

Christ Our Wisdom (1 Cor 1:10-31)

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[0 : 00] The passage today we're going to read through is 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 10 to the end of the chapter. I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this. One of you says, I follow Paul.

Another, I follow Apollos. Another, I follow Kephas. Still another, I follow Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?

Were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized in my name.

Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else. 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 : 13] 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. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.

Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased that through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called.

Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many were influential. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.

[2 : 31] God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.

And that is the word of God. And we'll just invite Pastor Johan to come up. Turn this on so you can hear me better.

It's good that you are good. Before I start, I'd just like to make a little plug for a program for young adults that we have called Bridge Mission.

It's an online program for people all around New Zealand. But we also have an in-person meeting at our office at OMF. And this time, the program will explore the question of where do I fit in missions?

[3 : 56] And it's basically about the idea that God can use your skills, your profession to open doors into going to East Asia. So we have a lady who's just returned from East Asia.

She's been working with a minority people group there. She's a criminal lawyer. She was educated as a criminal lawyer and worked in it for a while. But she will be talking about how people can use their professions to have access to people that an ordinary Christian worker just can't get to because of the skills and the professions that you have.

And so if you're thinking about that, and if you're thinking, OK, I'm really interested in mission, but I'd really like to use my profession, my education in that, then this would be a really good program for you to come to.

So I've got the link here, and I'm happy just to send you the link with all the information on it if you just come and see me. So that was one thing I wanted to say.

It's really good to be with you today. I did listen to William's message last week introducing the whole book of Corinthians and just reminding us that, you know, our identity, who we are, is really bound up in Jesus.

[5 : 17] And that's what we've been singing about, is that Jesus is the centre. He is the one that we all belong to and that we find our identity in. And this is really, really important.

As we grow as Christians, you know, coming to accept Jesus is one thing, but then we also need to realise who we are in Jesus. You know, we've been made anew. It's like being adopted into a new family, but, you know, still learning the ways of that family.

It takes time. We might be adopted. We're a child already. But, you know, it takes time to actually learn who we are. So last week, William talked about who we were, but then also the Corinthians needed to figure out who they really are.

And if you looked at who they were as a church, they had a lot of problems. There were big problems in this church. It wasn't like, you know, they were walking around, oh, we've got it all together, you know, we're all so holy.

If you look through the letter, this is one of the longest letters that Paul wrote to any church. There's over 15, 16 chapters. And there are huge problems in this church.

[6 : 31] Okay? He'd already written to them once. This is actually his second letter to them. He said, I've written a letter to you previously in chapter 5, verse 9. He says, I've already written to you about sexual immorality.

So sexual immorality in the church was rife, you know, and that was probably because of the way things were in Corinth. It was a society where there was a lot of sexual immorality, a lot of idol worship.

There were temples all around the city to different gods that people were supposed to worship. Do you know of any other problems in the church, by the way?

Is there anything that comes to mind? Some of you must have read the whole letter and kind of remember some of the things that were talked about in this letter of 1 Corinthians. Is there anything that comes to mind for you?

About what? Yeah, what kind of false accusations? Yeah, yeah, that's true. Yeah, they were taking each other to court. So in chapter 5, you know, there are lawsuits among you, you know.

[7 : 36] Somebody has done something wrong to someone else or someone's taken someone to court, you know, terrible. You know, it's like that sort of nullifies your whole witness before the community when there are things like that going on.

There was arrogance. People were looking down on one another. It was a really messy situation when they were doing communion together. Some people were eating first and not leaving any for people who came later.

There was a lack of love. You know, they didn't realise that they're all basically one body together. So Paul spends a lot of time telling them, you're all one body, you know. You've got to learn to work together to love one another.

And that's where we get this beautiful passage about love, you know, which is... But he needs to say that to help them to see what they were lacking, what they were not doing.

And so as you read this through this letter, you'll see that there were a lot of problems and issues in the church. And so today we're going to be looking at 1 Corinthians 1, verses 10 to 31, and it deals with one specific problem that they had, and that was what?

