

2/19/12

Divisions Are Destructive
1Cor. 1:10-17

When I was first saved in 1973 through the Jesus movement, I saw so many young men raised up by God to be used tremendously. And as time has moved on I have seen some of those men go through some destructive division in the work that God began.

Paul, as their spiritual father poured out his heart of loving concern in the opening introduction to the Corinthians, declaring their new life in Christ and how blessed they were, through the fellowship of Jesus Christ.

Paul now goes on to confront the Corinthians with strong words regarding the divisions that plagued the church, which is marked by: 1Cor. 1:10-17

- I. The plead against the divisions. vs. 10-11
- II. The parties of the divisions. vs. 12-16
- III. The problems caused by the divisions. vs. 17

I. The plead against the divisions. vs. 10-11

- A. The apostle Paul pleaded in humility. vs. 10a-c

* “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1. Paul pleaded with them as a spiritual father. vs. 10a
 - a. The word for plead “parakaleo” means to call to one's side, with the idea to entreat, summon, or implore.
 - b. The apostle is not attempting to use his authority as a forceful despot, but rather as a loving father.
 - 1) “Therefore I urge you, imitate me.” 1Cor. 4:16
 - 2) “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” 1Cor. 11:1
2. Paul pleaded with them as an equal with them. vs. 10b
 - a. He uses the word brethren “adelphos” whose root means womb, implying they were born into the same family.
 - b. He calls them “brethren” twenty-eight times in his letter!
 - * Their oneness was in their call into the fellowship of Jesus Christ their Lord, the Son of God. vs. 9
3. Paul pleaded with them by the name of their Lord Jesus Christ. vs. 10c
 - a. The One who saved them and made them one in Christ.
 - 1) A strong reminder to them of who they owed their loyalty.
 - 2) A mild reproof for their divisions.

- b. The word Lord “kurios”, is His title.
 - 1) He was their master and owner.
 - 2) He was the Savior of their lives.
 - c. The name “Jesus” indicates his humanity.
 - 1) He was a real person for 33 years on the earth.
 - 2) He was what His name means, “Yahweh is salvation”.
 - 3) His Greek name is the translation of the Hebrew name Joshua, the contraction of Yahwe-shua.
 - d. The word “Christ” is another title.
 - 1) The Messiah, the anointed of God.
 - 2) The One promised to Adam and Eve and all the prophets. Gen. 3:15, Is. 7:14
- B.** The apostle Paul pleaded for unity. vs. 10d-f
 * “that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”
- 1. Paul stated that unity is accomplished by speaking the same thing, as the people of God. vs. 10d
 - a. The subject as well as the object of the verb are emphatic by the position.
 - b. All the Corinthians were to be united in what they say as Christians.

- c. The word speak “logo”, always involves the thought that is put into words, not mere sounds from our lips.
 - d. This is only possible by recognizing the word of God as the standard for all who are in Christ or contradict each other as they were at this time.
2. Paul stated unity is evident by not having or allowing divisions. vs. 10e
- a. The word divisions “schismata” means tears or cracks.
 - 1) The idea being rifts and disharmony between people in the church.
 - 2) The word will be used two more times in the letter. 1Cor. 11:18, 12:25
 - b. The word is used of a torn garment. Matt. 9:16, Mk. 2:21
 - c. The word is used to record the division of the people, as to who Jesus was. Jn. 7:43, 9:16, 10:19
 - d. The word is identify one of the works of the flesh. Gal. 5:20
3. Paul stated that unity is strengthened by being perfectly joined together in the same mind and same judgment. vs. 10f
- a. The statement is to remedy their current problems.
 - 1) The word but “de” is a contrasting conjunction,

- 2) They needed to forsake their divisions.
- b. The goal is expressed by the phrase perfectly joined together.
 - 1) The phrase perfectly joined together “katartizo” means to mend what has been broken or rent, in other words to repair the damage.
 - 2) The word is medical term used to describe bones that were fractured and mended back together.
 - 3) The word is used of mending nets. Mk. 1:19
- d. The process to accomplish the mending and brokenness in the church was by being of the same mind and judgment.
 - 1) The mind “nous” is the place of perception and understanding, the context is in view of spiritual truth.
 - * The word is used when Jesus opened the understand to the men on the road to Emmaus. Lk. 24:45
 - 2) Judgment “gnome” means the faculty of knowledge to reason and discern for the proper conclusion.
 - * Paul will use it two other times for his own judgment on marriage and single life. 1Cor. 7:25, 40

