

In search of...

Truth & Right

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Corinthian Division

Today, in most communities, you do not have to look hard to see division in the Church. There are typically 2-3 or more congregations in any selected town when there was once one. How did this occur? For our discussion, it is really irrelevant, but nonetheless, sad. Typically, the resulting congregations have little interaction to none between one another and view the Christians in the other buildings in a jaded light as if they were not the Lord's Children, our brothers and sisters, at all.

Division in the Church is no just tied to the external. There is frequent division within as well. By verse 10 of I Corinthians chapter 1, Paul is expressing his concern over the division in the Corinthians Church. He desired them to be of one mind. I

knew a preacher once who believed everyone in the building believed the same exact thing. When confronted with the idea that that harmony did not exist, he demanded to know names! Though we desire harmony in all things, one cannot force growth. The Corinthian Church had spiritual gifts and an Apostle of Christ to come to proper instruction, yet, their unity was not complete.

The Corinthian letter starts with the mention of division, then the letter expresses where this division (from the teachings of Christ) is occurring. Chapter one through four discusses the foolishness of men's teachings versus the need to rely on God. Chapter five examines willful, defiant sin and notes it is not

appropriate to be patient with such, but to separate ourselves from it. Chapter six discusses the Christians defrauding one another. Chapter seven examines dysfunction in the marriage. Chapters eight through ten detail the harming of other Christians by putting a stumbling block in their way even in matters of conscience. Paul calls upon the Corinthians to remember the example of sinful Israel and to avoid such worldliness. Chapter 11 further examines separation from the law of Christ even to the extent of improperly taking the Lord's Supper. In chapters 12 through 14, it is seen even the Spiritual Gifts given by God to strengthen the early Church, were being improperly viewed. Paul establishes these things would end, but faith, hope, and love should be embraced. Finally, the pinnacle of the Christian faith, the resurrection of Jesus Himself, is discussed in Chapter 15. There were some Christians that were denying the resurrection of man!

Now consider these verses from the first Chapter and 16th Chapter of Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 1:1-3 - *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the **church of God** which is at Corinth, even them that are **sanctified** in Christ Jesus, called to be*

***saints**, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 16:20 - *All the **brethren** greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.*

In a letter written to address the division of the Corinthians from the Word of God, divisions which caused factions within the local congregation, how is it that Paul refers to these sin committing people as the Church of God, Sanctified, Saints, and Brethren? Notice Paul even sends greetings from other congregations of the Lord's Church? Should they not be shunning interaction with every disagreement? Should they not be dropping any relationship with these people leaving only one sided discussions of scripture until the other yields? The Corinthian letter gives us only one such example of separation. The chapter 5 example of the man who had his father's wife was a sin so obvious that even the Gentiles (world) understood it to be wrong. Yet, the man continued in the sin. Separation was imperative! Yet, I ask you to consider how many differences there are yet in body of Christ as we continue to grow and mature. Perhaps it's time that a bit more patience is had with growth issues. Perhaps greeting and loving those brothers and sisters who

re desperately trying to do the right thing but are not completely harmonious with His Word, will better aid their development. Are we the judges of the exact time an individual has enough growth and study to embrace a certain teaching of scripture? We certainly are judges of our brothers and sisters (1 Cor. 5:12). We are Keepers of one another's souls. However, have we been busier growing and sharpening our Christianity with our brothers and sisters, or busier murmuring against them while we avoid interaction with them? Are we still pointing to the one time or two times we tried to study with them, or are we busy trying to continually study with them? Are we avoiding entire congregations due to the attitude of one or two people, or are we approaching our brothers and sisters one by one striving to find unity with God?

My fellow Christians, I ask you not to every turn an eye to sin, I simply ask you to recognize the attitude we extend to our brothers and sisters when we believe there is a difference as to how we view scripture. Is the difference because through our earnest study we see the issue differently? Then lovingly study more. Is the difference because of willful sin? Then we have authority to separate. I suggest to you that separation occurs far more for improper reasons than proper ones and this ought not be.

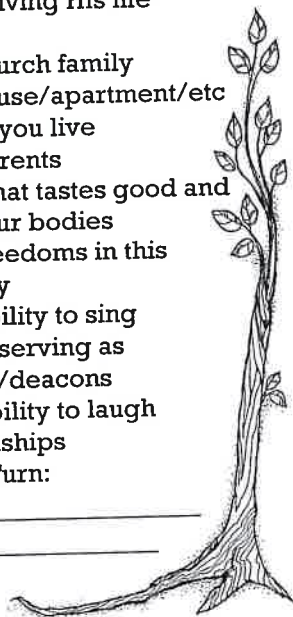
Travis Main

Dear God,

thank you for being there when nobody else was.

Have you thanked God today for any of the following?

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- The house/apartment/etc where you live
- Our parents
- Food that tastes good and fuels our bodies
- Our freedoms in this country
- The ability to sing
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- The ability to laugh
- Friendships
- Your Turn:



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Fifth Sunday Photos

Every fifth Sunday of the month, we try to highlight some of great things happening around our congregation that were captured through photography. If you happen to get a good picture of a member doing work for the Lord, please feel free to post it on our Facebook page or tweet us @wellsburgchurch #fifthSundayphotos or e-mail us at minister@truthandright.org with a little description of what is happening in the picture.



During our gospel meeting, Chuck & Vickie shared a meal with brother Mike Davis and invited several others as well. "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." (Hebrews 13:16)

Dan and Stacey Shay's baby girl, Makena, was born on St. Patrick's Day. Mother and child are both safely at home. Thanks be to God for answered prayers for their health & safety!

"When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world." (John 16:21)

