

"THE WORDS OF THE LORD ARE PURE WORDS, LIKE SILVER TRIED IN
A FURNACE OF EARTH, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES.
YOU SHALL KEEP THEM, O LORD, YOU SHALL PRESERVE THEM FROM
THIS GENERATION FOREVER." (PSALM 12: 6 & 7)

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Believers Divided Await Desolation

"Every Kingdom divided against It's self is brought to desolation (devastation and ruin), and every city or house divided against itself will not stand." (Matthew 12:25)

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our lord Jesus Christ, 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.

For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chole's Household, that there are contentions (quarrels) among you. 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". Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)

Dear reader, I am writing you today to discuss a matter of grave concern for all who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ. If Father's word is clear about anything, it is clear about His loving "unity", and hating "division" among His own people. "Unity" results in power (Matthew 18:19), while "division" results in destruction (Matthew 12:25). "Unity" brings peace, while "division" brings war. "Unity" leads to Life, while "division" leads to death. This is a spiritual law that is as certain as the law of gravity. It governs man's relationships, including marriage, nations, the church, and his relationship with God. "Unity" is the stabilizing force that maintains "order" in the whole of creation. This is evident even in the heavens. Take away "unity" and all that is left is mass "chaos"! I fear that few of we Christians understand this life and death spiritual law, as evidenced by our current behavior.

God loves unity in His body because He is "One" with Himself. Likewise, He hates division in His body, and condemns it to destruction! Father desires that each of His sons and daughters be in unity with Him and with each other; He says:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountain of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing --- Life forevermore. (Psalm 133)

As it is written, so it will be. Where there is unity, our Lord will command the blessing. Where there is division, the Lord will command desolation. This is Truth, whether we believe and accept it or not. Sadly, I must report that the vast majority of we Christians have taken offense with each other, and produced the fruit of division. Desolation, which is the fruit of division, is now upon us ---- and most of us are not even aware of it, or worse, we just do not care! May God have mercy on us!

Please allow me to take a moment to discuss the meaning of the term “unity”. First of all, “unity” is not two or more people who agree to disagree and for the sake of appearance and superficial harmony, continue to meet or fellowship together. That is not the “unity” that God’s word speaks of. We may call it unity, but in the end, it will only produce the fruit of desolation.

Webster defines “unity” as follows: “The quality or state of being or being made one ---- being in accord, harmony ---- continuity without change.” Unity is the fruit of an act or instance of uniting two or more things into “one”. God’s word speaks much of numbers; and the only number that represents “unity”, is the number “1”. One is defined by God’s word (and Webster) as being a single unit ---- the same in likeness and image.

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply;” (Genesis 1:27 & 28a)

As our Lord prepared to offer Himself as a sacrifice for our wicked behavior, He met with His disciples; as they finished their time together, He lifted His voice in prayer and He prayed for all believers who would come after Him. His primary concern was that we ---- you and I ---- be one. “Unity”, among believers, was our Lord’s number one priority as He faced the Cross. Our Lord said:

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

*And the glory which You gave Me, I have given them, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” (John 17: 20 – 23) *Emphasis Added**

There is no subject which Father addresses in His word that is taught with greater clarity, than that of unity ---- no subject! Sadly, instead of being fruitful and multiplying in unity, we are producing the fruit of division and harvesting a crop of desolation (grief, sadness, loneliness and ruin). In the end, we will find no excuse for our rebellion against our Father’s word. May God have mercy on us!

When I last wrote you, I shared a type of report card on the present condition of the modern-day church in relation to the Word of God. It was not a good report; in the class room of any institution it would be considered an “F”! However, may I suggest that it also confirms the certainty of God’s word as written in Matthew 24:4-14 & 24, 1 Timothy 4:1&2, 2 Timothy 3:1-7, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and Romans 1:18-32. When one looks at the “whole” of those who call themselves Christians, who among us would deny that the fruit of desolation is now visible for all the world to see? May God have mercy on us all!

It is my opinion that the most recent statistics relating to the Christian community and God's word, are the evidence of the fruit of desolation; desolation that results from the fruit of division; Division being the fruit of the offended. Now, with Father's help, I will try to give some clarity to my statement.