- 3) The Corinthians had culturalized and secularized their thinking, understanding and concluding judgment, so there were many opinions about all the issued Paul was going to address.
 - 4) They were not Christ-centered in their understanding and conclusions, failing to put on the mind of Christ, as Paul had taught them when he was at Corinth.
 - 5) Paul has mentioned His name, ten times in the first ten versus of his letter.
- C. The apostle Paul pleaded based on accurate information. vs. 11
- * “For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s *household*, that there are contentions among you.”
 - 1. The information received by Paul was first hand knowledge. vs. 11a-b
 - a. We are told the person was from Corinth, but Paul excepted and believe the facts as truth.
 - * It would be hard to believe that Paul would except a report from someone outside the body without confirming it first.

- b. The information was given to him by those of Chloe's household. vs. 11c
 - 1) The reference could be to a house-church where the body of Corinth met.
 - 2) The reference could be to the mere residence of the woman.
 - 3) The woman at Corinth is named by Paul, Chloe, which means "a green herb".
 - 4) Literally by those that belong to Chloe, it is in the plural, the information was affirmed and confirmed by a number of people.
- 2. The information was very specific, that there were contentions. vs. 11d
 - a. The word contentions "eris" means quarrel, strifes, debates and wranglings.
 - * The other time it is used in the letter, it is translated strife. 1Cor. 3:3c
 - b. The lack of centrality "in Christ" caused dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims. 1Cor. 11:19

Illustration

One day Korah led a division against Moses and Aaron saying they had exalted themselves above the congregation. He drew 250 of the leader and

they wanted the place of High Priest not being satisfied with service in the tabernacle, so God consumed them as the earth opened up. Num. 16

Application

- 1. Do you plead with individuals in the body of Christ to speak the same thing when you hear something that is different and contrary to the teaching or do you use it to add your two cents and add to the confusion?
 - * "Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned." Tit. 3:10-11
- 2. Do you play part in divisions, even one who causes divisions or are you one who attempts through humility to keep the unity of the Spirit in the body of the church?
 - * "Therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*" Eph. 4:1-6

3. Do you understand that the word is identified as one of the works of the flesh, strife and heresies.
 * “Idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,” Gal. 5:20
4. Do you run with information that is not even accurate, let alone first hand from a reputable source in the body of the church and join the contentious division.
 * “for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere men*?” 1Cor. 3:3

The plead against divisions is to be emulated by every believer!

II. The parties of the divisions. vs. 12-16

- A. The apostle Paul pointed out four groups by the teacher’s names. vs.12
 * “Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.”
1. Paul addressed first the followers of himself, who were perhaps those favoring grace over the law?
 a. The phrase “each of you says” denotes attachment to the particular teacher named, “I belong to”.

- 1) Another indication of their leaning to the cultural trends of their days before Christ.
 2) Leaning to their own understanding and wisdom of the world.
- b. Perhaps these individuals were Gentiles who were using grace as a license for sin, which Paul never taught, even as they were tolerating an incestuous relationship in the church. 1Cor. 5:1-2, 11, 6:15
- c. Grace is the basis of salvation, the process of salvation and the final product of salvation, not a license to contradict salvation.
2. Paul then addressed the followers of Apollos, who perhaps were those who favored the intellect?
 a. Apollos was from Alexandria where the great Universities were and Corinth prided themselves in knowledge and their intellect as Paul rebukes them for it. 1Cor. 8:1
 b. Apollos was a Jew born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures came to Ephesus and taught accurately about the Lord, except he knew only the baptism of John, so Aquilla and Priscilla explained to him the way

- more accurately at Ephesus. Acts 18:24-26
- c. Apollos after went over to Corinth, as Paul went to Ephesus. Acts 19:1
 - d. Apollos definitely had a strong following, for Paul mentions him seven times in his letter.
 - 1) Paul rebukes them for their human preference as a party to divide the church. 1Cor. 3:4, 3:5, 6, 4:6
 - 2) Paul tells them they were to benefit from all of these teachers. 1Cor. 3:22
 - 3) Paul tells them that Apollos would come at a later date. 1Cor. 16:12
3. Paul then addressed the third group, the followers of Cephas, who were probably Jews who did not cope well with the Gentiles and their lack of practice for the ritual of the law?
- a. Peter had been rebuked by Paul for his hypocritical life-style at Antioch as he removed himself from the Gentile table and ate with the Jews who came from Jerusalem. Gal. 2:11
 - b. Peter was given the ministry to the circumcision and Paul the uncircumcision, according to Paul. Gal. 2:7
 - c. The problem of eating of meats was one of the problems, stumbling some

