

Topic	How the Gospel Grows Community
Reference	1 Corinthians 3:1-17
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Speaker	Dr Peter Ng

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1. THE GOSPEL PRODUCES MATURITY NOT DISUNITY

Last week we referred back to the problem with human wisdom causing people to polarize, to have divisions.

1 Corinthians 1:12-13 (ESV) What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

So there is this division there and he is saying to them,

1 Corinthians 3:1-4 (ESV) But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while **there is jealousy and strife** among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, "**I follow Paul,**" and another, "I follow **Apollos,**" are you not being merely human?

So there is a huge problem in this church. It is divided. That's not the only thing, if we look at the Corinthian church, it is a difficult church in many ways. Like many of our own churches in this community.

- Swayed by powerful personalities, maybe powerful preachers. They polarize to each one with their individual loyalties.
- Sexually active outside of marriage
- Questionable business practices, cheating each other, breaking covenant and contracts, suing each other.
- Swayed by the culture. Following what the other Corinthians were doing, especially the temple prostitution, taking food offered to idols.

- Don't know how to conduct themselves in worship. Everybody speaking in tongues simultaneously as if it is a sign of spirituality.
- Doubt core doctrines like the resurrection, which is the reason why Paul spend the whole chapter 15 talking about the resurrection.

This is the nature of the Corinthian church and the issue here is flesh. There are two kinds of people and Paul is saying those led by the spirit and those led by the flesh, although they are Christians because he defines in this chapter different from chapter 2, is that they are infants in Christ. They are fed with milk, which is basically basic doctrine. Where else you should be matured in Christ which is the implied issue there and you be fed with meat, deeper understanding of the word. So, the two things. When we talk about flesh, the problem is we all get kind of confused. We sync into this Greek idea that there is this flesh and spirit and the flesh is basically the bad things like murder, rape, robbery, violence, etc. Spiritual things are nothing to do with what you do in the flesh, in fact not so bad thing but still bad jealousy, gossip, hypocrisy and pride. If you go to an average Greek person, he will say look these are all desires, they are not part of me, I got my spiritual side and I have got my physical side. In fact, this is taken up in Hinduism. Here is a chapter from Hindu text,

"Contacts with matter make us feel heat and cold, pleasure and pain. Arjuna, you must learn to endure fleeting things—they come and go! When these cannot torment a man, When suffering and joy are equal for him and he has courage, he is fit for immortality".

So therefore, what the Hindus do and also the Buddhist is that they actually separate feelings, desires from spirituality. So therefore, what you do is that in both religions they detach themselves from all their feelings and desires. You do yoga, you do meditation and you pray to the various gods, but the flesh is not about feelings and desires. The flesh is the aspect of your life that actually wants to be God. The desire to be independent. So therefore with all your other desires, you desire food, comfort, sex, competency, love and affection and power, these are actual desires which God actually has given us, they are not to be rejected but they are to be utilized and embraced as a strategy to honor God. Now if you use the same desires to please yourself then it becomes flesh. Take for example, Adam and Eve, garden of Eden and here we actually have,

Genesis 3:6 (ESV) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Do you know this actual process takes place every single day. There is nothing wrong with the desire to eat, but there is something wrong with the motive behind the desire. In one case, you ate the fruit because you enjoyed it, God gave you the desire and for you to glorify him. Same thing with sexual feelings for young people, nothing wrong with sexual feelings. It is given for you to enjoy in the context of how God has made you, so that it actually glorifies God when you are participating in it, so nothing wrong. So, we actually reject that kind of theology or approach to life where all desires are evil. They are not evil, they are given by God to enjoy in gratitude to God.

When Eve decided to utilize her desires, satisfy desires in defiance makes her wiser than God. So that comes to us, the flesh is work, career, business, performance, life, health, family, nothing wrong with that. They are natural culmination of your desires. But if you utilize your desires to live apart from God, as an independent strategy then it becomes of the flesh. So when you come to church, you have got different kind of sins compared to last time, you just Christianize your sins. What happens is that, they sought the support of certain leaders, they want spiritual gifts, they want wisdom, miracles, good works, nothing wrong with all that but they use it to fill their own self-esteem, to buildup their own self-righteousness as if this will bring them to heaven and that is the flesh, and when you do that then you start to look down on others. They are not as good as you. They are not as gifted as you. They are not as spiritual as you, so you stand next to the other guy, you can speak in tongues, he can speak in Malay only and he looks bad. That is precisely the thing that breaks many churches apart. They don't do good for the glory of God, they do good for themselves.

