

Navigating Truth with Love

Series: Cracks – Navigating Our Divided Times
Brad Bailey – February 6, 2022

Intro

Today I am **inviting us to into a new series**.... a series focused on helping is navigate our divided times. As I shared in some promotion of this series...

The recent season of **political divide** and **pandemic debate** has been something like a **cultural earthquake**. Perhaps the sense of magnitude differs depending on the community that one inhabits...but the wider effects cannot be missed. It's left many lives and leaders **staring at the cracks of division** ... with **varying degrees of dismay**. [1]

The **polarizing divide of ideas** about what is true and good that has **fractured relationships among family and friends**. Many have experienced the bonds of even long term relationships seem lost... with a sense of **living in different orbits of reality**.

And **most notably for us here**...the **very nature of the Christian Church in America** has been **struck with a level of division and damage** that was almost unimaginable just a short time ago.

Randy Alcorn... a nationally trusted pastor and author, recently wrote [2],

“In the 52 years I’ve known Jesus, I’ve witnessed countless conflicts between believers. But never more than in the last year. Many have angrily left churches they once loved. Believers who formerly chose churches based on Christ-centered Bible teaching and worship now choose them based on non-essential issues, including political viewpoints and COVID protocols.

The increase in Christians bickering over non-essentials doesn’t seem to be a passing phase. And it injures our witness, inviting eye rolls and mockery from unbelievers and prompting believers to wonder whether church hurts more than it helps.” - Randy Alcorn

I share that sad reality. This year will mark 50 years of knowing Jesus personally...and what I hear across the whole of Christian culture... particular in America ... **has been tragic to both our unity in Christ...and our witness of Christ**.

In keeping with the analogy of an earthquake... I believe that we are in a time similar to what might follow after a major earthquake. **After an earthquake** has caused visible damage... some fear ever going back inside...they don't trust it's safe...they need some assurance that things are sound. **Many are standing on the edge of Christian Church... wondering if it's safe**.

Some may be quick to just go back to freely living in the house because they see they some form of walls and roof are still there. They **may think that he best way to get past the drama** is to try and **ignore the cracks... and the questions they raise**.

But before someone can just consider repairs...they have to assess the damage...and ultimately **make sure that the foundations are sound and solid**. Structural inspectors often need to issue a warning... helping those effected to understand that before going back to normal... they need to assess whether the structural support may be compromised... they identify where it **may need some retrofitting to restore it's integrity**.

And they look for cracks... because the cracks are **where there is the most vulnerability to future pressure**. When pressure comes again... they will be the sources that will widen again.

That is what this series is about.

It's about **identifying those cracks that may be vulnerable...** and **seeking God's word to solidify a strong foundation** in what we believe.

In this series we'll discover the significance of staying centered in Christ... and why it is actually the most radical way of life.

We'll **engage questions** like....

How can we know what is true and right in the midst of so many **competing claims** and controversies?

What does God say to us about **how we relate to our nation....** and the problems with what many refer to as a **rising trend of Christian Nationalism.**

We'll seek to **hear God's heart** regarding some of the **current issues including** how we relate to **foreigners...** including refugees and immigrants... what God seeks in **racial justice...** and how to be **proponents of the value of ALL life...** beyond merely political positions.

If you have felt the divide of ideas over the recent season...and found it hard to grasp...I believe these weeks will provide some handles of understanding to navigate the future.

If you have just begun to explore Jesus... and found some of the recent conflicts within Christian culture to be confusing...I believe that these weeks will help you see Christ more clearly.

I believe that when we let him shine in all his distinction...we will grasp even more...how brightly he shines in all his divine goodness and glory.

Let me quickly add what this series is not about.

This series is not about simply denouncing a political party. It's not about denouncing everything Trump.... or denouncing everything Biden.

And more importantly, my focus in this series is not on political positions per se...but on the posture and positions that have emerged within Christian culture... on clarifying what God calls us to embrace...