- of the Jews in the church of Corinth, since the meat had been offered to idols. 1Cor. 8-9
- 4. Paul addressed last the followers of Christ, the self-righteous ones, who thought themselves to be the elite of the church, the real spiritual ones.
 - a. These were perhaps those who were denying sexual relationships to their married partners, and exalting singleness over marriage, thinking it would make them more spiritual. 1Cor. 7:3-6, 36
 - b. These also could of been using their spiritual gifts to exalt themselves above others, as well as using them for credentials for their spirituality, while only bringing confusion. 1Cor. 13:1-3, 14:1-40
- B.** The apostle Paul posed three questions that revealed the foolishness of their four parties. vs. 13
- * “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”
- 1. Paul asks them, “Is Christ divided?” vs. 13a
 - a. The question does not indicates if they have cut up Christ, but rather, is there different kinds of Christ?

- 1) A Paul Christ?
 - 2) A Apollos Christ?
 - 3) A Cephas Christ?
 - 4) The answer is an obvious no!
- b.** Then why were they dividing up the body into these four group of human teachers?
- * They needed to take his council and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment!
- 2.** Paul asks them, “Was Paul crucified for you?” vs. 13b
- a.** The question is a sharp rebuke to their natural way of thinking and perspective, for no sinful man can atone for the sins of the world.
 - b.** The answer again is an obvious no!
 - c.** Then why did they have Paul as a group leader of the church, rather than Christ, who is the head of the church?
- 3.** Paul asks them, “Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” vs. 13c
- a.** The implication is in union or connection, literally “into” the name of Paul.
 - b.** The answer for the third time was no!
 - c.** Then why were they giving allegiance to him in a divisive manner?

- C.** The apostle Paul rebuked them for preferring man and ritual over Christ. vs. 14-16
- 1.** Paul gave thanks to God he had baptized only a few people. vs. 14
 - * “I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,
 - a.** Crispus was the ruler of the Jewish synagogue, one of the first converts of Corinth. Acts 18:8
 - b.** Gaius was Paul’s host in his visit to Corinth. Rom. 16:23
 - 2.** Paul gives the reason, lest someone should say that he baptized in his own name. vs. 15
 - * “lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.”
 - a.** He did not raise up disciple after himself.
 - b.** He did not teach that only those he baptized were valid.
 - 3.** Paul also baptized the house of Stephanas and he could recall no one else. vs. 16
 - * “Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.”
 - a.** Stephanas was the first fruits of Achaia, not of Corinth, though he was now at the church of Corinth, devoted

- to the ministry of the saints. 1Cor. 16:15
- b. Stephanas was a great example of leadership to submit to. 1Cor. 16:16
 - c. Stephanas was presently with Paul at Ephesus, along with Fortunatus and Achaicus, who journeyed from Corinth to Ephesus, possibly with the letter from Chloe. 1Cor. 16:17
 - 1) The Corinthians had some weird doctrine regarding baptism, for they were baptizing for the dead for the resurrection while at the same time denying the resurrection. 1Cor. 15:29
 - 2) The sin of party divisions lead to the sin of exaltation of petty doctrines and ultimately the worship of a man.

Illustration

I have never in thirty-six years of ministry seen any good come out of divisions. The trouble makers leave and the people that are sucked in are scattered and most do not go to another church faithfully.

Application

1. Do you realize that the basic same four groups are with us today in the church? Acts 17:11

- a. Those who take grace to an extreme and think that no matter what, they are saved.
 - b. Those who follow teaching that leans heavily to intellectualism that prides itself on current information.
 - c. Those who get caught up in liturgical ritual and traditions of the church.
 - d. Those who think they are just a cut above everyone else.
2. These four groups as well as any other, will be shown to be a groups of fools, if they are asked the same questions that Paul asked the Corinthians.
- a. We have those who divide the church over the gifts.
 - b. We have those who divide the church over the mystery of Predestination and free-will. better known as Calvinism and Armenianism.
 - c. We have those who exercise the gifts of the spirit in a confusing and circus type atmosphere today and if not exercised in that manner, they say the Holy Spirit is not present.
 - d. We have those who are teaching doctrines that are not biblical, but heretical, such as “laughing in the Spirit”, “faith in faith”, “the believers are little gods”, The EMC, etc.
 - e. Your baptism is valid only if you are born again, otherwise you are just a wet sinner. 1Pet. 3:19-21

* You do not have to get rebaptized here, we except your baptism wherever it took place.