Spiritual gifts are not a sign of maturity.

1 Corinthians 1:4-7 (ESV) I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in every way **you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge**– 6 even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you– 7 so that you are **not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

This is the very church where there is sexual immorality, they participate in temple prostitution, they are divided, Paul calls them infants. So spiritual gifts are not a sign of maturity. In fact, in chapter 13 it says

1 Corinthians 13:2 (ESV) **And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing**

So therefore, there are differences in the body, but there should be no divisions. The whole paradigm, the work of the Holy Spirit is unity in diversity.

1 Corinthians 12:24-26 (ESV) But God has so composed the body, giving greater honour to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be **no division** in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.

Paul acknowledges that in the body there are differences. There has to be differences. God reflects himself in different ways, but because there are differences, if we follow human wisdom differences causes division. Differences in Christianity should not cause divisions. The only places where there are no differences is cults, everybody wear the same. The gospel brings maturity because in chapter 2 it says,

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 (ESV) And because of him you are **in Christ Jesus**, who became to us **wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption**, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, **boast in the Lord.**"

So you are able to be filled with Christ, filled with love and you are focused on service

1 Corinthians 2:16 (ESV) 16 "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" **But we have the mind of Christ.**

The mind of Christ is serving others, pouring yourself out to others.

2. THE GOSPEL PRODUCES SERVANTS OF HIS KINGDOM

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 (ESV) What then is Apollos? What is Paul? **Servants** through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, **but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labour. 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.**

Christian leaders don't own the farm, God owns the farm which is the important thing. Famous preacher D. L. Moody says, the gospel is like a caged lion. All the preacher does is that he opens the cage, the lions come out and it eats you alive

because when you hear the word of God you are hearing God in your heart. That's how powerful the word of God is. If it is properly allowed to come out of the cage. Most of us block the cage. So basically, it is about the lion. Then we have this non-Christian idea that the leaders are all there is, we polarize around them. We have this idea in the world that the leader brings in the money. There was another church in Singapore and if you look at his book, he writes,

*FCBC has grown rapidly because of **my** strong and anointed leadership.*

So again I think there is a misunderstanding. There is International Coalition of Apostles and they write,

In the NT this person is a strategos, warrior-strategist, a general or governor in his assigned sphere. When one is sent out as an apostolos, he is the full delegate and representative ambassador of his sender. He carries in his person the full authority of the one who sent him.

So, leaders are like grasping for authority and people are trying to give them that kind of authority. We need to differentiate in scripture two things, being authoritarian and being authoritative. Being authoritarian means "This is right because I say so.". It is intrinsic. Being authoritative is 'I say this because it is right'. So which means it is delegated authority. Methodology in authoritarian leadership is coercive, methodology in authoritative leadership is persuasive. The authoritarian leader says, I know best. The authoritative leaders exist to unlock potential. Authoritarian leader, the pope, intrinsic authority to his person. He is a supreme spiritual leader of the catholic church and controls the church doctrine. If you look into Vatican 1 in 1869, all the bishops at that time declared that the pope is absolutely infallible. This is authoritarian leaders, but the trouble is Ephesians says,

Ephesians 5:23 (ESV) For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

There is no intrinsic authority in leaders. It is intrinsic in Christ. We have delegated authority.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 (ESV) What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labour.

So, you actually have authoritarian leaders, they actually abuse their leaderships. Some of the traits are:

- Special insight and authority from God
- Intolerant of criticism
- Surrounded by Yes Men
- Events designed to glorify leader rather than equip saints
- Cultivate a dependence on one leader or leaders for spiritual information
- Culture of fear and shame
- No evidence of repentance or transparency

That kind of leadership destroys the church, because you are living a lie. We are all sinners. C.S. Lewis says,

It seems that the higher we reach and the more good we achieve, the greater will be the temptation to cling to those accomplishments and use them to build ourselves up.

Leaders will use the time of the pulpit, the time in the ministry to build our own self-esteem up and others will latch on to us to be our gang, so that their self-esteem will also be built-up, but the delegated authority is limited in its nature. If you look in Hebrews chapter 13

Hebrews 13:17 (ESV) **Obey** your leaders and **submit** to them, for they are keeping **watch over your souls**, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

It is limited because there is authority that you have to submit to them, why because they are watching over your souls, you have to submit to them, not to bring them tea. Now in Romans,

Romans 13:1 (ESV) Let every person be **subject** to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God

So therefore, this is delegated authority, which means there is a limit. If you look at Mark, he talked about some of the pharisees coming to see Jesus and they asked, is it right to give taxes to Rome.

