

Of Christ  
1 Corinthians 3:1-9  
Rev. Paulette Mixon-Weller  
February 12, 2023

And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, <sup>3</sup>for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? <sup>4</sup>For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human?

<sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. <sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup>So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. <sup>8</sup>The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. <sup>9</sup>For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

Sermon for Feb 12, 2023

Divisions are high in our country. Divisions are high in the church as a whole. Some are more progressive; some are more conservative. Some Christians barely acknowledge that others they disagree with are also Christians. My sister is the assistant to the pastors at a large

Methodist church in the South. They have to decide whether to go “Global” or go “United Methodist.” One is more conservative and the other more liberal. The stakes are high; both sides feel passionately about their stance. Division and passionate disagreement is not new in the church.

In our lesson for today Paul is upset and disappointed in the Corinthian church. They have divided themselves into groups that prefer one leader over another. This has created real division and disunity. Paul reminds them that Paul and Apollos are both only human and are mere servants of God working together.

In Acts we get a glimpse as to why some may have preferred Apollos to Paul. In Acts 18:24 it says Apollos is “an eloquent man well-versed in the Scriptures,” but on the other hand in Acts 20:9 a young man named Eutychus fell asleep as Paul talked on and on, and fell out of a window. Paul obviously had a lot of other talents but maybe public speaking was not his forte. He was obviously quite the writer. Together Paul and Apollos planted and watered the church of Corinth.

Thinking about Plymouth, each of us here contributes to the life of the church. We are all servants of God together fulfilling our call. We are in this together. None of us is higher than the other- just with different ways of serving God.

Our first love, our first allegiance is to God. Augustine said that “all sin is ultimately an attempt to fill our need for God with everything but God”(Beebe’s *Longing for God*). We need God; we need to give someone our full allegiance. It is our nature.

I bought a book years ago called “They Have a Word for It,” and it is so interesting. It is filled with “untranslatable” words and phrases from

other countries. Sometimes the meaning of a word is close to an English word but has different nuances. One such word is the Spanish word Confianza. It is related to the English word Confidence. Confianza implies “a combination of utterly eternal, unshakable reliance, trust confidence, and unconditional social support.” To talk to someone in Confianza is to “to commit to your trust his/her innermost soul secrets.” “Unconditional love is to love as Confianza is to trust.”

Putting God first helps everything else line up. Our Confianza is in God. God is the keeper of our soul secrets, the motivation behind our deeds. Our trust belongs with God, with Christ.

There was a church marquee that misspelled United. Instead of reading First United Church, it read First Untied Church. United with the i in the wrong place becomes untied. We are united in Christ. If we put ourselves or any other person or thing in the wrong place in our priority list, we become untied as individuals and as a community.

To be united doesn't mean we have to all agree on everything. It does mean we are committed to each other and to staying together.

Loving God first naturally leads to loving neighbor. No other love leads immediately to the love of others.

From The Daily Office of the Joint Liturgical Group of the British Council of Churches:

**In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy, help us to trust  
your love, to serve your purpose,  
And to praise your name,**

**Almighty God, you have chosen us as your own and you give us new life in Christ. Fill us with his spirit of compassion and love, and may his peace always reign in our hearts.**

**Almighty God, you have taught us through your Son that love is the fulfilling of the law. Grant that we may love you with our whole heart and our neighbors as ourselves; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**