

I Corinthians 4 – 14 November 2021

“Killing Disunity Within”

Introduction

*This is a very practical book, teaching us about:

- Divisions & unity (*Chapters 1-4*)
- Solving Christian disputes in-house (*Chap 5-6*)
- Christian marriage when ideal is lost (*Chap 7*)
- Conscience issues ie eating of meats (*Chap 8-11*)
- Proper public worship (*Chap 12-14*)
- Doctrine of the Resurrection (*Chap 15-16*)

*In Chap 1-2, discussion of unity & division began w/ being taught to keep Christ the focus, not man & allow the Spirit of the Lord to work in people's lives

*In Chap 3, spoke of *how* we build each other up as the church – together in unity

*Chap 4 finishes the subject by using Paul's example to the Corinthians for how to kill discord & disunity

***So today, here are 3 keys for killing disunity within the church and even our own hearts**

1st Key for killing disunity is to give deference to God's judgement (Vs 1-5)

Read Vs 1-2

1. Christians are servants, that means stewards
2. The requirement of a steward is trustworthiness
 - a. It's not great charisma or wealth
 - b. All of us have the ability to be faithful
3. The one thing God is looking for from His people is faithfulness without promoting other causes, other people or worst of all...self.

Read Vs 3-4

1. Paul isn't concerned w/ what the Corinthians think of his service & ministering for Christ
 - a. Paul knows he'll be justified by God as us stays faithful to what he's called to give out
 - b. Paul won't be justified dependance on the react he receives from his preaching
2. God will judge our Christian service on the Judgement Day of the Bema Seat Judgement

3. Vs 3: “Yea, I judge not mine own self”
 - a. Paul’s not hyper-critical of his own actions
 - b. Paul didn’t constantly 2nd guess himself

Read Vs 5

1. We tend to think that once all things are revealed there will be consequences, but this verse indicates praises for some w/ their good motives
2. Point of the verse is this: Don’t scrutinize or condemn another Christian’s service as wood, hay or stubble, God will judge that
3. This isn’t saying we should never judge others
 - a. We judge between right & wrong using God’s Word (John 7:24)
 - b. We judge disputes between Christians by the Church not the world system (I Cor 6:1-4)
 - c. We judge the characterization of people by their lifestyles (Matt 7:15-16)
 - d. We judge Christian’s behaviors to help them prevent sin, not to condemn (Matt 7:1-5)
 - e. We also don’t judge other Christian’s preferences or liberties (Rom 14:1-3)

2nd Key for killing disunity is to accept that we don't have it all figured out (Vs 6-13)

Read Vs 6

1. He's using himself & Apollos as examples of different teachers with different styles
2. This is designed to teach the lesson that they too shouldn't be puffed up as if ONE teacher has everything they need
 - a. Only God & His Word have all we need

Read Vs 7

1. Any goodness that could come from us was first given to us by God
2. Simply acknowledge that we've had to grow in our own understanding & we need to continue that

Read Vs 8a

1. *Sarcasm* – he's saying, this isn't the time to abuse authority for selfishness, but to serve others
2. Don't live in a false contentment as if you have all knowledge & wisdom

Read Vs 8b-9

1. The apostles are suffering in service to God and that is evident to all who look at them
2. Doesn't it seem that this will end up being the pattern for that all Christian servants will endure?

Read Vs 10

1. *Again Sarcasm* - 'Fool vs wise' – World sees Paul as a fool, yet they want to be seen as smart
 - a. 'Weak vs strong' – Paul is weak in physical strength and presentation, yet they want to be seen as powerful people
 - b. 'Despised vs honorable' – World hates Paul's very purpose, yet they seek honor from the ungodly who seek a different purpose
2. Shows that they still have some carnal flesh to put to death and grow toward Christ

Read Vs 11-13

1. Apostle's example is that they've given up on this world & are willing to suffer to fulfill the mission... they're more to do! We all have growing!

3rd Key for killing disunity is to accept instruction from God as from a loving father (Vs 14-21)

Read Vs 14

1. He's not trying to bring them low; he's trying to get them to avoid these sins as a loving father
2. Does no good to beat someone up for their sin
 - a. Rather show them your care about the rewards or consequences that are down the road that they're on

Read Vs 15

1. Difference between a teacher & a father is love
2. Paul isn't focused on hating someone in another Christian group, he's focused on loving those that he does get to serve

Read Vs 16

1. I Cor 11:1 - follow Paul as he follows God
2. Every good father sets the example
3. Read III John 3-4 – Love & God's truth destroys disunity

Read Vs 17

1. Timothy will show them again a pattern of Paul's teaching thru his very life
2. See, the unity comes not from Paul, not from Timothy, but from the teaching & growing in the Lord

Read Vs 18-20

1. The Kingdom of God is the substance for which we live for (this isn't words but a lifestyle)
2. There is power in presence
 - a. There's power to convict and to strengthen
 - b. We can't conduct church simply over long distance or over you know, the internet

Read Vs 21

1. Correct it, or I will continue to deal with this when I get there...b/c I won't ignore it
2. A loving teacher will do whatever it takes to help people they care for grow

Conclusion

So let's kill the disunity within the Church, by killing the disunity that is within our own hearts

- 1. Let's give deference to God's judgement to come**
 - a. Just stay focused on our own service to God
 - b. God will correctly account for everyone else who's serving, **WE DON'T HAVE TO**
- 2. Let's accept that we don't have it all figured out**
 - a. This false pride of acting like there's nothing wrong in life is only hurts us
 - b. As we serve God, against the grain of this world, we will be hunger, despised, & mocked
- 3. Let's accept instruction from God as if from a loving Father**
 - a. When other Christians give us feedback, don't put up a barrier, but listen to them
 - b. Love covers a multitude of sins
 - c. Love each other and walk in truth