

MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

No. 7

April 15, 2024

George B. Harris, Minister
Email: bernerdharris@yahoo.com
mhcc16@yahoo.com
Church Telephone: (434) 845-3855
Minister's Telephone: (434) 215-4846

Pam Hubbard
Music Director

Brenda Harris
Administrative Assistant

Equal Standing

In the Apostle Paul's 1st letter to the church in Corinth he addresses the audience as brothers and sisters. The Apostle Paul establishes common ground with all believers as children of God. Paul's understanding is that we are all equal. Male and female are equal. Jews and Gentiles are equal. We are all children of God. The Apostle Paul appeals to the people to speak with one voice, one mind, and one purpose. How do you do that? With so many variables, opinions, and emotions, how do we speak with one voice, one mind, and one purpose? I think the answer is to stay true to the words and actions of Jesus. Paul writes the letter due to divisiveness. His appeal is unity in Christ. Paul's attitude is that divisiveness does not belong and is unacceptable. We belong to Christ. We answer to God. Our allegiance is to God. Religion is not just a Sunday morning thing. Our faith is a matter of living a life that is centered on Christ. The foremost and dominant thought should always be the word, prayer, and the manifestation of the Spirit.

To focus daily living on the life of Jesus we need to look at what did Jesus said and did. During the great temptation his response was the written word. When he was preparing to face the cross his response was prayer. As Christians, we are to live our lives centered on Christ. Life challenges you and will always tempt you and stress you out. When it does, rely on word, prayer, and the Holy Spirit. The theme that dominates Paul's letters is the theme that dominates the ministry of Jesus. It is the theme that dominates the Bible. The theme is Love. Paul's doctrine is we are one, we are equal, we center our lives on Christ, and love.

The Apostle Paul values distinctiveness of believers and appreciates any differences that we might have. However, he does not tolerate divisiveness. Unity of believers is established in God's grace, Christ's love, and the reception of the Holy Spirit. That is the basic premise that Paul founds his letters upon. Believers are united in the one body of Christ. We are united together in a common good and a common purpose to follow the teachings of Christ. To be united in the body of Christ you have to know the Lord. Not just say it but take ownership of the idea that you have surrendered your life to Christ. Paul's counsel is based on love. Love is the foundation and has the power to refocus people from competing against each other to building up each other.

We are all members of the body of Christ and this means we all have equal standing. We all use gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit to care for the common good of all. We are given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. Jesus is to be the Lord over your life. This means you do not live a life that is divided between sacred and secular. This means that you do not have two competing value systems. You have talent and are to use your talent, whatever it is, for the common good of all. You have been given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. You have been given life from the creator of the heavens and the earth. You have been given salvation from the grace of God. As we embrace our equal standing as children of God, let us in turn, show our appreciation, by using our God given gifts for the glory of the Lord here on earth.

Thank you,

George