Mark 12:17 Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Which means the image of God is greater than image of Tiberius Caesar, it overrules that. Submission to human authority is always limited by our submission to God. There was a stunning letter from a detained Chinese Pastor, Wang Yi in China recently and he wrote,

I believe that this Communist regime's persecution against the church is a greatly wicked, unlawful action. As a pastor of a Christian church, I must denounce this wickedness openly and severely. The calling that I have received requires me to use non-violent methods to disobey those human laws that disobey the Bible and God. My Saviour Christ also requires me to joyfully bear all costs for disobeying wicked laws.

Submission to delegated authority is limited.

1 Peter 5:1-3 (ESV) So I **exhort** the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 **shepherd** the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 **not domineering** over those in your charge, but being **examples** to the flock.

The way of Christian leadership is different because it is delegated authority. It is completely different from non-Christian leadership which is domineering. Human authority is absolute, whereas biblical authority isn't. The attitude that motivates authority is different. Oswald Sanders writes,

"the difference between secular leadership and Christian leadership does not lie in the absence of authority but in the attitude that motivates authority, the sanctified nature of ambition and motivation."

It is the motive behind the authority. They are watching over your souls, not for shameful gain. So the spiritual authority is a person who is confident in God, he knows God, seek to find God's will, self-effacing, finds and follow God's methods, delights to obey God, motivated by love for God and man and is basically God-dependent all the time. He doesn't necessarily know all the answers. There is no intrinsic superiority. Fan clubs are based on the fact that you like the guy, you are going to follow the guy but it is a two-edged sword.

1 Corinthians 3:5-7 (ESV) What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

They were just given a particular task, what is the big deal about them. A warning for leaders, do not exalt in the glory of your members who say, oh very good, you preach very well, tomorrow anything happen people turn. They have no loyalty. Why is delegated authority limited?

Delegated authority is limited simply because we are all made in the image of God. We are all made with the kind of intrinsic image of God that allows us to relate God directly, independently to God, we don't have to depend on anybody else in that sense, we can make up our minds, we all have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, so when leaders lead they lead from the position of equality. There is no intrinsic superiority, which means the leader isn't more superior than you, when you lead on the basis of equality that he can't tell you what to do. There is no command and control position, because the command and control diminishes the person.

The word of God allows you the kind of freedom and the leaders should empower you, give you the tools to make up your decision and make up your mind because in the end you are going to answer to God, you are not going to answer to me. Leaders cannot overstep their bounds. We are to unlock the potential. We see the person and help him unlock the potential. Because we are equal, we are not better than you.

Today, we have Christian leaders who feel that they are entitled to luxuries of life, which is wrong. Paul says,

Ephesians 4:11-12 (ESV) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Our job is not the job of going out to evangelize but to prepare you to do the kind of job, but our personalities take over. Dr David Mains is a pastor of the Circle Church in Chicago. He actually shared later on that,

I allowed my own identity to merge with the church. I should have been God's man and let the church develop its own personality

Sometimes we want to stamp our ideas, our personality on the personality of the church and the church is made after your own image, which is wrong. Here we have delegated authority, which means accountability.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 (ESV) What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

Bill Hybels, senior pastor of Willow Creek. After 42 years, he had to step down recently because of a series of sexual scandals and they write in Chicago Tribune.

"We have tragically witnessed the profound wounds inflicted upon victims when an abusive leader surrounds himself with those who are supposed to hold him accountable, but instead find themselves protecting and defending him, while at the same time ignoring and vilifying those he has wounded,"

Elizabeth Elliot writes in a book called 'No Graven Image', a story of a missionary called Margaret Sparhawk. What she was doing was she was working among the Quechua people in Ecuador and key to her work was translation. She went there to translate the Quechua people's language into a written word and key to her work was a gentleman called Pedro, who understood both her language and the native language of the Quechua people. One day, Pedro fell sick, he had cellulitis infection of his leg and Margaret Sparhawk did the best she could, and she gave him penicillin. She didn't realize that Pedro was allergic to penicillin. Pedro got reaction, it got really bad and Pedro died. Not only Pedro died, there was a huge flood and all the little cards where she wrote in all the translation was washed away and as a result of that, she told all the people who supported her mission field, 'I am not giving you any newsletter, I have got nothing to write because God just took everything away from me'. Later on she actually wrote these words,

"God, if He was merely my accomplice had betrayed me. On the other hand, He was God, He had freed me".

