

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

SABOTAGED FROM WITHIN | CHURCH IN THE WILD

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Hey, it's good to be with you, everyone online at the campuses—welcome.

I am excited today. We're kicking off a brand new series of messages Church In The Wild. Right? Sounds provocative. What is that? What does that even mean?

Simply, we're going to be walking through, verse by verse, the Book of 1 Corinthians. That's what we're going to be doing. And we're going to get to that in just a moment.

But before we get to 1 Corinthians, I do just want to take a second and really focus in on that title, why we named it and what we're looking to do and what we want to be, actually, as a church. A church in the wild.

Let's just start with this question:

WHO IS THE CHURCH FOR?

Everyone. Right?

I hope that is what is in the back of your mind. But I know for me, growing up, I didn't think that. I thought the church was for those people in those khakis that went to that place on that day.

And it's not that anyone was against me. I just didn't feel like our two worlds collided. They were going that way, I was going this way. Maybe your story kind of resembles that, like, "I don't really know what the church is or what it's for.

So, let's go back to Jesus' commission as He sets the church in motion. What does He have to say? This is called the Great Commission and no matter what church you go to, their mission statement is built around these few lines of Scripture. So, look at what it says, Matthew 28:

"Jesus came and told his disciples, 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,'"

Is there anyone not included in all the nations? No. It's everyone:

"baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

Here's the line that I want us to really think about. It's this one here: Go.



You know a lot of times when churches begin to decline, they begin to die, they begin to close down their doors it's because they stopped going. They stopped going out into the wild.

They kind of pulled back and they said, "Let's just take care of what we have here. Let's just have these little holy huddles. But the problem is that they walked away from the mission of what Jesus set them apart to do.

And church, I just want to be very clear:

We want to be a church in the wild

We want to be a church that is going. We want to be a church that is advancing, that is meeting new people. That we are coming face to face with those who don't believe that they are the church for them. They don't believe that there is a church in the wild. We would be the one to bring them the gospel. And we would be the one that bring them back here. That is the kind of church that we want to be.

And if I could celebrate a little bit about us, that is the church that we are. When you look at our mission statement: We exist to remove unnecessary barriers that are keeping people from Jesus.

This is what we are focused on. This is why we continue to launch new campuses. We continue to go out and to spread the gospel. Because we are willing to do anything to get people face to face with Him. We are flattening mountains, filling valleys, doing everything we can to bring people to Jesus.

But, what is it that makes that so difficult? Why are a lot of us not doing that? Why is it that we leave here with so much energy but it feels like by the time we get to our cars the next conversation is, "What do you want to do for lunch?"

If I could boil it down into one word, the why we are not completely living out that mission of being a church in the wild—one word, because it's: Hard.

It's very difficult to be constantly in opposition. Once again, look at this. Matthew, chapter 11. It says:

"And from the time John the Baptist," who was Jesus' cousin. He was actually on the scene before Jesus began His ministry, so from the very beginning, "...until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people are attacking it." Matthew 11:12 (NLT)

That's why. It's because when we go out from here I think a lot of times we have this idea that God's mission is going to go forth and it's just going to move peacefully and no one is going to notice and no one is going to care and it's just going to happen. And more and more people come to know Jesus. But that's not what it says. It says, the



kingdom of God, which is just the place where the people of God live, the church—it says the kingdom advances...

And God's kingdom is different than any kingdom on the earth. It's not set to one geographic place. It's wherever we are. That's where God is. And that's where His kingdom is.

And it says that it only advances through force. It's being attacked violently from the outside. That's what it means to be a church in the wild. It means to be willing to go out into the darkness, to go out into the pain, to go out to the people who think that they have no hope and that there is no God for them and bring the gospel to them.

When we study the Corinthian church in this letter we are going to learn what it means to be a church in the wild. They were for sure a church in the wild. And lucky for us, some letters we don't know too much about, but this one—we actually know a lot about the city of Corinth.