3. The word for heresy in it's original meaning simply meant "to chose" but then through the years it became identified with those who taught false doctrine, contrary to the Scriptures, we are to reject such people if they refuse to repent. Tit. 3:10-11
 - a. Many today have chosen to exalt party divisions.
 - b. Many today have chosen to follow heresies.
 - c. Many today have chosen to exalt themselves by false spirituality.

The parties of divisions are a confusion to every Church!

III. The problems caused by the divisions. vs. 17

- A. The apostle Paul declared they had polarized themselves to ritual moving away from their relation to Christ. vs. 17a-b

* For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

 1. Paul exposed their empty ritual of baptism, due to their loyalty to man instead of Christ.
 - a. Baptism is a ritual that symbolizes a public confession of what has already taken place in a the heart by faith.

- b. Baptism is to be practiced in the church, but it does not save a person or complete salvation, otherwise the sacrifice of Jesus would be insufficient!
 - c. The practice of baptizing believers seem to of been done by other in the church or who were with Paul.
2. Paul declared that God commissioned him to preach.
 - a. The phrase preach the gospel "evangelizesthai", means to bring good news or announce glad tidings.
 - 1) The word is used throughout the New Testament to proclaim the gospel, 55 times.
 - 2) He will used it five more times in the letter. 1Cor. 9:16 (2x's), 18, 15:1, 2
 - a. The commission came from God, through Ananias to Paul, "But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel." Acts 9:15
 - b. The content was the gospel, directly from Jesus, "But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came

through the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Gal. 1:11-12

- B.** The apostle Paul declared they had polluted the gospel with their cultural wisdom. vs. 17c
 * “not with wisdom of words.”
1. Paul had preached the pure gospel, they had contaminated it with human wisdom.
 - a. The word wisdom “sophia” is a key word in the letter.
 - b. The word in it’s context means human intelligence and understanding in contrast to Divine wisdom.
 - c. The word appears sixteen times within the first three chapter as it is contrasted between human and divine. 1Cor. 1:17-3:19
 * Appearing only one other time. 1Cor. 12:8
 2. The implication is very obvious, these groups had come to exalt their ability to cleverly speak about the gospel, while lowering it’s content to human words.
 * “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 1Cor. 2:1-2

- a. Paul is not speaking against using modern knowledge or information to relate to people in order to present the gospel, but rather in trusting, depending and using them to soften and bypass the cross!
 - b. Attempting to persuade, impress and appear intellectual.
- C.** The apostle Paul declared they had neutralized the effectiveness of the gospel. vs. 17d
 * “lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.”
1. Paul knew the cross was the instrument by which God atoned for the sins of the world. 1Jn. 19:30
 2. The cross was the instrument of death for the believer’s life daily, in order to live in the Spirit. Rom. 6:11, Gal. 2:20
 3. The cross was of Christ, the Messiah, who died in the place of sinners, not a mere martyr. 1Jn. 2:2
 4. The cross would be made of none affect, powerless, when it is reduced to human words that empty it of it’s Divine revelation of salvation.
 - a. The phrase none effect “kenoo” means to make empty, neutralize, powerless or inoperative.

- b. The preaching would have no affect on the heart of the sinner, but be another philosophy of man.

Illustration

Divisions and contentions only infect others to rise up at another time, even as those who objected to the destruction of Korah and the 250. Num. 16

Application

1. People that get caught up in divisions tend to loose sight that God has sent all of us to preach the gospel as the priority, rather than spend our time to promote our own group or teacher.

- * “Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 1Cor. 3:5-7

2. People tend to loose sight that we are not to preach the gospel with wisdom of words, but rather the power of the Holy Spirit.

- * “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

3. People tend to loose sight that they make the cross of Christ powerless through their cleverness of using sociology and psychology to explain or

preach the gospel. The seeker friendly movement and the Emergent Church Movement!

- * “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.” Col. 2:8

The problems caused by the divisions canceled out the power of the gospel!

Conclusion

Paul confronted the Corinthians with strong words regarding the divisions that plagued the church marked by:

- I. The plead against divisions is to be emulated by every believer!
- II. The parties of divisions are a confusion to every Church!
- III. The problems caused by the divisions canceled out the power of the gospel!