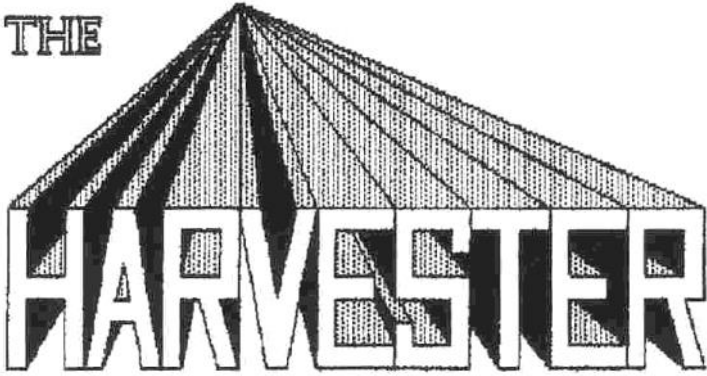


THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

September 2017

No. 381

NO DIVISIONS

In the New Testament we are told that the church in Corinth had many problems. One of these problems was that they were divided. One reason for their divisions was that they were following men. *“Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?”* (1 Cor. 1:12-13a)

Jesus Christ is not divided. We all must be His disciples. Even today, believers sometimes follow a popular preacher or evangelist or godly man and a division results between others who follow a different individual. Within a church, family mem-

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bers may band together, and there can be one family group against another family group. When there is animosity between brothers within a family, there can be a division between the brothers. There may be differences of opinion that cause divisions. The devil can use any problem or difference between us to create a division.

The problems and divisions in the church in Corinth were so bad that their assemblies were not for the better but for the worse.

Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. (1 Cor. 11:17-22)

Even as the Corinthians partook of the Lord's Supper, there was carnal thinking and inconsideration of their fellow Christians.

Divisions are often the result of carnal, worldly thinking.

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? (1 Cor. 3:1-3)

James described a similar situation in James 4:1-2a:

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war.

As long as you have carnal thinking you cannot please God.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom. 8:5-8)

So what is the cure for carnal thinking that causes divisions? The answer is that you must change your thinking; you must change your mind.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Rom. 12:2)

Instead of looking for the differences and emphasizing the problems or offenses and creating adversarial relationships, realize that you are all members of Christ's body and therefore seek to be of one mind and develop deep love for one another.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. (1 Pet. 3:8-9)

My encouragement to you is the same as that of the Apostle Paul as revealed in the following passages.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing

one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Eph. 4:1-6)

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Cor. 1:10)

I encourage you to work for unity and being of one mind within your congregation, that there be no divisions among you.

ED ANDERSON
(Sierra Vista, AZ)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Which land did the Lord promise to Abram?
2. How many plagues did God send on Egypt?
3. What was Jesus wrapped in when he was born?
4. What was Jesus teaching about when he said, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”?
5. Which city came down from heaven “prepared as a bride”?
...and remember last month’s questions?
1. Melchizedek was a high priest, but also king of where? SALEM (Gen. 14:18; Heb. 7:1)
2. Which prophet told Jeroboam he would rule over ten tribes? AHIJAH (1 Kings 11:30-31)
3. What miracle did Jesus perform just before healing Legion of his unclean spirit? CALMING OF THE STORM (Mark 4:39 - 5:2)
4. Where did Philip preach the good news about the Kingdom

of God leading to many baptisms? SAMARIA (Acts 8:12)

5. Paul thanks God that he did not baptize any of the Corinthians, except for which people? CRISPUS, GAIUS AND THE HOUSEHOLD OF STEPHANAS (1 Cor. 1:14-16)
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“I HAVE THINGS TO DO”

We are extremely blessed to live in the United States of America! We live in the greatest country that has ever existed in terms of food, clothing, medication, homes, transportation, modern amenities and so on. We have the opportunity to learn to read and write. Those who wish to can seek further training or education after high school. Others go directly into the work force. Some choose to delay marriage until they are settled financially. Others seek a spouse and begin raising a family as soon as they can. Whatever path we choose, if taken seriously, involves much time and effort. When we get involved in the hustle and bustle of life, sometimes we make a priority list either physically or mentally. If we have a project for school done properly, we can get deeply involved and we may have to neglect some of our chores. The same holds true for home renovations. When we get very busy with re-doing our homes, other things like mowing or taking out the trash may have to be postponed.

We are going to put forth a lot of effort on something. Why do we spend so very much time on things of this life? We see our families and peers working, attending school, raising families, and we want to be part of life. When we set our priorities, something will be first on our list and other items are given less priority. What determines what is first on the list? Grandma and Grandpa may invite us for supper while we are patching a large hole in our roof so that rain won't ruin the interior of our house. We answer our cell phone while we are on the roof and say, "Thank you, but I have things to do".

When it comes to our soul salvation, with eternity in view, how do we set our priorities? Let us consider very carefully the fol-

lowing words given by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. (Mat. 6:25-34)

All the material things in this life, including our bodies, are temporal. Jesus plainly teaches us that we are to seek the kingdom of heaven first. All the things that one can accumulate will one day return to dust or be burned when the earth is

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destroyed. We can spend a lot of time building a beautiful home, working long hours on a job, collecting expensive paintings and coins, playing musical instruments, visiting many foreign countries, accumulating college degrees, raising a family and on and on. While we are involved in many things of this sort do we put God first? Or do we say, “I have things to do” and God is put way down on our priority list.

When we decide to further our education away from home, do we consider if there will be a New Testament church that one can attend within driving distance? When we select a mate for marriage do we select someone who is a baptized member of the Lord’s church that does not have a living spouse? When we get a job do we select a place to work that is in driving distance of a congregation of the Lord’s church? Do we put God first in all that we think about, talk about, and do?

Let’s consider Grandma and Grandpa’s invitation to supper while we were fixing a hole in our roof. We told Ma and Pa the priority of our “do” list for the day. We must stop the water from coming into our home. Let’s consider a different invitation. It is Sunday morning and they invite you to take them to church because they are getting up in years and don’t feel like driving that day. Would you tell them, “I have things to do”? Or would you already be in the mind-set that you were going to attend church and commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and would be delighted to take them to the church assembly! Would you put some thick plastic over the gap in the roof and put God first and attend church or say “I have things to do”?

The planet earth will one day be destroyed via fire! The apostle Peter vividly expounds,

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (2 Pet. 3:10)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
September 1 - 3	Freefield Stateline, MS	Hunter Bulger (Prattville, AL)
September 8 - 9	Ashlock Near Celina, TN	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
September 8 - 10	Hopkinsville Hopkinsville, OH	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)
September 10 - 15	Mount Zion Crab Orchard, KY	J.D. McDonald & Joe Hill
September 22 - 24	Van Lear Van Lear, KY	Hunter Bulger (Prattville, AL)
September 29 - October 1	New Bethel Cullman, AL	J.D. McDonald & Timothy Lewis

What could be possibly be more important than our soul's salvation? If we gain the whole world and lose our souls what have we gained? Matthew plainly conveys in chapter 16 and verse 26, "*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

Peter's inspired words in his second epistle gives us plain teaching regarding setting our "to do" lists.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (2 Pet. 3:11-12)

TIM ELDRIDGE
(Woodland, AL)