My goal is to focus on what God makes clear about some particular issues... that can serve as **boundaries and guidelines** when things can get off the rails so to speak. It's a call to hear **God's heart ...** beyond which we can learn from one another in how we take up and apply God's heart.

And I also want to express that this series is **not a reaction to any fears or frustrations** I have **about our community... our local church.** It's **actually just the opposite.** I see a maturity that I trust ... a maturity that wants Christ to be the center...and can navigate some diversity of political perspectives.

What I realize is that it's hard to have trust if we don't try to clarify what we believe.

It's been noted that quite often if we tell someone we are Christians ... the **immediate question** they have.... but usually don't know how to ask...is....**What kind of Christian?** Are you one of them? And of course if they did ask...and you tried to answer... it isn't likely a simple "yes or no" answer.... it's about offering being able to clarify what we do believe about the issues they have in mind. **So I want to help provide some clarity** that will serve your process of trust....as well as those who come wondering what kinds of posture and positions we may have.

And today...I want to begin today with of a **more foundational call to hear the heart of Jesus...** to hear what Jesus told his first disciples **about unity.**

At the core of our communal life is Christ. We are called to receive him...and to embody his living presence. And as such, **we must hear the depth of his heart** when he neared the end of his earthly life and called his followers to be united as one... through love for one another.

John 13:34-35

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

He is pleading with his disciples... to fulfill the call of love. Why is it so significant? Because it is how the world will know that we are his disciples... that we are actually living the life he has given to us to live.

Who are they? They are not a team of lives who had initially held dramatically different beliefs about politics... about relating to the governing powers of the Roman Empire. And the life he called them to transcended that relationship with Rome. Their unity was not about getting them to have the same strategy of resolving their relationship to Rome or to Caesar. It was about their relationship to a greater kingdom that is not of this world. [3]

And then as he prays to God as Father in heaven... as he prepares for his death...

John 17:20-23

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Jesus has been praying for his disciples. And he now shifts very clearly to pray for others... for those who will come to believe... that is...he is praying for me and for you.

He is praying that we will live in the profound unity that comes from a shared life with God. Jesus is saying in effect... You have become a team ... a team united in something so much bigger than yourselves.

This is the issue he is praying for.

Will we stay faithful in loving one another as God loved us... so the whole world can know this love?

You have now known the love of the Father... for the son... extended to you.

This divine love...is what has come to save the world. That is what they must see... in order to know the Good News.

Failure is not an option if we are going to fulfill our ultimate calling to Jesus.

"If an individual Christian does not show love toward other true Christians, the world has a right to judge that he or she is not a Christian." - Francis Schaeffer

And if one reads through the Biblical Book of Acts... we see them working through conflicts... and through the whole of the New Testament ... we hear this calling embraced in the heart of the apostles.

The call to unity became the clarion call of the new community called the church.

Ephesians 4:1-6

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

There are some vital truths here about our unity.

1. Unity is a spiritual reality... seeking our fulfillment.

Notice he says...the calling you “have received”... because it is the eternal reality we have been immersed / baptized into... the “one hope when you were called-- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

This means there can be conflict... even amidst those united.

He is saying there is something bigger and must be bigger in our lives.

He says... “keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

> It's about keeping what you have.... a bond of peace... that which has reconciled us from our separation with God and one another. [5]

How can we fulfill this? By making every effort....

We are called to “Make every effort to keep the unity” (Eph. 4:6)

2. Unity takes effort.

What kind of effort... well he says... “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” [6]

We do well to sit before that call. [6b]

For some of us...this is an indictment on how we have tended to navigate these years. For most of us... perhaps it's a challenge to consider how vital our efforts are... and it's a call to be all in for seeking peace and mutual growth.

And not surprisingly....

3. Unity is rooted in love.

How do we bear with one another? What fuels our hearts and efforts?

Paul said... “bearing with one another in love.”