When man is offended, unless he or she chooses to reject the offense, the "seed of offense" will infect the mind toward the one through whom the offense came. Then, with time, the offense will take root in the heart of the offended. Once the heart is infected, division is an absolute certainty. Telephone contact is broken, the letters or e-mails stop, intercession or prayer on behalf of the offender ceases and fellowship ends. Agape Love is replaced by "love of self" which, even among believers, is a form of wickedness that reeks of pride, and God hates it!

Once division is complete, only desolation and destruction, in some form, follow; it is only a matter of time. This process of being offended, then separating yourself spiritually, mentally and finally physically, is evidenced in many ways. A marriage ends up in divorce court. Nations go to war; and churches split. Life is replaced by death; light is replaced by darkness and love is replaced first by a dislike, followed in time, by hate.

Visually, when the world looks at several church buildings in close proximity to each other, it represents to them division ---- not unity ---- dislike or hate of each other ---- not love for each other; such visual evidence does not leave the impression of "meek humility", but rather that of pride and self-centeredness. Professing Christians, who among all people, should know better and set the example for the world to see, have instead mastered the "sin of taking offense", establishing their own self-satisfying kingdoms, and have taken on the appearance of the rest of the world. Yes, the "form" is there, but the Glory of God along with His power has departed.

The desolation that our Lord promised would follow division (Matthew 12:25) is evidenced by the fruit of our self love, our love of money, our pride, our disrespect of God's word, our un-holiness, our un-forgiveness, our lack of self control, our love of pleasure rather than loving God, our religious form and lack of God's power (2 Timothy 3: 1-5).

For the past two weeks our Lord has been dealing with me on this issue, and as each day passes there is a deeper spiritual revelation to be received, all focused on being offended, then divided or separated from the offender, and the inevitable desolation that follows. Our Lord's words in Matthew 7:13 & 14, Matthew 22:14 and Matthew 6:15 should cause all of us to tremble (Isaiah 66:2) in light of our present state of spiritual immaturity!

"Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

"For many are called, but few are chosen."

"If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Dear reader, be warned, this matter of division among believers is as serious as any matter that we have, are now, or will face, in the future. Heaven or hell could hang in the balance. I plead with you,

do not turn a deaf ear to our Father as He warns us. Hell will be well populated by the “many” who were sincere in their religion but set God’s word behind them (Psalm 50:16&17). Our religion will not save us ---- our church will not save us ---- our pastor, priest or Pope will not save us ---- our spiritual gifts will not save us ---- our good works will not save us! Our salvation comes as: “we receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save our souls” (James 1:21).

We, the Bride of Christ, the One true church, are sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the Word, that our Lord might present us to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that we should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:26&27).

Being offended, divided and bearing the fruit of desolation is not a part of the equation of salvation, but rather that of the many who are called ----- but not chosen. May God have mercy on us all!

As I draw this letter to a close, I would like to share an actual event that our Lord has used to open my eyes and ears to the seriousness of this matter.

A group of twenty-five believers, all professing to believe in Jesus Christ, and to having been born-again, gathered together for a weekend retreat. The group included couples and singles from several mainline denominational churches, as well as non-denominational churches, and a few home fellowships. The group, as a whole, were seasoned professors of Christ, and well versed in God’s word. In addition to one full-time pastor, there was one former pastor, and those who were involved in leading youth groups, prison ministry and lay-evangelism. One would think that if any group would reflect the likeness and image of Christ, it would be this group.

The purpose of this gathering was to spend approximately 48 hours together (Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon), sharing individual testimonies, while searching Father’s word for the Truth. There was no set agenda, except for meal times and group gathering times. Everyone was encouraged to participate as they felt led, and to be totally honest with their brothers and sisters.

What happened with this group of twenty-five believers is a text-book example of what happens following a person’s having been offended. It is also an example of what has been going on for generations among professing believers. If one would honestly follow the historical time-line of all denominations and modern-day-churches, one would find that each church or denomination was the fruit of “Division”. That is a historical fact, regardless of the claims made by the Church of Rome. Believe it or not, there was a time when Christians were “one” in the unity of Christ.

During the first evening together, several people shared their personal testimonies. While one, a former pastor, was expressing himself, he made several harsh comments about the modern day church as a whole. At least one person was “offended” by the comments, interrupted him, and began to contradict what he was saying. This interruption offended several others, as they viewed it as an open rebuke and out of order. The seed of offense had now been sown and received.