I just want to start with a map of Corinth because I think a lot of times when we talk about cities in the Bible, we act like they are just out there in fiction somewhere. It's like, "Oh, yeah. Corinth. Isn't that right next to Hogwarts? It's right there and then Corinth is over here and Mordor is over there.

No. These are real places in real time. Corinth is only 50 miles from Athens, Greece. You can go there. This is not Hogwarts. This is Turkey—modern day Turkey. This is a real place that people take trips to. And that's where this church is. It is in the heart of this city.

And this was a tough city. This is a city near the water and it would bring in a lot of travelers. There was a proverb that talked about the city of Corinth. It made the claim that not everyone can afford a journey to Corinth. And it's not because they couldn't afford it financially, they couldn't afford it morally.

A Corinthian girl, that was a slang term for prostitute. A Corinthian man, any time a Corinthian man was portrayed in a Greek play, always drunk. That is who they were. This was a city of prostitutes and drunks.

One commentator described the city like this, "The city of Corinth was intellectually alert, materially prosperous, but morally corrupt."—Leon Morris

I don't know, does a city like that sound familiar to you? Some of you are like, "Yeah, Vegas." I would even... Indy. We have some of that same stuff going on right now.

And what I want us to start with, just an encouragement from the original story of when this church was being planted; it was being planted by a guy named Paul. This was kind of his thing. He went in to cities. He started churches. And then he left to do it all over again.

Paul goes into the city of Corinth and he's planting a church and it's really hard. Why? It's because he's facing violent opposition. And he's scared. One night as he's sitting, God begins to speak to him. And I want all of us to hear these words. It says:

"One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and told him, 'Don't be afraid! Speak out! Don't be silent! For I am with you, and no one will attack and harm you, for many people in this city belong to me.'" Acts 18:9-10 (NLT)

I know when you leave places like this you can feel overwhelmed. You can feel small. It can feel like you're the only person in your family who is following Jesus, you're the only person at your job who follows Jesus, you're the only person in your school who follows Jesus and it can feel like you are alone.

But I want you to be encouraged because I believe that God is saying this same thing today: Don't be afraid. I have people in your city who are following Me. I have people in your city who are shoulder to shoulder with you I have people in your city who you don't even know who are praying for you. You are not alone.

And bigger than that, here's the comfort. Did you catch what He said? God said, "For I am with you." Somebody needs to hear that today. God is with you even when you feel small, even when you feel overwhelmed. Even when you feel alone, there is a God of this world who is with you and is for you. He's behind you.

This was a church in the wild but through God's grace, through all of that opposition, Paul plants this church. It gets going. Then Paul leaves. He goes on to continue to plant more churches. And then word begins to come back of what's happening at the church in Corinth.

And you've got to think that this was a small church. You're looking at probably of 100 to 200 people in a city of 50,000. But that wasn't necessarily the problem. The size difference wasn't the problem. If I could sum it into one line. Here was the problem the church in Corinth was facing:

It was as if the boundaries between the world and the church had completely disappeared

It was as if the boundaries between the world and the church had completely disappeared. Remember, this was supposed to be a fortress. This was supposed to be a refuge for those who were lost to come and find the love of God. It was supposed to be set apart. Jesus would say, "Like a city on a hill." Salt and light. A preservative to a dying and broken world. Holy and set apart.

But as it began to grow and time went on, those lines began to dissolve. And no longer could you tell the difference between this church and this organization. Or these people over here and Christians. They all just blended together.



And they were doing some wild things. I'm just going to give you a few. Things that we're going to be studying in this letter that I cannot believe that was what was happening inside the church.

We're going to read that there were a lot of people who were sleeping with prostitutes. People in the church, "I believe in Jesus. I'm following Him. Also, on the side, I do that." And Paul is like, "Okay, I kind of get that. That's happening around in the city. Don't do that."

