

Bedford Bulletin

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Things That Divide (Part 1)

I am convinced that basic understanding of Bible authority and how to establish it would eliminate almost all the division amongst religious people today. For that reason, I want to suggest three things at the beginning of this set of lessons. One, open your mind to an open Bible. Two, free yourself of everything prejudice by letting the Word of the Lord be the only tutor. Third, examine everything you currently believe concerning faith, the church and your soul's salvation against God's revelation, His word.

Thomas Campbell once said, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." Understand, I am not a follower of Thomas Campbell, I'm a follower of Jesus Christ, but like Campbell I believe Scripture is all sufficient giving believers, "*all things that pertain to life and godliness*" (2 Pet. 1:2-4), and is God breathed, and "*...profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work*" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Thus, these words are a summary of many scriptures that teach us not to add to or take from the word of God (Deut. 4:2, 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Eccl. 12:13-14; Rev. 22:18 etc), that is in my words, stick to what God said, don't try to take His place on the throne by "adding your two cents". Too many today are guilty of "putting words into the mouth of God", too many are living contrary to the word of God, putting their souls in the hands of the words of men, who have long since died. Men who ever so slowly and incrementally began to teach and practice error simply because they turned their focus from the word of the Lord toward and listened to the word of men. Let me say clearly, most of these men of the past likely loved God as much as any today, and never intended to stray from the truth. But that is what happened, and the only cure is to turn back to the one and only source of objective truth, which is God's word (John 17:17).

Therefore, in the next few issues we're going to focus on some things that have caused division and Lord willing redirect us all back to the inspired word, implanting that word in our hearts, which is able to save our souls (James 1:21).

To get our hearts in the right mode first let me say that before the world began, division in the church, and among believers, was never in the mind of God. Jesus Christ died upon the cross and purchased His church in order that all men might be one in Christ, whether they be Jew or Gentile, black or white, bond or free, rich or poor (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:1-6; Gal. 3:28). Now at the same time division is commanded by God to keep the church pure, to eliminate all false teaching and error that is contrary to God. Jesus Christ said that He brought division. This may sound strange to some people whose impression of Jesus is from man, not God. Open your Bible, to Matthew 10, and read from verse 34 to 39. "*Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'* 37 He who loves

Knowing & Doing God's Will

⌞ Proverbs 11:14 ⌟

father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.” The “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6), Jesus said, “I did not come to bring peace”. Christ is saying that under certain conditions, there will be division—whenever people go astray. Leaving the commandments of the Lord to follow anyone or anything will bring division between man and God. (Read 2 John verse 9). The sword comes as a result of our following after man, and not God. Loving God first will often bring division even within the family. But be certain that the relationship with Christ is eternal, and so is the separation from Him. Everything else is temporary. Jesus prayed for unity, not division (John 17:20-23). Read it for yourself, look for the words, “...that they all may be one...that they also may be one in Us...that they may be one just as We are one...that they may be made perfect in one...”.

Let’s return now to what causes division; a lack of understanding of the principles of bible authority in religion. Who has “all authority” in the church? For the answer, open your Bible and read Matthew 28:18-20. Christ has all authority which leaves man zero authority (Matt. 28:18-20). Note that no matter what translation you may have, they all say Jesus has all authority and He said, “both in Heaven and in earth.” This is important because some falsely teach Jesus’ authority is in Heaven, and they have authority on earth, such is the one who sits ruling from the Vatican City. Everyone seeking a home in Heaven must know and accept in the very beginning that Jesus Christ has all of the authority—not your preacher, not your church, not anyone in the Vatican City and not



“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’”

your family. Our “Master”, is in Heaven (Eph. 6:5), our Lord and King is

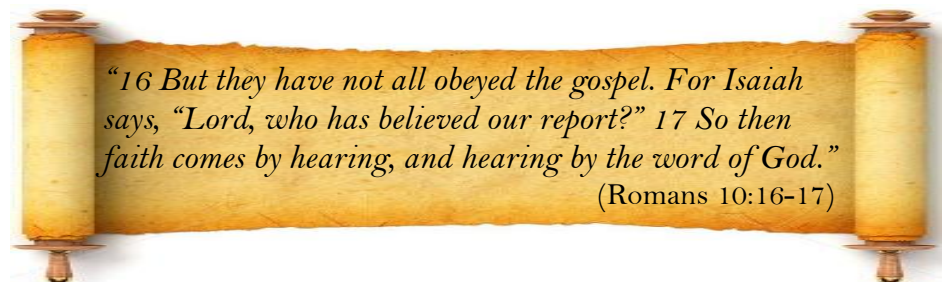
Jesus (Rev. 19:16). God made Jesus, “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). He is the Head of the church (Col. 1:18, 24). Therefore, we must respect the authority of Jesus Christ—found only in the written word which gives life (John 6:63).

Too many have and continue to say, “I believe that Jesus Christ has all of the authority”, then they turn right around and refuse to believe and obey His commandments. It was the Lord who asked, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). If you call Jesus Lord, if you respect Him as the Master and the One with authority, why do you quibble and argue about what the Lord says? Whatever Jesus tells you to do, are you not willing to do it? As a believer we must be willing to simply say, Lord, you speak, and I’ll obey.

Now, open your Bible to Mark 16:15-16. Read it for yourself. Then answer this question. Who are the saved? Remember, our mission is to accept God’s word into our hearts and not what we’ve been taught by anyone else, so don’t allow your mind to race to phrases, and teachings that cannot be proven by the word of the Lord. Just respect the authority of Jesus, and answer the question based upon the words of the Lord. Who are the saved according to Jesus? To emphasize this further, turn to John chapter 12 at verse 48. Answer this: What did the King say will judge us in the end if we reject His word? By now, it should be, becoming clear, that when we talk about authority, we’re talking about the Bible, we talk about the word of God.

I pray that your love, your trust, your soul, is not in anyone other than Christ Jesus. Again, open your Bible and read Matthew 14 verse 22-33. Note that the disciples were afraid saying, “it is a ghost!” (v.26). Then after Jesus made Himself known, notice that Peter trusted Jesus, Peter put all his focus on the Lord and asked, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water” (v.28). Peter walked on the water with Jesus, but the moment Peter turned his focus away from the Lord, Peter began to sink. (Read also, Mark 6:45-52; John 6:15-21).

The same will happen today if we lose our focus. This happens whenever we pay more heed to “what I’ve been taught”, more on “what my preacher said”, more on “what my family has believed”, and more on “what my



church believes”, more on “what I believe”, and less on “*what does the scripture say*” (Rom. 4:3). Will you, “*let God be true but every man a liar*” (Rom. 3:4).

As always, in Love
Dave Scarpino

Times of Our Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	9:50 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30 PM

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Hear the gospel-----	John 6:45; Romans 10:17
Believe the gospel-----	John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6
Repent of sins -----	Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30
Confess Christ-----	Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10
Be baptized-----	Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
Remain faithful unto and until death-----	Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22