[8 : 45] Division. Yes, there was factions and divisions in the church. People were dividing off and saying, I belong to this person, I belong to that person. And this, you know, this person baptised me, so I belong to them.

And this one's a better speaker, and so I follow that one. And, you know, they were sniping and quarrelling with each other about that. So Paul encourages them to be united in their faith and to focus on the message of the cross, because ultimately that is what is going to bring them all together.

Now, it's very easy for divisions to form in the church. Have you noticed that? If you've been around a while, you would have seen it's really, really easy. People tend to form into little groups and factions all the time.

It's a little bit like high school, first year of high school, you know. Everybody has to find a group to belong to. You know, you've got the nerds, and you've got the sporty people here, and you've got the, you know, everybody else over there, and, you know, depending on what you're interested in.

You know, people are like that. You know, in high school, it's almost ridiculous how groupy and clicky people get. But at heart, you know, we're all a little bit like that.

[9 : 56] We want to belong to a little group. And especially when you're in a church like this, which is actually very diverse, okay, because you've got language differences.

You've got generational differences. You've got people coming from different parts of the world. You know, just because you come from a Cantonese background doesn't, you know, you can come from many different countries.

Okay, so it's very, very easy for cultural misunderstandings to occur and for people to become divided and say, oh, those people over there, they're no good, you know, and we've got all the answers, and if we only did this, you know, things would be much better.

This happens all the time. And it's not just this church. It's every church. Now, I deliberately didn't ring Pastor William and say, hey, what kind of divisions are there at your church?

Because I didn't want to come in with any preconceived ideas. I'm a guest. I'm a visitor. I know nothing. And I don't really care that much about your divisions, to be honest.

[11 : 06] But what I'd like you to do now is I'd like you to just divide into some groups. Hang on. I'm going to move this forward. Corinthians Church, many problems.

Okay. And ask you the question, what kinds of things? I don't want you to pinpoint specific ones, okay, that there might be a division that you're all thinking about. But what kinds of things can cause division at PCBC?

So just take a bit of time, talk among yourselves in twos or threes, and just come up with a few answers for me. Okay. Just talk about it between yourselves. Thank you.

Okay. Okay. Now, the good thing about having this kind of mic is I can walk around the room and I can talk to people.

So who's got an answer? Who's got one thing that can cause a division in the church? Do you want to say? You don't want to say? Okay.

[12 : 49] Who'd like to say something? Just one thing. One word. Okay. You guys were... Come on. Just one thing. Pride. Pride.

Pride. Okay. Yeah. Some people are very proud. They never want to apologise or give way, you know. Once they've decided, that's it. There's no flexibility. Yep.

That can cause divisions. Anything else? Sorry? Age. Age. Age. Yeah. So there's generational differences. Different generations think differently about different things.

I'm going to give you an example of that in a minute. Yep. What else? Someone's pointing. Either. Either. Um... Meetings.

Like... Meetings where people talk a lot but don't get much said. Right. Okay.

[13 : 44] All right. So meetings where people talk a lot but don't listen. Is that what she means? Yeah. Okay. All right. Good. Anyone else?

Yeah. Different ways to worship. Yep. Different ideas about worship. Yeah. I remember when I was working at a Chinese church, I decided to play some music before the service started.

And, um... It was kind of modern music. It wasn't old church music. And, uh... One of the ladies comes in. She wasn't Chinese, by the way. She was Anglo.

So I can say this. She goes, What is that noise? I thought, I'll never do that again. Okay. Yep. Anyone else? Yep.

Um... Difference in beliefs and opinions. Yep. Difference in beliefs and opinions. So theologies. There's all kinds of different things people can disagree about. And we are Protestants, aren't we? So that means that we protest.

[14 : 46] We protest anything we don't like. Okay? Protestants are, you know, very good at dividing and forming factions. Okay? Yeah. So there's some of the things. Any others that you'd like to mention?

Yes. So language is a big one, of course. Because you can't understand one another if you can't really talk clearly about what you mean and what you intend. And sometimes with language, I've found that, you know, you might say something, but you actually understand it.