He is speaking of Love.... a divine force that cares for one another. [7]

When we bear with one another in love...it is more than simply in some resentful begrudging manner...it is out of knowing that there is a sacred value here that is greater than what offends me. Even if in the arena of idea... they are a foe... they are more than that.

No matter how impossible it's been to relate to someone who seems to be in another orbit of thinking... you still care...still pray.

We do well to pause amidst the social conflict and allow our hearts to grasp the significance of being united in Christ. [8]

Paul goes on in this same chapter to say that in contrast to being immature and blown about by winds and waves of false ideas...

Ephesians 4:15 (NLT)

Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

Our maturity involves navigating truth with love.

I know that for some of us... that phrase "truth with love" may be very familiar....but it provides a really valuable word to us in these times.

It affirms that that truth matters. Our maturity depends on being grounded in what is true.

We should speak up for truth and contend for what is true.

However... we must do so in love.

If we are going to fulfill Christ's call to unity... by joining God's love for one another... then we have to make every effort to keep unity...and that means learning how to speak truth with love.

That isn't easy for some of us. It's not easy for me at times.

But I know that I am called to both... truth... and to love.

I am called to value truth... wisdom...

Proverbs 23:23 (CEV)

Invest in truth and wisdom, discipline and good sense, and don't part with them.

Proverbs 4:5 (NLT2)

Get wisdom; develop good judgment. Don't forget my words or turn away from them.

2 Corinthians 10:5

"...take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

AND I am called to love... as we read in the previous text...

Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Matthew 7:12 (AMP)

Treat others the same way you want them to treat you

Let me conclude with ..

Some Guiding Practices to Navigate Truth with Love

1. I will try to separate judging ideas from judging people.

Much of what has been dividing lives... have been different ideas about what is true and good.

In other words... while some ideas may lead to some difficult behavior... it hasn't been about people intentionally motivated by harming people.

And in such a time, I have found it vital to try and

Separate judging ideas from judging people.

It's not easy ...but neither is it optional.

John Wimber from early on as the Vineyard arose... had a distinct love for the whole church... and a grace when criticized. When asked why he didn't initially respond to critics he would commonly say:

“Your brother is not your enemy... even when they act like it.”

Over time... he came to realize that there were issues that needed to be set straight...but with grace. In other words... he realized that it is important to clarify and contend for matters of truth... but not to attack the person.

One of the things that has helped me... is to realize that being right and being good are not the same things.

So a second helpful principle is this...

2. I will not confuse being “right” with being “good”. (Having the “right” position does not make one a better person.)

Having the “right” position does not make one a better person. Some of those whose ideas I believe I should contend with... I truly believe from God’s perspective... may be better people than I am. (i.e. more sacrificial in their care for others, their affection for God, etc.) Therefore, a commitment to seek truth and think wisely, however valuable, is not a basis for finding spiritual pride.

3. I will stay in the room with differences.

This is perhaps the most fundamental choice we make. It affirms what the Scriptures were calling us to pursue...which is the unity that must keep us rooted in what we share in common...as we engage our differences.

As someone put it... the underlying question that we may have with others...is something like this:

“If you find out that I voted for who you think is the wrong person... does it mean we have to break up?”

This is the underlying question that we can help answer.

And it can begin with us accepting that we don’t have to change what another person believes.

There is a critical difference between WANTING to change another person’s views...and NEEDING to change another person’s views.

We don’t have control over the other person’s choice to stay in the room with the differences we have...but we do have control over how WE manage the differences.

What people want to know...is if the space between you is safe.

That is a question that challenges me. I know that I have not been as safe as I should.

4. I will focus on understanding others... before and beyond making judgments.

As is so often described... there is tendency to win arguments but lose people.

And one of the primary reasons is that we can tend to relate to positions more than people.

We can tend to see sides of a war... our side and the wrong side...more than individuals. And so we seek winning more than understanding.

I can project so much onto the other...rather than connect with the other.

