

Bedford Bulletin

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BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE
FAITH
1 Corinthians 3:9-11

Things That Divide (Part 5) The Church of Christ

In this series we have been studying “things that divide”, and an important subject it is, for the object of these things is the Church of Christ. Our weapons of war against these things are listed in the scriptures such as Ephesians 6:10-20. But we can only be “*strong in the power of the Lord and in the power of His might*”, if we “*put on the whole armor of God.*” Putting on this armor requires that we are diligently studying, consuming the word of God and applying its precepts to our daily walk in Christ (2 Tim. 2:15; James 1:22). That should remind us of the great importance that is laid upon understanding how to establish bible authority by direct command, approved example and necessary inference, all which were discussed in previous studies. If we “*stand therefore*” in the word of God (Eph. 6:13-17), we’ll win the battle for our souls and for the purity of the Lord’s church. But, if we have our heads in the sand and “just believe with all our hearts there is ‘no division’, everything will be ok”, then we’re doomed to failure. Let’s never forget as members of the body of Christ, “*you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*” (1 Pet. 2:9). We need to let our light shine!

Now open your Bible to Acts 20 and verses 17, 28-30 and consider the significance of Paul’s warning. Note that in verses 17 and 28, it is clear Paul is speaking to the Elders at the church in Ephesus. As you read verse 29 take care to note the words “*I know*”. Paul didn’t say, “I think”, “I’m pretty sure”, or “It might be that”, no, he said “*For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.*” Think with me and connect the dots. It is not strange that these “*wolves*” came after the Apostles left. The false teachers who come, come in by stealth (Gal. 2:4; Jude 4) only do so when there is a lack of strong faithful teachers. Do you remember the saying “when the cats away the mice will play”? Apply that to Paul’s warning from verse 30, “*Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking [a]perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves*”. Yes, this can be applied to weak Elders, Preachers, and Sunday School teachers, anyone who speak perverse things and draws away disciples after themselves. What a shame! What a tragedy, because of the words, “*from among yourselves*”, and “*draw away*”. Paul said division will come from within. What is the warning? The men of God warned that some in the church will try to take the place of God by establishing their own human reasons and doctrines as if they were “doctrines of God” (Matt. 15:8-9), thus dividing the body. What caused the division? Man inserting his authority over God’s.



*“But above all these things put on love,
which is the bond of perfection.”*

In Paul’s first letter to Timothy in the fourth chapter Paul warns, “*Now the*

Spirit [a]expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1). The “*Spirit expressly says*”, not man, the Spirit! There is some good news in Paul’s statement. He said, “*some will depart from the faith*”. That means the church can still stand for truth and righteousness. But, when some do leave, it’s called division, and this is not a “first century problem”. It has and will happen within our ranks even from this very day forward. How can a member in good standing fall from grace (Gal. 5:4) and leave the blood bought church, where salvation is (2 Tim. 2:10, 3:15)? Paul tells us by this list: “*giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy*” (v.1b, 2). Listen, when Paul said, “*deceiving spirits*”, he’s referring to men and women who

Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

would draw you away from the truth, and sometimes in all sincerity, that is to say, their minds have been seared, and they believe the lies they are purporting. This happens because some grow tired of the preacher that preaches “*in season and out of season*”, then they “*will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables*” (2 Tim. 4:2-4). This happens because there are many deceivers in the world, “*antichrists*” (2 John 1:7), who “*who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness*” (2 Thess. 10b-12). Paul said, “*having their own conscience seared with a hot iron*” (1 Tim. 4:2). They are under the influence of the master of deception, Satan.

How can this happen to a child of God? The Hebrew writer sheds light here saying it is because of “*Spiritual Immaturity*”. Read the explanation: “*12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the [b]oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are [c]of full age, that is, those who by reason of [d]use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*” (Heb. 5:12-14). In chapter 6 at verse one the key to protecting ourselves and our local church. “*leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to [a]perfection*” (6:1). The word “*perfection*” in Greek is [τελειότητα] from “*telios*” and means: “*the state of the more intelligent, absolutely, moral and spiritual perfection*”, Thayer’s. Solomon summed it up saying, “*The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them*” (Prov. 11:3).

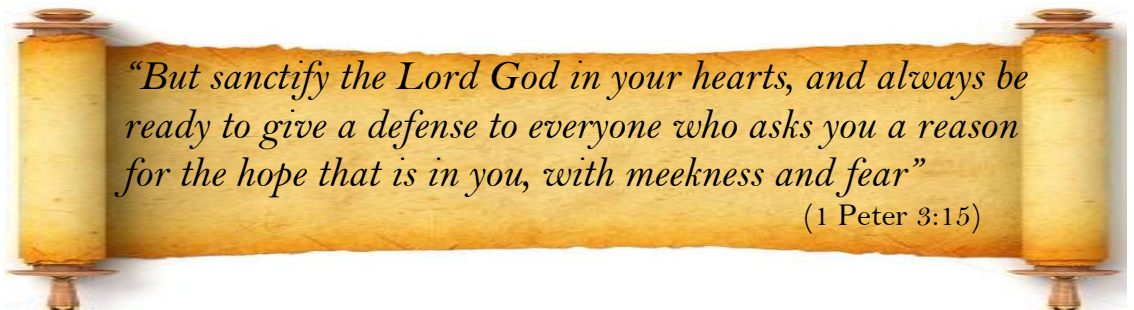
How can we protect ourselves from false teachers, from divisive statements that separate members?

First, never stop growing in your faith (2 Pet. 1:5-11). Peter did say, “*be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble*” v.10).

Second, study God’s word daily, and “*...shun profane and [a]idle babblings, for they will [b]increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer*” (2 Tim. 2:16-17). The word “*idle*” comes from [κενοφωνία] which is a compound word made from kenós and phónéó: Kenós means empty, void; worthless, amounting to zero (of no value, profit) and phónéó means “*to call out, give forth a sound*”. What makes for empty words? People who stand in the place of God and teach lies. Who are these? Most radio and T.V evangelists. Most of the books written by the plethora of authors, who write from self-imposed positions of authority. I must at this point say, that the lies don’t have to be “*Big Lies*”. Remember in the garden the deceiver only added a single three letter word that changed the course of history, “*You will ~~not~~ surely die*” (Gen. 3:4). Knowing God’s word through careful study will keep us protected from those who don’t learn to rightly divide.

Third, meditate on the words of God. Too many just coast through listening to every word of the preachers and the teachers. But we must remember, that we won’t remember but a little portion of what was taught. Therefore, Paul said, “*Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you*” (1 Tim. 4:15-16). To the saints at Philippi he commanded, “*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things*” (Phil. 4:8).

Forth and final. Live your life patterned after Christ. “*but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct*” (1 Pet. 1:15). “*...we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*” (Eph.



“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear”

(1 Peter 3:15)

1:4). “*...a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish*” (Eph. 5:27). “*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may*

prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2). Paul wrote, “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Titus 2:11-14). “nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22).

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