But then there was also a guy who was sleeping with his step-mother. And Paul is like, "Listen. I don't even know where you got that. Because people outside the church don't even do that. You're living in a city that has no rules and it's like, 'Yeah, we don't have rules, but we don't sleep with our moms.'"

There were people who were struggling with idolatry and division. There were even a handful of people who were getting drunk at church on communion wine. And you wonder why it's grape juice in those cups. Right? We're just saving ourselves from a future problem.

But there were all of these things that were separating them. And what I want you to see, all of the problems, pretty much all of the problems you're going to see in this letter are not from the outside putting pressure on the church. They were problems on the inside.

There is no external force that is strong enough to take down the church of God. When she falls, it's because she has been sabotaged from within

I want everyone to feel the weight of that responsibility. The growth and the health of the church are not just dependent on the leadership. You are a big part of that.

And if you've been around church, maybe you grew up in the church, maybe you can talk to someone a little bit older today and if they talk about why they stopped going to their church or why their church closed, you'll hear words like: the church split.

What happened? It wasn't on the outside. They split because they couldn't have harmony on the inside. I've heard of church splits over the color of the carpet.

That's a real story where they couldn't decide on the carpet so they left the church. The church that grew people who have been entrusted with the most important mission in the world. The people who have been empowered with the Spirit of God got into a meeting and one said, "Brown," and one said, "Gray," and the others said, "Peace."

People leave because they were not doing the ministry like they once did. Or, "We changed our style of worship and I don't really like the direction that we are going."

There are all of these small, trivial things that if they could be addressed and we could have real conversations about we could maintain health. But we don't.

I want you to think about this. Church history shows us that when the church faces persecution from the outside it thrives. But when there is division and problems on the inside, it collapses.

And that's where this church in Corinth was. In the midst of this busy, wild, crazy city they were beginning to allow the outside in. This was a church that was supposed to be there to influence the city, was supposed to be there to take new ground for the kingdom, but the roles had been flipped; now the city is influencing the church.

So, here's the question I want to put before all of us today:

Is Traders Point influencing the city, or is the city influencing Traders Point?

And that's for us corporately as a church but it's also for you, "Am I influencing my job, my school, my place or am I being influenced by them?"

A lot of times we try to just point the fingers out there when we hear a message. And I really want us to hold back from that tendency this series, "Oh, well if that was better," or, "If the world was easier," or, "If they weren't so violent and aggressive this would be easier." Scripture shows us that they are not slowing down. Opposition is coming. Violence is coming.

What we can control is what happens in here. What we can control is how we view one another and that we walk out of here with unity. Are we a church in the wild or are we just a wild church? That's the set up. Alright?

So, now if you have a Bible, 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, starting in verse 1. That's where we're going to be for the rest of our time today. And I'm just going to read a little bit and break it down, teach a little bit and then continue to do this for like 16 verses.

The thing that I want to encourage you with is to bring your Bible every single day during this series. I'm going to read from here, obviously, and I'm going to take notes. But my goal is not to just teach you what the Bible says in these few verses, what I want to give is how to read the Bible—tools so that you never feel dependent on a Sunday service to connect with God.

So that no matter where you are, God will meet you right there. And you have the confidence to open up His Word and to understand it. That's what we want to give you. So bring your Bibles every single week and we'll be in them. Alright?

So, 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 1:

"This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes. I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people.

“He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 (NLT)

So, just a few things here at the top. You’ll notice this in really any ancient letter. It begins with a greeting. And they do their greetings differently. Our letters, we write at the top who this is to and then you have to go all the way to the end to know who this was from. They just put everything there at the beginning.

So, this letter is from Paul, he’s the writer, and he’s writing to God’s church in Corinth. That’s what this is. It is a letter written from him to this specific church.

And here’s what makes studying the Bible a little bit tough. We are only reading one side. Alright? So, this is one letter written to this church. We don’t know the letter that the church wrote to Paul.

So, we have to infer some things. We have to... Based on the way he says things or what he brings up, we have to know that that is a problem that they let him know about.