Many of us think that God is our fellow worker. If we say God is our fellow worker, that means the agenda is yours and God is only helping, God is your accomplice.

"Margaret realizes that the demise of her plans had shattered her false God and now she was free for the first time to worship the True One...Now she had been liberated to put her hope not in her agendas and plans but in God himself."

As we serve God, we are God's fellow workers, sometimes we don't understand what he is doing.

3. THE GOSPEL PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

1 Corinthians 3:9-12 (ESV) For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. 10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For **no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

The foundation is actually the word of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18 (ESV) For the **word of the cross** is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The people in the Corinthian church were using a different foundation. They were using a foundation of human wisdom, Greek philosophy. The authority of the elders is related to their proximity to the truth. So therefore, the delegated authority you have, the stronger it is, is the closer you are to the word of God. It is like a lizard, in the dark it has got no energy. The closer the lizard goes to the sun, the stronger it becomes, same with the Christian leader. The closer they come to the word of God, the stronger they become, the more authority they have why because of the word of God.

Jonathan Edwards is actually one of the pastors who actually changed the face of American Christianity. There was great revival. In 1750, they had a church business meeting and this famous fantastic preacher got only 10% vote. Why, because for years before that his grandfather said, that people in this church are two classes of membership, one is covenantal membership and one is non-covenantal membership. Covenantal membership are those members in church who have made profession of Jesus Christ, they believe in him, they can have Lord's Supper, the non-covenantal membership is those people who have never accepted Jesus Christ but cannot take the Lord's Supper and later on what they did was allow all the non-covenantal members to take the Lord's Supper, because they were more in number. He lost and after six years he died, but he was saying the truth.

We build on the foundation of the gospel and what we do is we define things, we change the gospel. We say, sin is a sickness or addiction, sinner is a victim, sin is a flawed strategy to gain fulfillment, we change. This Bill Hybels when he was younger and what he did was, when he started his fellowship, he only had about

76 people in his fellowship. He rented a movie theatre called Willow Creek and what he did was sent three students to do a survey and the survey came back with the findings.

- Non-Christians didn't like being bugged for money;
- Program boring, predictable, and routine;
- Irrelevant to their lives;
- Always left church feeling guilty (the Christian message too negative with 'sin,' etc.)."

So Bill Hybels say, we can fix this and within a few months from 76 it went to 1000 and later on Willow Creek was like 20 over thousand strong. You see, church attendance and worldly acceptability, basically it is give them what they want, not what they need. So you focus on

- personal fulfillment,
- identity, companionship,
- marriage,
- family,
- stress relief,
- meaning
- morality

You focus on these things and the people will pack your church and that's not building on the gospel. We have to give people what they need, not what they want. John Piper writes,

"The irony is that the more you adjust obscure Biblical doctrines to make Christian reality more attractive to unbelievers, the less Christian reality there is when they arrive".

Dr John MacArthur writes,

"Watered down, diluted theology will fail to produce deep reverence, deep worship, deep repentance, deep humility, deep understanding of God's nature, His work, His ministry, His laws, His standards, His principles. It fails to make people of God, people that are God-centered."

So we need to build on the foundation.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 (ESV) Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is

burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

So therefore, we have imperishable versus perishable, it doesn't matter whether your work is gold or silver or precious stones. There are only types of works, one burns out and one doesn't. This means on the last day, Paul is not talking that you won't be saved, you will be saved but there is a system of rewards in our faith that God rewards people who work for his glory rather than for the flesh. The last day is not going to be like a courtroom where you stand there and you either live or you die. In fact, it is going to be like the Greek heroes that go for the crown.

1 Peter 1:6-7 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of **your faith- more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire-** may be found to result in **praise and glory and honor** at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Michael Phelps is about the only human being 2160 years after Leonidas of Rhodes, they both won the same number of gold medals, 12. Individual gold medals, not team. Leonidas has already died, he left his medals behind. Michael Phelps will die one day too, but Revelation say

Revelation 14:13 (ESV) And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours, **for their deeds follow them!**"

Michael Phelps medals will not follow him, whatever you do in this short life on earth are the only things that you bring along and Jesus says in Mark, it is not the magnitude or effort, you don't have to be like Michael Phelps to win, but Jesus says,

Mark 9:41... I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you **a cup of water in my name** because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.

