the edge, about to jump off. Immediately he ran over and said "Stop! Don't do it!" "Why shouldn't I?" the man asked. Bobby Joe said, "Well, there's so much to live for!" "Like what?" Religious or atheist, Christian or Jewish, Catholic or Protestant, Are you Episcopalian or Baptist, Baptist Church of God or Baptist Church of the Lord, Original or Reformed, Reformation of 1879 or 1915? 1915! To which Bobby Joe said, "Die, heretic scum!" and pushed him off.

3 points about this joke: 1, Baptist CofG & Baptist CofL don't exist, so not picking on anyone. 2. This joke is really about finding differences, not unity. And 3. As off as it may be, this serves as the "sugar that helps the medicine go down" as Mary Poppins would put it: The church is divided. This morning, Paul begins this section with emphasis on the oneness of the church.

1. We Confess the Same Lord. **read 1-3**

- a. Not lip service, but confession
- b. As non-Christians, they were under demons' controls, but now with the Holy Spirit, we are given self-control, freedom to confess Jesus as our Lord, which leads to:

2. We Depend upon the Same God. **read 4-6**

- a. Paul gives us a Trinitarian view, Spirit, Lord, and God. And concludes that God is active in everyone and everything.
- b. He writes the Church in Philippi that He enables us to desire and act for His purposes.
- c. And yet, though the gift and usability of gift is from God, the church tended to emphasize the person instead. Why are we competing with each other instead of glorifying God?

3. We Serve the Same Body. **read 7-11**

- a. Listed here are some of the gifts given to build up the church, and yet, perhaps they were kept for personal enjoyment instead of mutual encouragement.
- b. List is not exhaustive, for more are in verse 28, Eph. 4.11, Romans 12.6-8, and even then there is more.
- c. This list, is carried through now the Bible, but other gifts, such as cooking, music, administration. What are you gifted with? Are you using your gift for the good of the church?

4. We Experienced the Same Baptism. read 12-13

- a. Baptism is one event with 2 parts. Acts 2.38 says that baptism is the point that the Holy Spirit is given. And it's water immersion.
- b. Baptism is unifying point in process, where we are equalized. We may be different, which does not mean superior or inferior. But 1.

What does this mean?

Do we seek unity for sake of unity? No, we seek it based on the Word of God, by the Word of God.

How do we become united? Though we are one body, we are not all the same. God has gifted each of us differently. We are not competing. We are about being the witness to Winslow, to Arizona, to the World. We are to use what we have been given to encourage others. And we will look more at this next week.

But for this week, we do this by loving God, and loving our neighbor, both here in the building as well as in our community. We do this by being encouragers to one another during the week, and finally by drawing closer to God through personal worship time, through reading, studying the Word.

Then we can learn from the church of Corinth, how to be a united Church.