The people who are listening understand you differently. So they might think you're being really rude when you're actually trying to be very polite or the other way around. And so, you know, language can actually...

It's so easy to miscommunicate with language. I pastored in a Chinese church. And just as an example, I had to run the Friday Night Youth Group.

And we used to finish the program about 15 minutes early just to give the kids time just to hang out with each other for 15 minutes. And one day, after I'd been there about four months, the parents called a meeting.

[15 : 56] And it was a very serious meeting about a very serious issue to do with a Friday Night Youth Group. And the problem was these 15 minutes of hanging out time.

And I was the pastor. I was new. I was young. I didn't understand what the problem was. And so they all sat around. There's about 20 parents at this meeting all sat around discussing these 15 minutes very, very solemnly, very, very seriously, very, very concerned.

And I sat in this meeting and it went on for 45 minutes. And I couldn't understand what the problem was. I just... It just... It just flew over my head like a jumbo jet.

And so I had to go and ask. I had to ask one of the... The lady who was actually the secretary of the church. I had to say, What's... What is the problem here? What is the problem?

And so she had to explain it to me. She said, Well, the problem is that they actually think that this unstructured time is very dangerous because some of the boys and the girls might, you know, start getting together and sneak out the back or whatever.

[17 : 05] No, that's not a problem. Like, we're watching them the whole time. But apparently because some of them were actually lying on the floor playing a game, some... One of the parents had seen this and thought this was highly inappropriate and thought, Goodness me!

You know, so different values. Different values about, you know, how you structure people's time and, you know, and I had to accept that. I had to say, Okay, this is, you know, something the parents don't like and, you know, okay, we have to adapt this and make sure that we don't give this impression that, you know, there is immorality going on.

You know, that there's... So, you know, it's very easy for things like that to be either misconstrued or miscommunicated or misunderstood and for people to take things the wrong way or think that something is too loose or something is not appropriate just because there's different body language or there's different ways of doing things.

And so, we can almost expect misunderstandings and the potential for division to occur whenever you have different cultures trying to work together.

And by different cultures, I also mean different generations because most of you are growing up in a very different culture to what your parents have grown up in and so, you know, you're living in a church which is actually very multicultural.

[18 : 34] And so, Paul sets the stage for the rest of the passage and he begins by pleading with them. He says to them, I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you but that you be perfectly united in one mind and thought.

Okay? So, that's what he's saying to them. That's the heart of the message. So, he's urging them to come together in a spirit of unity and to seek to work together and to understand one another.

And then, that means that we have to also suspend judgment. You know, so often we're quick to judge, you know, and we say, that's wrong or that's bad, you know, when someone else has a different opinion and a different outlook and we have to take time to really listen, to try to understand people because division can tear a church apart and we have to think the best of each other.

We have to think, well, we're all coming here to worship God and to follow Jesus together and so we have to work out the best way of trying to do that together. And so, he goes on and addresses the whole issue of factionalism where people say, you know, I follow this person or I follow that person or, he's pointing out that even those who claim to follow Christ are causing division within the church.

So, you know, some people are saying, well, I follow Jesus, you know, and even there, it seems like people are actually creating a division by saying that. You're all wrong because you're following a person and I'm following Jesus.

[20 : 19] So, you have to be very careful about that. There's obviously not a lot of love going on between these different factions and Paul gets to that later on and he returns to this idea of factions in chapter five as well.

So, it's obviously a really big problem that has to be dealt with because he comes back to it time and time again. And so, in verse 13, as he's summing up, he, you know, he reaches this point where he says, is Christ divided?

And it's a rhetorical question. The obvious answer is, okay, no, Christ cannot be divided and therefore Paul argues that the church should not be divided either.

Instead, the focus should be on the message of the cross and so then he moves into this idea that we find true wisdom from God in the Lord Jesus.

And so, this is where we actually learn to deal with things like divisions and factions because this is where we learn to grow up when we find wisdom through the cross of Jesus.