And I also know that writing letter is kind of a lost art. Maybe back in the 1900s we did this a little bit more, so I’m going to speak to the younger generation because I’m a man of many people. Image that you only had one side of the text message thread. Right?

Imagine all you could see was what was sent and not what was received. That’s what we are doing here. We are reading someone else’s mail. So, we’re going to have to do some work here to know what Paul is talking about.

He starts off by saying that he is an apostle. This just means that he had this divine moment with God. He met Jesus and Jesus made him a special ambassador. He gave him abilities and gave him a specific mission to do. That’s what he is starting with, “This is who I am.”

And he said, “I’m writing to the church in Corinth.” I want you to think about this. We’ve already talked about some of what Paul knows. Paul knows all of their problems. He knows what they are struggling with. He knows what they are doing.

But look at how he addresses them. He doesn’t call them by what they did; he calls them by who they are. He says to be His own holy people. And that word holy what he’s saying here is that he calls them saints. That’s the word that is being used here.

I think we all need to be a part of this—this idea that when we live together and we end up stepping on each other’s toes and we do something wrong, we fall short, it can be really easy to begin to label people or to talk to them as the thing that they did as who they are. You are a liar. You are a gossip. You are a drunk. You are these things.

But notice what Paul does here. And we can all learn from this. He knows what they did, but more importantly he knows who they are. So, he reminds them.

He says, “No, you are saints. You are God’s holy people. You have been set apart for a very specific purpose. You are sons and daughters of God. That is who you are. “I know what you’ve done, but that’s not how I’m speaking to you. That’s not your identity.

How much more could we learn from that? As we begin to communicate with people, as we begin to bring up problems when people do things or when we do things ourselves, how should we view ourselves? We are saints.

And maybe you don’t view yourself that way. Like, “I’m anything but a saint.” But there is one theologian who says there are only two types of people in the world. There are saints and there are aint’s. And neither one got the title based on what they did.

The saints are not the ones because of how well they’ve lived. It is because they responded to the finished work of Jesus on the cross. They have been made holy through His work. And now they are being sanctified for their whole life.

That is who you are. You are not what you’ve done. You are what Jesus has done for you. He has given you a new identity. Amen.

Keep going:

“I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus. Through him, God has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge.

“This confirms that what I told you about Christ is true. Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns.

“God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:4-9 (NLT)

Now, I want you to think about this. He starts by telling them who they are. Reminding them of their identity even though they have fallen away and they are not living up to that name, that doesn’t mean that they still don’t hold that name.

And then he calls them back. He says, “Hey, I want you to be reminded that you have every spiritual gift that you need.” Why is he telling them this? Because they’ve slipped away.

You’ve got to think, no one in this church grew up Christian. They grew up with their own lives, their own ways of doing things. Their ways of how they handle problems. How they dealt with the opposite sex. They had all of this.

But there was this moment when they met God and began to lay all of that down. They started following Jesus. But they did it for a little while and then they slipped back. Why

did they slip back? Probably because they weren't seeing the results that they thought they would.

Think about that in your life. Not just with spiritual things but anything. You give yourself to something. You believe in something. But then when you don't see immediate results you are like, "Ah, I've done all I can do here."

Have you ever worked out hard for like two weeks? Day in and day out, sweat—6 a.m. going at it. Diet on point. And then you walk by and you catch the mirror and you see no difference. And you're like, "I'm getting the chicken wings tonight. What's the point when I'm doing all of this and nothing is happening fast enough?"

But Paul is reminding them, "Keep your head up. Wait for the day for Jesus to return. That's what you're waiting on. Things aren't going to happen the way you thought they would, but God is with you and He has a very specific plan for what He is doing. He's saying, trust the process."

And I'm sure there are a lot of us in that space right now. You began to stop doing things one way. Now you're trying to do it God's way. But you have these moments where you're like, "I really want to do things my way. I can get things done my way. I'm going to have to get a little loud, a little violent, but it will get done."