What I need to develop is sincere interest in the other person... the kind of interest that actually wants to understand what they think...and why.

This is what allows us to connect with the actual people in our lives... and often to discover fears that we can appreciate... distrust that may have some merit... good motives even if we think they may be misguided.

It's a shift in attention...and it may be the most powerful shift that we can make. How few times have we found someone who really centered in on what was inside of us? It is rare... and it is powerful.

As Simone Weil once wrote [9],

“Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.” — Simone Weil

Approach these trepid issues realizing that often there is a lot beneath the surface of what we hear in the postures and positions people have. There may be hurt...or shame... or fear.

5. I will give attention to what we share in common.

At the core, we share our common humanity.

We're all people trying to do our best with fears, hopes, dreams, insecurities, needs, and people we love. That's a LOT of common ground.

If we are followers of Christ...we share a common purpose...even if we have different ideas about how to fulfill that. [10]

Closing:

So today I invite us to embrace the call to make every effort to keep the unity"... and to pursue that goal of speaking the truth with love.

I want to encourage connecting with others in this process. During these 8 weeks, we are excited for Life Groups to experience going through a complementary series called **“Christians at Our Best: A Guide to Living in the Age of Outrage”** developed by Ed Stetzer.

And of course the effort begins in our hearts. The heart of unity... lies in our hearts... our inner dispositions.

For some of us...we may have withdrawn from others to avoid the discomfort of disagreement.

For some of us... we may find we are so deeply offended by what some people seem to believe... or the things they say or post...that we decided long ago that they were an enemy. If you relate to that... I want to encourage you to be honest... did the Spirit give you permission to define them that way? No matter how fitting it may be to be offended at what they believe or say... will you allow Jesus to speak to you about the difference between estranged family... and enemies.

Jesus rooted his whole life and calling on his relationship with his 12 disciples... and they failed in their understanding of what was happening... and yet he didn't change his commitment to them.

Some of us need to realize... that when you close our heart to people, we close ourselves from God.

The Spirit of God may be calling us to discover that what unites us is bigger than what divides us.

Further recommended reading:

Articles

Healing a Pandemic of Disunity: The Love of Christians Is the Gospel's Greatest Defense
By Randy Alcorn, November 15, 2021 - [here](#)

The Dissenters Trying to Save Evangelicalism From Itself by David Brooks, NY Times, Feb. 4, 2022 - [here](#)

The bitter recriminations have caused some believers to wonder if the whole religion is a crock.

Thabiti Anyabwile pastors the largely Black [Anacostia River Church](#) in Washington, D.C. “It’s been at times agonizing and bewildering,” he says. “My entire relationship landscape has been rearranged. I’ve lost 20-year friendships. I’ve had great distance inserted into relationships that were once close and I thought would be close for life. I’ve grieved.”

Tim Dalrymple is president of the prominent evangelical magazine Christianity Today, which [called for](#) Trump’s removal from office after his first impeachment. “As an evangelical, I’ve found the last five years to be shocking, disorienting and deeply disheartening,” he says. “One of the most surprising elements is that I’ve realized that the people who I used to stand shoulder to shoulder with on almost every issue, I now realize that we are separated by a yawning chasm of mutual incomprehension. I would never have thought that could have happened so quickly.”

Taking Evangelical Christians Beyond the Partisan Divide: With his newsletter, David French pushes his fellow believers to think beyond the usual political boundaries, while explaining to outsiders what his community is thinking - By Maggie Phillips, June 09, 2021 - [here](#)

A RESPONSE TO CHRISTIANS WHO ARE DONE WITH CHURCH By Carey Nieuwhof - [here](#)

Book

Divided We Fall: America’s Secession Threat and How to Restore Our Nation by David A. French - [here](#)

Notes:

1. As the Pew Research Center found, “...the 2020 pandemic has revealed how pervasive the divide in American politics is relative to other nations. Over the summer, 76% of Republicans (including independents who lean to the party) felt the U.S. had done a good job [dealing with the coronavirus outbreak](#), compared with just 29% of those who do not identify with the Republican Party. This 47 percentage point gap was the largest gap found between those who support the governing party and those who do not across 14 nations surveyed. Moreover, 77% of Americans said the country was now [more divided](#) than before the outbreak, as compared with a median of 47% in the 13 other nations surveyed.” - America is exceptional in the nature of its political divide.