[21 : 24] And he says, 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. You should have already memorized that one.

Okay? Paul is saying the message of the cross which is the foundation of the Christian faith is seen as foolish by those who don't believe. But for us who are being saved it's the power of God.

Now, why is that the power of God? You know, it seems from one point of view it just seems so ridiculous that a Jewish man who died 2,000 years ago can actually change the lives and the whole direction of history today.

Does that make sense? I mean, when you put it that way it's like, that's ridiculous. It doesn't make any sense. It only makes sense in the context of our relationship with God that the whole of humanity has wandered away from God and has said we don't want you.

We want to do our own thing. And God says, well, we need to be brought back together. So he sends his own son into the world to give his life as a punishment for the sin that we deserved.

[22 : 51] We are the ones who should be punished for what we've done from walking away from God and ignoring him and living our lives our own way. But instead, Jesus has taken that punishment on our behalf.

And we are now free. We are now free to turn back to God and be restored into a relationship with him so that we can live as one with him, with him as our father, with nothing between us.

We don't have to live our life out of guilt and shame. That's not what motivates us anymore. We're motivated because we've experienced the love of God in our own hearts and that changes us.

Paul then contrasts the wisdom of the world with the wisdom of God. He writes like this. He says, For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.

So the wisdom of the world which values knowledge and experience and authority, all that is going to be frustrated because God has called the weak and the foolish to himself.

[24 : 09] You know, most cultures value wisdom, don't they? The whole book of Proverbs in the Old Testament is about wisdom.

You know, get wisdom, pursue wisdom. Chinese culture values wisdom. Greek culture that Paul writes about was really big on wisdom and that's why he talks about it so much because they thought that they were so wise.

They had all the Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, all of them were very wise men and they addressed the question of how do we live well?

You know, how do we live in such a way that it brings true joy and happiness to us? Epicurus had one way. The other group was the Stoics who lived another way through discipline but ultimately the way was to live a good life, to live a life that brings satisfaction but you know what?

It was all based on the self. It's all about how can I? What is it that I can do? God's wisdom is so different because it's based in God through what Jesus has done for us so it becomes a completely different side of wisdom it's almost like wisdom flips on its head.

[25 : 36] Have you ever heard of this one? No, I was going to give you one example first. When I became a Christian one of my friends I used to talk to him about Jesus and how important it is to follow Jesus and his motto or his word of wisdom was God helps those who help themselves.

Okay, I don't know if you've heard that one but that's sort of like a refrain almost and it sounds so good God helps those who helps themselves. Well, that's, yeah, that's true but it's all about you, isn't it?

It's not really about God. Here's some Chinese ones. A wise man makes his own decisions but an ignorant man mindlessly follows the crowd. That's true.

If you are planning for a year sow rice. If you are planning for a decade plant trees. If you are planning for a lifetime educate people. It's true.

It's very wise, isn't it? Listening well is as powerful as talking well and is also as essential to true conversation.

[26 : 45] Very wise. If people are of one heart even losses can become gold. Okay, true, very true but there's not a word about, you know, what we're really trying to achieve is, you know, not about us.

It's not about me having a successful and a good life. What we're talking about here in terms of God's wisdom is living a life that brings honour and glory to God.

Not about you. It's not about you living a life well. It's about living for Christ. Paul's talking about godly wisdom and it's so different to worldly wisdom.

It doesn't make sense. Why would an all powerful God who made every galaxy and star in the universe choose to come down on our little tiny planet, live a life here and then give his life in such a cruel and barbaric and an inhumane way on a cross like a common criminal?

From people's point of view, it just doesn't make sense. But God chooses the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.

[28 : 16] He writes, but God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of the world and the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before him.

So God uses unexpected people and situations to accomplish his purpose. He doesn't choose those who are wise and powerful in the eyes of the world, but instead he chooses those who are humble and faithful, and he can even choose you.

And because we have this new life in Christ, we don't have to compare ourselves to others. God loves you just as you are.

If you belong to Christ, you need to be prepared to be like him in his death and in his life. You don't have to win every argument. You don't have to become the most powerful person in this church or at work or in your family.