But he's saying, "No, no. Trust the process." Why? Because God is faithful.

And there was probably a day in your life when you began to follow Jesus, when you saw God for who He was and how He felt about you. And you wanted so desperately to follow Him. And you did.

He's saying, "I want you to remember that day. And remember the faithful God who saved you back then is still the One who is standing next to you today, He has everything that you need."

And he says He has brought all of this together for your partnership. What's the partnership? What we learned about in Matthew 28, the Great Commission, to:

"...go and to make disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

Teaching them to obey everything that Jesus has commanded. And be sure of this: I will be with you always. He says, "Remember the partnership of why you were saved, not just from something but for something."

Now, what he's going hit on in this next verse, verse 10, I mean he's going to start getting into the issues of the church. And what do you think he's going to address first? What's the biggest problem that he needs to make sure...? Because you know how some people are. They read the first half of the letter and say, "I think I get it."

What is the thing that he is going to address first? What's the biggest problem in the church? Some of you are like, "Probably the guy sleeping with his mom. We should definitely get back to that."

But that's not it. What we see in verse 10 is what commentators say is the theme of this whole letter. It is the thesis of this letter. All of the other problems are symptoms, but this gets to the root of the problem of what is going on. Look at this in verse 10. He says:

"I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose. For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels,"

Imagine being Chloe in this moment, "I said that in secret, Paul. I said that in the letter." But I also want to draw attention to this. We've been talking a little bit about this over the past few series.

The way that Christians operate is different. Back in this time a woman's voice, a woman's testimony was not trusted. But it is here. Chloe was the one who spoke out. Paul takes her voice as a trusted voice and leader in the church. Just a subtle thing there. He says:

"Some of you are saying, 'I am a follower of Paul.' Others are saying, 'I follow Apollos,' or 'I follow Peter,' or 'I follow only Christ.'" 1 Corinthians 1:10-12 (NLT)

What is happening? This is the division that is happening here but he says, "I appeal to you. I plead with you. I beg of you to live in harmony." That's means to be joined together. It really contrasts with this other word here where it says divisions.

So our language is just so clean it doesn't capture the fullness of Greek words with their pictures. Division—the idea is to be torn apart, to be separated, to be dislocated from its natural place.

The way to think about this is either through a blanket or fabric that is torn, separated. But more for our context it would be like the human body. When a bone is broken. Or your shoulder is dislocated. He's saying that disunity within the church should feel like that. We should be very aware.

I don't know if you've ever broken a bone in your life. I've broken lots of bones in my life. And every single time I wasn't like, "I wonder if that was something?" No, I felt all of the pain. I've broken my nose. I've broken most of my fingers. I've broken my ankle.

But the worst time was probably when I was playing football (and I know that you are looking at me like, "Yeah, makes sense. You look like it. I thought you were a football

guy. You've got the size for it.) Yeah, that is why I was out there. I had no business out there.

But I go to make a tackle and I tackle this guy and we come down and my hand is underneath his body. My finger gets sandwiched between his body and the ground. And my finger goes one way and the weight went down. And I look and my finger is going parallel.

Now, I don't know if you know a lot about fingers. And I'm not a doctor. I'm not here to do that. But most fingers go straight up and down. Right? Like that's a rule. This one was way out the other way.

I just panicked and I grabbed it and I just tried to pull it as hard as I could. And I just thought that somehow I would become a doctor and I would have healed myself. But I looked down. Still not healed. Still to this day not healed. Actually, if you look up here there is nothing up there anymore. It kind got all pushed in.

But, what Paul is saying here, he's like, "Hey, we should be so sensitive to one another if we are one. If we are one body. The moment we have something between us, if there is anything that is separating us, it should feel like a broken bone that you need to have addressed."

It should feel like a shoulder that has been separated. And you are like, "This is unnatural. We need to do everything to get this fixed."

