

A House Divided

Everything seems to be politicized these days and it's not just because it is an election year. Today we are talking about a house divided.

There is so much divisiveness in the world today. Here in America, it is a presidential election year. Most people are separating and taking sides and getting quite mean about the other side's candidate. Public health has been divided because of politics. People have divided into two camps of wearing masks or not wearing masks. Public education has divided people into what subjects should be taught in school and what subjects are allowable to be taught in school. The list goes on.

Here me now, friends. This divisiveness is evil. It is from the pit of Hell and the devil himself. Dividing people by driving wedges between them has been the devil's chief weapon to use to conquer humanity from the beginning. Let's read Genesis 4:1-8.

Genesis 4:1-8

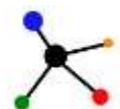
(1) Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." (2) Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. (3) In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. (4) And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, (5) but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. (6) Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? (7) If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." (8) Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

We are not entirely sure why the Lord looked less favorably on Cain's offering than He did on Abel's, but nonetheless, that is the case. We read that this troubled Cain, and he took it out on his younger brother and killed him. Cain allowed jealousy to well up in his heart and this brought division. Jealousy is not a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Jealousy is an emotion that is rooted in our sinful nature and comes from the devil. In this case, the devil fanned a tiny spark of jealousy into a fitful rage and divided these two brothers to the point of murder.

When division occurs, we start to only see our point of view. When we allow ourselves to be divided we are less strong. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

(9) Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: (10) If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. (11) Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? (12) Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.



Two are better than one and a cord of three strands is not quickly broken. When we are divided, we are weaker. President Abraham Lincoln, who led the United States through one of the bloodiest civil wars the world has seen, knew this and spoke Jesus' words in a speech. Let's read Matthew 12:22-25.

Matthew 12:22-25

(22) Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. (23) All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" (24) But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." (25) Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand."

When we look at nations and cities around the world we see deep division. We see movements like the "Occupy Movements", "Black Lives Matter", "Equal Rights", "Fair Trade", and more. Often these movements stem from an issue that is relevant to society but often bring more divisiveness than solutions. Jesus said that a city or house divided against itself cannot stand. Look at our cities today? Have you seen such division? Look at our politics today. Have you seen such division?

There was a day when people could disagree about a subject or issue and could still sit down together and have a discussion or debate about how to solve that particular issue. But today we allow the devil to stir the pot of public opinion and our emotions up so much that we cannot come together. These emotions get stirred up so much that all we can do is divide and demonize anyone who disagrees with us.

The church is no different. If we take social and public issues out of the conversation and just examine the church as a whole we see all sorts of division. We divide ourselves by one or two pieces of doctrine that do not affect our salvation one way or another. We separate into denominations and these denominations are divided by worship style and small pieces of doctrine. We divide on whether we are Calvinists or Wesleyans. We also divide on whether we are Pentecostal, Charismatic, Conservative, Liberal, or Evangelical. It is all division, and it is not being *One Church*.

Jesus said He would build His Church and the gates of Hell would not prevail against it. All the division in the world and the church as it exists today is showing me that the devil is using division to distract us from the mission Jesus gave us. We have to focus on Jesus and celebrate all that we have in common. We also must respect one another. If we can do that in the Church, imagine the example we can be to the world.

I personally do not care what your preferred style of worship is. I have Christian friends who are Anglican, Catholic, Pentecostal, Baptist, Lutheran, and more. I have friends who are Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, and more. I have friends who believe the doctrine of "once saved always saved" and friends who believe you can lose your salvation. All of these can spark conversation, and sometimes we must agree to disagree on a matter, but we continue to respect each other, not demonize each other.

Ultimately, the way we are going to keep from being divided is to all come under one banner, that of Jesus Christ. We close with Joshua 24:14-15.



Joshua 24:14-15

(14) "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. (15) But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

Joshua was addressing the people of Israel. They had come to a crossroads. There was division amongst them. Joshua needed to inspire them and lead them. He knew he could not force them to do anything. He could only inspire and lead by example. He laid out the choice very simply and then turned to the Lord himself.

Let us not let our nations be divided. Let us not let our cities be divided. By all means, let us not let our houses be divided. Division is a common tool of the devil to distract our attention and focus from Jesus and miss what Jesus is asking us to do.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