You don't have to be proven right. You don't have to be admired or respected to have a sense of self-worth because God loves you just as you are, not as you necessarily want to be, and that should be enough.

[29 : 41] You don't need to cling to others for your sense of self-worth. You don't need to be desperate to be accepted by the people that you admire, to be in the in crowd.

You don't have to prove yourself to anyone else, not your parents, not your boss, not your friends, not your partner. When we have a clear sense and confidence of our identity in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we don't need to put ourselves above others.

And that is the key to overcome divisions in the church. because we don't have to win. We are just simply trying to work together to be united in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So Paul's message to the Corinthians is very clear. They must come together in unity and focus on the message of the cross, not on each other and their own little groups.

They must remember that the wisdom of the world is ultimately futile in the face of the wisdom of God. And that God uses unexpected people and situations to accomplish his purpose.

[30 : 56] And this is really important that we take this to heart. Because we can fall into the trap of division. And when we allow anger to set in or bitterness, that's when people, God or Satan, can really use that to twist us and create situations of divisions in the church.

And they just become bigger and bigger and bigger. So it's really, really important that we come together, we're united in our love for Christ and for one another.

That we are humble and faithful. And that is ultimately the distinctiveness of our true Christian faith. Not by being the boss or by being the biggest or the one that everybody admires.

So we see this happening in Corinth and we see it happening in churches all over the place. And we see Christians gravitating towards different leaders or pastors or aligning themselves with certain denominations or theological positions or cultural background.

We do it because it's comfortable and it's easy. because people in those groups get us. They understand us. But the downside of it is that it sometimes creates a sense of rivalry or competition and it can cause us to lose sight of the message of the cross.

[32 : 27] What it's really all about. One Christian leader in the USA pointed out that Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in the country.

whites worship with white people. Blacks worship with blacks. Chinese go to Chinese churches in New Zealand, probably not that different. We've got Samoan churches, Tongan churches, Arab churches, Greek churches, Egyptian churches.

Even the youth have their own churches that are kind of youthy, that do the youthy things and upbeat worship. worship. And then we have all the different theologies.

We have all the different Protestant groups and then we have the Orthodox and then we have the Catholics and they have their own little groups as well. It just goes on and on. I mean it's understandable that people worship in their own tongue.

I'm not an idealist in that sense. I'm not naive and recognise that, you know, sure, you need to have different language services because it's not easy for people to go to a church service where they just can't understand anything.

[33 : 39] But, you know, can you imagine if Paul would have said, ah, it's too hard for the Greeks and the Jews to worship together. Let's just start our own churches. Let's just let the Greeks go and do their own Greek thing and the Jews go and do their own Jewish thing.

He never said that, did he? He said, you know, we have to learn to work together and to get along. We're all one. So Paul warns us against valuing the wisdom of the world over the wisdom of God as well.

You know, as young as people, you know, we're often bombarded with messages of the world, how we should value, how we should live our lives. You know, we're so told over and over again that success is measured by our achievements, our social media following and our material possessions.

And this is something that comes across all the time in our workplaces, sometimes in our families, sometimes in many other forums as well. The wisdom of the world is ultimately futile in the face of the wisdom of God.

So we have to align ourselves with God's wisdom, which values love, compassion and service to others. We shouldn't be afraid to embrace our weaknesses and our vulnerabilities.

[34 : 54] You know, God can even use our flaws to accomplish his purposes. We don't have to prove anything. We should seek to live our lives in a way that honours Christ and reflects his love to the world around us.

Sometimes that might mean that we have to put up with decisions we don't like or leadership that we don't really agree with. Sometimes we might have the opinion to express what we think.

But we need to make sure that we do it in a loving and a respectful manner so that we don't add to the divisions that are already there. Striving for unity means having to make some sacrifices and not having everything our own way.

And you know, that's okay. Because ultimately, God is in charge of the church. So I just want to finish with a few practical hints, okay, to make sure that we're part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

Because it's so easy to kind of become distracted, you know. And here's a little quote. Humility is a weakness. It's not a weakness. It's relying on God's strength.