What could it have been that was creating such division in this church? Leadership. And not even necessarily a problem with the leadership, there were just so many good leaders that people began to line up underneath different leaders. And then it began to create division, spiritual elitism within the church.

Some were like, "I follow Paul, because Paul planted the church. He's the guy I'm following him. I'm only listening to him. No one else."

Others were like, "No, no, no. I'm not following him. I'm following Peter because Peter is like the original, the Jew's Jew. He's the one who got this thing started. I don't care what anybody else says, I'm always going back to Peter."

Others were like, "No, I'm with Apollos." And Apollos is the guy who started to take over the church after Paul left. Apollos—amazing communicator. Paul, not so much.

I was going to make a joke here about how once Paul was preaching and a guy fell asleep and fell out of a window, but I've been in this room before and have been preaching and seeing you fall asleep. And I'm just glad you weren't next to a window. Alright?

And then there was another group who almost sound noble. They are like, "I only follow Jesus." But Paul groups them with the others so it's not a good thing. Basically they

were saying, "I don't follow anyone. I don't even really need the church or any leadership. It's just me and God." And this is what begins to separate them one by one. They create all of these separate groups. Lots of leaders.

Today, at all of our campuses lots of leaders. We could fall victim to this. "This is my leader. I resonate with him. I like him." It's okay to have preferences. It's when that begins to separate us... Because we have lots of leaders, we only have one Lord.

Look at how he is going to continue to push in on this in verse 13. He says:

"Has Christ been divided into factions?"

No, the Jesus we read about earlier has been given authority over heaven and earth. He doesn't share it with anyone. He's not divided.

"Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not! I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, for now no one can say they were baptized in my name. (Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas, but I don't remember baptizing anyone else.)" 1 Corinthians 1:13-16 (NLT)

You see, the problem came when they began to separate under the very thing that was supposed to unite them. They began to almost introduce themselves in this way, "Hey, yeah. My name is John. I've been here for two years. Me? Baptized by Paul actually. Yeah. No, I know. I know."

And then people would line up underneath that. The almost felt that there was something special about who baptized them. And they lost it. Baptism, the thing that symbolically shows that we are united with God and one another.

That's what you are doing in those waters. You are standing in a watery grave. You are being lowered into death, sharing a death just like Jesus did. And then being resurrected into new life where now you are one with God and one with one another. This was supposed to be the display of unity. And somehow this had become the thing that was dividing them.

And Paul makes it really clear. He says, "No, no, no. Think about this. Was I crucified for you? No. Were you baptized into my name? No. You have lots of leaders but you only have one Lord." So, if Jesus is the One don't let anything else separate, don't let anything separate what God has joined together.

I love how disappointed he gets with them. Was Paul crucified for you? And I just want to put that question before all of us today:

WAS ___CRUCIFIED FOR YOU?



As we get going in our Christian lives it becomes easy to take on things, whether it's theology, whether it's politics—this is what it means to be a Christian and this is what it means to be a real Christian. And then we get this us versus them mentality where we're over here doing stuff and they are over there and they are less than us. And we allow these things to divide us.

I just want to put this out there. As you begin to work through all of these things in your life, things that you've held on to, bring it to this space, does it pass this test? Was crucified for you? Was that leader crucified for you? Was that family crucified for you?

I'm going to bring it up now because I know the debates have already started and now that's another one that... This is what it means to be a Christian. You can't vote like that and be a Christian. You can't vote like this and be a Christian. Was your political party crucified for you? Don't let it divide what God has united.

There are a thousand little things that could divide us. Jesus is the only one big enough to keep us united

We have a thousand reasons. There is no way a room like this or campuses like the ones that you are sitting should exist.

Chances are that this is the only place in your week where people from all ages, all backgrounds, who couldn't be any different politically, or where they were raised, but still there is this space where because we can stack hands on who Jesus is and that we are saints, sons and daughters of His, then no matter how many differences we have, we have this one thing that will keep us close. Hold on to the one thing.