What’s unique about this moment – and particularly acute in America – is that [these divisions have collapsed onto a singular axis where we find no toehold for common cause or collective national identity.](#)

By Michael Dimock And Richard Wike November 13, 2020, [here](#)

Also, “McCoy and Press studied 52 countries “where democracies reached pernicious levels of polarization.” Of those, “twenty-six — fully half of the cases — experienced a downgrading of their democratic rating.” Quite strikingly, the two continue, “the United States is the only advanced Western democracy to have faced such intense polarization for such an extended period. The United States is in uncharted and very dangerous territory.” – New York Times [here](#)

2. Healing a Pandemic of Disunity: The Love of Christians Is the Gospel’s Greatest Defense By Randy Alcorn, November 15, 2021- [here](#)

3. Regarding Christ's heart for the unity of the disciples, we can also read:

John 17:10-11 (NIV)

All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are one.

Matthew 23:8 (NIV) - "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers.

1 John 4:20-21 (NIV) - If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

4. Francis Schaeffer's *The Mark of the Christian*

5. "Our call is not to create spiritual unity but rather to manifest spiritual unity by relational unity." – Anders, M. (1999). *Galatians-Colossians* (Vol. 8, p. 149). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

This unity isn't simply about our ability to get along...it is nothing less than only in God can we transcend a world that defines and divides us by our differences... and discover belonging to life and one another.

This truth is developed well here:

"Through the Spirit of adoption, we become sisters and brothers of the Son who is united to the Father. By this union, we become partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4) and so participate in God's unity. If Christians are united to God the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit, then they are united to all who are similarly united to God. Our union with other Christians is no more a nominal or metaphorical union than is our union with God. Therefore, all who confess Christ are in their very being bound to each other and so ineluctably share a common identity in Christ. Another way to put it is that because we as individuals are *really* united to Christ Jesus we are necessarily *really* united to all others who are united to Christ – that includes those with whom we share much in common as well as those with whom we are different in just about every way imaginable. This union of believers in Christ is the precondition for the Church's fulfillment of its mission to be "a light unto the nations."

Neither the Church's existence as the Body of Christ nor the fulfillment of its mission is possible apart from the bonds of the Spirit. This was Augustine of Hippo's insight in response to the Donatist Schism in North Africa. Simply put, the schism began because one group of Christians believed baptisms performed by Catholic priests was invalid because the Catholic priests lacked, in their eyes, true holiness. At the heart of Augustine's critique of the Donatists is the role of the Spirit as the foundation of our life together as the Church. The Church is the body of Christ born of the Holy Spirit whom the Father sent and whom the Son breathed upon the apostles. The key to understanding this unity Augustine located in Romans 5:5, "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us." The Spirit, the Father's eternal gift of love to the Son and the Son's reciprocal gift to the Father, is God's gift to the Church and the condition for its unity. The Spirit, who bears witness to the love of God (i.e. God's love for us) revealed in Christ, sanctifies the believer's will with an infusion of the love of God (i.e. our love for God) and by extension with a rightly ordered love for self and neighbor. When the Spirit indwells the believer, the Christian loves others with the very love of God that is the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit who imparts the love of righteousness, therefore, is the source of personal and social holiness. This is the gift of love that gave birth to the Church when the apostles were anointed by the Spirit. Because the Church is born of the gift of the Spirit,