1 Corinthians 4:5 (ESV) Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the **purposes of the heart**. Then each one will **receive his commendation from God**.

You will be judged. So, judgment day is like graduation ceremony, like you go up and receive your scroll. Some of us will have first class honors, some of you will

have second class honors, some of you are third class honor, some of you were just graduated. Samuel Hoe writes,

To overdo the sorrow aspect of the judgment seat of Christ is to make heaven hell. To underdo the sorrow aspect is to make faithfulness inconsequential

You will stand before God. I think there is certain degree of regret that you didn't get first class honor and you got second class honors. There is a certain tinge, because otherwise if there is no reference to that then faithfulness is inconsequential. It really wouldn't matter, but the overwhelming feeling from graduation is happiness, you have made it. That's a very nice picture of what judgement day will be with God.

I met a lady named Stella who was suffering from cancer and she was on her death bed. I remember she comes from a Baptist church further down near Old Town. She came with a whole bunch of people and their church had a lot of political problems and many people left. I being very naughty asked her to join our team in FBC. We need a pianist and she plays and she told, "doctor I would love to come, and my church is dying but I have to play the piano for them, I am the only one". She stayed with them. I think she would be happier here, but as she is lying in ICU at 55 years of age, I don't think she is going to make it, but one thing I will remember is that her faith. As long as they need me to play the piano, I will stay.

Life is short and so many of us are so focused on so many other stupid things, the day they tell you, "you got cancer", your time is up and it is the only time where you can honor and glorify God and you don't have to be a Michael Phelps, you don't have to be the best, giving a cup of water is sufficient. On the last day, the motives for which you play the piano, the motives on which you do this and do that will be revealed to the honor and glory of God and there is no other time where you are going to gain this. The small cup of water, the friend you gave a lift home to, God will commend you on that. That is something to live for, yet we live in a world where we never think of judgment. We never think about doing what we need to do to honor and glorify him.

4. THE GOSPEL ENSURES VICTORY

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (ESV) Do you not know that **you are God's temple** and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

The word temple in Greek is called 'Naos'. Naos is actually the word describing the 'holy of holies' inside the temple. Paul describes that you collectively are that temple. The thing is that people love temples. Non-Christians build huge temples, yet when you come to church it is a little bit different.

If we come to church as a holy time, a lot of us come late. We are treating God not with holiness, you are treating it like an entertainment, and you are totally indifferent, you can't lead but you won't follow. God is a holy God and we are a holy church, isn't that important. That's the most important thing.

Someone said, church is like the sandhill cranes. They fly thousands and thousands of miles. They are successful because of three things, they rotate leadership, they never stay with one guy up there all the time. Whoever gets tired, that fellow goes behind, next one takes over. Then they always choose a leader who can survive their turbulence. When the leader is in front everybody is honking. That's what a church is, that is what we are like, if you can't lead you honk. A church is like an iceberg, what you see in front is nothing, underneath is the power of God

17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

If you destroy God's temple with indifference, you can't lead but you won't follow, you are not bothered, you are a road block or you are fighting and the leaders are all focused on breaking you up, always trying to secure peace. God protects His temple. We may look lousy outside but inside us is the power of God. So we need to treat God's temple with the kind of pride and holiness. It is the holy time, it is a sacred time, it is the time where we honor God.

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18 ESV)

When Paul on Damascus road was encountering Jesus Christ, Jesus said to him,

(ESV) 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' Acts 26:14

The Christian church will survive. All kingdoms have fallen, the church is the only organization that survives. We grow because of the gospel, it produces maturity, not disunity, it produces servants for his kingdom, it provides the foundation for growth and it ensures victory. Paul challenges us in the end

1 Corinthians 3:18-23 (ESV) Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," 20 and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."

The challenge is don't deceive yourself. They are all fighting.

21 So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

You have the victory in Christ, so the reality in Christ is that it is very stupid to polarize against certain leaders because they all belong to you and you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God, that is a beautiful glorious reality, that if we understand this reality the church will move on in victory and unity. I hope this will be a challenge for our church for the next 10 years. The victory is already ours, let us live in the victory that Christ provides us.