Guys, this whole call is a call of unity and I just want to put that back to you. Once again, we're the church, the health of the church... Who raises their hand and wants to be a part of one our church our campuses. What's it like in there? How will I be met in there? You can't bring me into a civil war. No one wants to come in to that.

But it comes down to me and you choosing, not to ignore all of the differences, not to have healthy conversations and dialogue about all of the differences, not to share or do all of that, but at the end of the day, we're saying, "I'm not going to let that divide what God has brought together."

Over and over... If there is anyone, anyone in this church I just want to plead with you that if you have tension that you have separated from or that you are divided with someone, I would just want to encourage you to go first in the name of Jesus.

It is bigger than you and this other person or this other family. What's at stake here is the kingdom of God. And when you see a church fall, be reminded of that. It is a split that started on the inside not on the outside. And you and I are responsible for harmony, bringing things back together.



Like with a dislocate shoulder, I'm sure there is a lot of pain. But in a moment, when it gets reset, almost immediately you feel that peace and that harmony and that things are the way that they should be. So, I just plead with you, please focus on the one thing, not on the thousand others.

The other group I want to speak to is those of you and maybe you're here and you don't even know why. Maybe you were invited. Maybe you're unsure. Maybe you want to believe.

But there is another group of people who have been living with this sentiment that there is no church in the wild, "It sounds good. But I wish it was true for me. It might be true for you, but I'm too far gone. I'm too wild. I've done too many things."

I just want to say that that couldn't be further from the truth. The God whose words we are reading come from Paul. His background, he wasn't always a leader of the church. He wasn't set up to do this one thing. He lived most of his life against the church. He was leading the persecution of the church.

He was there for the execution of the first Christian martyr. His life was going way over here. He was all of the way in the wild. And God met him one day. He saw Jesus for who He really was. He placed his life and his faith in Jesus. And everything changed.

If that can be true for him, it can be true for you as well. I want you to know that you can leave here today being a part of this church. You can find harmony here. You can leave here as a saint.

And it has nothing to do with where you come from. It has everything to do with what Jesus has already done on your behalf. Jesus, the One with all of the authority in heaven and earth, God, Himself, came here, wrapped Himself in flesh and bones and lived a perfect life, one we couldn't live.

And He went to a cross and died the death we deserved. But rose three days later defeating sin and death for all. Creating a way that now we can be united to Him. We can be co-heirs with Christ. We can be sons and daughters in God's family, in His kingdom from now and for all of eternity.

That is what you are being invited into. And that is what you can receive today. And that's why at all of our campuses at the end of every service we have a team at the front of the room, right here by the stage, ready to receive you, to pray with you, to celebrate with you.

Please do not leave here without receiving all that Jesus has done for you. He has set you apart. He has a plan for you. Don't leave here without that.



Right now, as we close, I want to close in unity. So would you stand to your feet? The band is going to lead us in one more song and we are going to worship all in one voice, all in one mind, reminding us all of what God has done to bring us here to this space.

Would you pray with me?

Father, we thank You so much for today. Father, we thank You for your Word. God, we thank You for

1 Corinthians. We thank You for this church in the wild that we have so much to learn from.

God, I pray that You would give us the courage to go, to go and to push back darkness. To go and to be the light. To go and be that city on the hill. God, help us to be a church in the wild. Help us to be a refuge for those who are lost and hurting and broken.

Help us to erase the stigma that there is anyone on Your planet that is too far from Your love. No one is outside of Your reach.

And, God, I pray right now for the hard work of making sure that what we have here, that there is nothing that would separate us from You and nothing that would separate us from one another.

God, I pray that this week we would have the courage to have hard conversations. God, I pray that You would give us the mind of Christ Jesus. Allow us to lift our eyes and to see what You have done to unite us together. And that is the biggest thing. That is our identity. And if that's there let nothing separate us from You.

Father, as we stand in one voice help us to worship You today. Help us to bring all to you, Jesus. It is in Your perfect and holy name that we pray. And the church says: Amen.