Augustine says, its members are united in Christ's body by the bond of charity. Those who break the bond of charity cut themselves off from other members and in so doing from the Spirit as well. The tragic irony of the Donatist schism, therefore, was that in attempting to preserve the purity of the Church, Donatists broke the bond of charity which is the *sine qua non* for holiness." From - Once Again into the Breach: Returning to the Mandate for Unity by J. Warren Smith, September 14, 2021 - [here](#)

"Our culture isn't craving an echo of itself, but rather an alternative to itself." - Carey Nieuwhof

6. "The seven-fold description of the Christian life resembles very closely what is found in the twin-letter (see Col. 3:12–15). Though not intended as a complete list of qualities which believers should reveal in their lives, the Ephesian list furnishes a broad characterization of this new disposition and behavior. The mention of lowliness leads naturally to that of *meekness*. The meek individual is slow to insist on his rights. He realizes that in the sight of God he has no rights at all that are his by nature. All his rights were secured by grace. And although with reference to men he may at times have to insist on his rights (Acts 16:35–40), he does not rashly throw himself into the fray. He would rather "take" wrong than inflict it (1 Cor. 6:7). With Abraham he prefers to let Lot have first choice (Gen. 13:7–18), with great reward ... for Abraham! He exercises *longsuffering*. Emphasis on this virtue was greatly needed in the early church, when believers suffered misunderstanding, harshness, and cruelty from those who did not share their faith. For example, the lot of a Christian wife who was married to an unbeliever was by no means easy. Nevertheless, as long as her husband was willing to live with her in the marriage relationship, the wife must remain with him and try, by means of her God-fearing behavior, to win him for Christ. Thus, the grace of longsuffering would be beautifully illustrated in her life." - Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Ephesians* (Vol. 7, pp. 183–184). Baker Book House.

6b. Similarly the Apostle Paul wrote...

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. - Romans 14:19

Every life that claims to follow Christ must ask themselves whether they have made every to do what leads to peace and to MUTUAL edification...which means mutual growth.

7. Here the Greek word agape" is used which speaks of a higher divine love.

8. Regarding how Paul and the New Testament writings called for unity, we also read:

1 Corinthians 1:10-13 (NIV)

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. ¹¹ My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹² What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." ¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?

Galatians 3:26-28 (NIV)

²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:13-14 (NIV)

¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

9. Weil quote from letter to Joë Bousquet, 13 April 1942; Simone Pétrement *Simone Weil: A Life* (1976) tr. Raymond Rosenthal; First and last notebooks. And drawn from 3Practices developed by Jim Henderson; THE 3PRACTICES [here](#).

Here also my friend Jim Henderson identified a great talk show host who is gifted in this way. And they explained... that it is a matter of sincere curiosity.

“Most of us learn to spot fake interest from a mile away. We learn to recognize sincerity, too. And we’re drawn to others who genuinely seeks to understand us.”

We need to learn how to begin questions with the words, “I’d be curious to know....” and mean it.

10. It’s been found that there is a general overestimation of the perceived hate of others. We tend to allow the loud to become the larger. A one article noted: “The other side’s hate is probably overestimated. The [steady growth](#) in Democrats’ and Republicans’ dislike of each other interferes with Americans’ ability to agree on policy, and likely short-circuits empathy. But individuals commonly overestimate how ideologically extreme the other side is and how much it is driven by animosity. In recent [studies](#), psychologists asked Republicans and Democrats how they felt about the other party’s voters and what they believed out-party voters (supporters of Republicans if the individual responding voted Democrat) felt about them. Both groups expressed some prejudice against the other side. Both also vastly exaggerated how much prejudice the other party’s voters felt toward their own. These perceptions were associated with desires to avoid out-party members and with support of undemocratic policies such as gerrymandering. In effect, the misperceptions became self-fulfilling prophecies.”

- Opinion: Our divided times are an opportunity for empathy. Really.

By Jamil Zaki, Robb Willer, Jan Gerrit Voelkel and Luiza Santos, December 29, 2020 - [here](#)