[36 : 10] Okay. So what can we do about that? How do we live that out? Okay. So how do we fight divisions and factions springing up? Okay. So put Jesus before your leaders.

Leaders fail all the time. Don't expect leaders to be perfect. Don't expect them to always make the right decisions or have the right mindset. Leaders are fallible. Okay.

And you need to encourage them and try and help them to be godly. You know. Just in the last few years, I got ChatGPT to look up a few leaders who've had moral failure in their lives in the last couple of years.

And ChatGP wasn't good, by the way. It was hopeless. They were all American for a start. And I had this big argument with ChatGP. What about this person?

What about that person? And said, oh, yeah, yeah, I'm sorry. My database is, you know, not complete. Anyway, Bill Hybels. You heard about Bill Hybels?

[37 : 10] Big church in Chicago? Yep. Anyway, he had big problems. Mark Driscoll. Have you heard of Mark Driscoll? Yeah? What was his church called again?

Can't remember. It's already Mars Hill. That's right. Mars Hill Church, you know, he was arrogant, you know, a little bit abusive in some of the things that he said. Ravi Zacharias.

Now, there's a big one. You remember him? Okay. And he's gone. Okay. I won't tell you what he got up to. George Pell. Here's another one. The Archbishop of Sydney, Catholic Archbishop.

He was put into jail. Not very good. And Jonathan Fletcher actually knew him. He's gone. Yep. All basically moral failure.

Okay. So don't expect leaders to always do the right thing. Because they're just like us. They're fallible. They're vulnerable. Okay. So don't be surprised.

[38 : 13] But, you know, make sure that you are encouraging them and helping them to stand strong in the Lord Jesus. Okay. Don't be part of, don't allow cliques and factions to form.

Okay. Sometimes it happens really subtly, you know. Oh, we're just, you know, we're part of a group here, but we won't let that person in. You know. That's not Jesus' way. Okay.

Jesus is always inclusive of everyone. And make sure that, you know, even if you have exclusive groups, don't, don't make that a thing. Okay.

Don't look exclusive. But we need to make sure that we are involving and including everybody as much as possible. Okay. And there are all sorts of little subtle ways that we can do that. And sometimes we do it out of selfish reasons, but we have to be wary of that.

Stand above them. You know. Don't take sides when people are taking sides or cut off a whole group of people who don't think like you do or who follow a different leader. Just work harder to show friendship to those who are not part of your group to make sure that you're overcoming these little cliques and factions that before they set, you know, before they become a permanent feature of the landscape.

[39 : 25] And welcome newcomers. Okay. This is so important. Make sure that when new people come that you are, you know, you make them feel included. First of all, greet them, but then make them feel apart and give them a sense of belonging as well.

You know, don't just say, oh, yeah, yeah, everyone's welcome. You know, we're happy you're here. But then, you know, oh, we're all going out. We're all going out for dinner afterwards, but I'm sorry, you know. It's just for us.

Okay. So make sure that, you know, you're open to making friendships with new people and including others as well. You know, if Jesus really is the true leader of the church, you know, these are the kinds of things that we will be wary of, aware of, and wary of allowing factions and divisions to form in the church so that we can honour him in the way that we worship and live together.

So that when new people come in, they really feel like they're accepted. They feel that they're a part. And, you know, you are a good witness to the community around you as well. Okay.

So why don't we pray that we do that? Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for what Jesus has done for us on the cross. We thank you that this was the way that you were wise, that you brought us back to yourself.

[40 : 50] And that is how the power of God has actually shown itself in the cross and what happened there. Help us to always look back on that and to be assured that we are loved, that you accept us, that you reached out to us, so that, Father, that we can, in the way that we run the church here, that we honour you, that we bring you glory, and that we do the things that you want us to do.

And that we show the world that Jesus is not divided, that we live under his headship. And we want to honour you most of all. We're not living for ourselves, but we're living for you, Jesus.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.