At the end of the first evening, four of the twenty-five brothers and sisters left, two without even saying good-bye to the rest. Later the following day, the leaven of offense had spread, causing several more of the offended to leave; several of these also left without even saying good-bye to their brothers and sisters. Just as it is written, so it is:

“A little leaven leavens the whole lump.” (Galatians 5:9)

The leaven of offense had found one or two receptive hearts where it could reproduce its fruit of division, and from there, spread to others. May God have mercy on us all.

The retreat came to a close on Sunday morning with ten of the original twenty-five still together, that's 40%. Sixty percent of those included in the original twenty-five had left ---- most having been infected by the leaven of offense. Those who remained were shown how real this battle is. When the pride and self-love of man rises to the surface, cloaked in the garb of religion, Agape love and meek humility is replaced by division and desolation. This spiritual law applies to all and never fails.

Many of the original twenty-five had been influenced by the same spirit that the apostle Peter wrestled with for over three-years; not the Holy Spirit, but that of the false angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Finally, our Lord spoke to Peter thusly:

“Get behind Me Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” (Matthew 16:23)

Peter was not delivered from his flesh, until he was broken and wept bitterly (Matthew 26:75). I am persuaded that none of us are nearly as enlightened and spiritually mature as we think we are. Many will discover this truth after it is too late. Our religion could disqualify us from being numbered among the “few” who are chosen. May our God have mercy on us, and take us to His secret place where the bitter tears cleanse the heart and wash away all the spots and wrinkles of religion.

Many of us, including myself, have reacted as did Peter. We believe strongly, are full of zeal, and certain that we are right! Rather than being quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19), we are quick to speak, slow to listen and quick to anger. We would all do well to revisit, in meek humility, what Paul said to the church at Corinth.

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”

*“Love does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;”
“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”
(1 Corinthians 13:2, 5 & 7)*

Sadly, what the group of twenty-five went through, is repeated somewhere in the Christian community every day. Someone is offended, the seed of division is received, and desolation in some form, soon follows. The offended returns to their own, believing that they are O.K. and that all is well within their world of religion; however, deep within the soul hidden by their own affections (2 Corinthians 6:12), the evil seed of division begins to form what will in the end be ----- desolation.

Dear reader, I pray that this letter, though imperfect, will help you to realize the seriousness and eternal importance of the sin of being offended. What I have shared with you is truth; and I speak as one who has in the past, offended and been offended. I am well aware of what happens when our religion overshadows God's word; and I promise you --- it is not good!

Finally, I could not close this letter without addressing two questions: First, "How does one avoid being offended?" I answer, By Choice! Second, "Where does unity begin?" I answer, with me!, and with you. A "true disciple" of Jesus Christ desires, above all things, to be one with Him; to be in union with Him as it is written:

*"At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."
(John 14:20)*

As we become "one with Christ" our passion and zeal for Him grows; our primary goal in life is to be more and more like Him. We literally eat His word until we begin to think as He thinks (John 15:15), to speak as He speaks and act as He acts. The Word of God in us reproduces after its own kind ----- we take on the likeness and image of God ----- and we are in unity with all other likeminded men. Our common bond is our total devotion to our King; all other interests including our religion, spiritual gifts, theology, doctrine, our church, our family, pale in comparison. We become Head worshippers, and are His true body. We are lovers of, and seekers of ----- Truth. We are free to go where ever Truth leads us. This is the unity spoken of in God's word; all else is a mere imitation at best.

There is at least one more question that needs to be addressed: Should a follower of Christ, who is pursuing oneness with Him, ever separate from fellowship with others who claim to be Christian? We will discuss what Father has to say concerning this question, when I write to you again.

As always, eat the fruit you find here freely, and when the seeds of the flesh are found, spit them out. I hope to write you again – soon. There is much more to be shared on this matter.

Your brother,

Thomas

"EVERY WORD OF GOD IS PURE; HE IS A SHIELD TO THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM. DO NOT ADD TO HIS WORDS, LEST HE REBUKE YOU, AND YOU BE FOUND A LIAR." (PROVERBS 30:5 & 6)