

Separation - and Unity

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Date: 02 January 2022

[0 : 00] You're going to go to the Word of God. You've got your Bible, 1 Corinthians 1. 1 Corinthians 1. Talking about the subject of separation and really it's about unity and false unity and true unity.

! And so we're going to go to the Word of God and the Bible calls us, it issues a call to unity. And we see that in 1 Corinthians 1. From verse 10. It says, Now I beseech you, brethren, Paul says, Now I beseech 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 hath been declared unto me of you, brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. So the Word of God exhorts us here, Paul exhorts the church at Corinth here, that you speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, that you be joined in the same mind and the same judgment.

So Paul's saying here there's a unity, that's a good thing. There's a good kind of unity, a true kind of unity. But we see also there is a false kind of unity. We see the modern trends all around us.

[1 : 33] There's a lot of modern day compromise and apostasy. And it's alike to the time of Isaiah, when Isaiah put it, that truth is fallen in the stream. You know, we believe as a church, as God's people, we do believe there is a standard of absolute truth.

There's a final authority. And it's in this book. It's the Word of God. It's absolutely true from cover to cover. But we're living in a serious hour, when people don't believe in truth, or they try to re-divine truth, such that they say, you've got your truth, I've got mine.

But the truth is the truth, is the truth. And we're living in a time, where the truth is under threat. What should be our response? The Bible talks about a battle for truth, that we would face in our day.

It tells us how we should search, and find, and ask for, and walk in, the old paths. The old paths, it speaks to us really, of old time Bible, biblical Christianity.

The old time gospel truth. Some would say that we should bring in, a kind of a unity of religion. A unity of religion. And that's called, as people call it, the ecumenical movement.

[2 : 44] Now the ecumenical movement, actually leads to, what is the interfaith movement. Now right now, and it's just been, I believe, just been dedicated, at the start of this year, as in, the last couple of days, there is what's called, the Abrahamic family house.

It's the headquarters, of the one world religion. In effect, or certainly, it's in that vein. And it's an interfaith complex, in Abu Dhabi.

It's a church, a synagogue, and a mosque, all on the same site. Now this is a picture of, the kind of, falling away, I put to you.

This ecumenism, this actual interfaith movement, where it's all a joining together, a promoting, a tolerance, as the absolute virtue of all, despite major, doctrinal, and practical differences.

Of course, we know, between Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, there is much difference. Much, much difference. You can't blend them all together, in some kind of mishmash.

[3 : 52] But that's what the world, and these kind of, situations are, working towards. In reality, ecumenism, is an attack, on God's church.

It's literally, the ecumenism, the word ecumenism, it literally means, the whole world. So, we hear, the phrase, ecumenism, it kind of sounds, okay to some, they think that's okay, church is getting together, inter-denominational, ecumenism, but ecumenism, it actually means, the world.

And it's just that. It's the end times, apostasy. It's an unholy, alliance. It's trying to, blend this mishmash, of all kinds of ideas, about God, and faith, as if they are, the same, but they're not.

And nowadays, everyone, we should be exhorted, to be aware, of these things, that there's some, high profile, evangelical leaders, that are engaged, in dialogue, with the Roman Catholics, seeking to bring about, a church unity.

Some leading evangelists, are now regularly, sending Roman Catholic, converts, back to the Roman Catholic Church. And Roman Catholic priests, are members of many, ministers fraternals. [5 : 07] So these, get together, of local ministers, and I'm not part of that, but they get together, and it's, anything goes. Like anyone can sit, around the table, and they're shaking hands, and giving hugs, like they're brothers, and sisters.

But many of these, people are actually, not saved. They're preaching, a false doctrine. And friends, it's happening in Adelaide. It's happening in our city. In Adelaide, right now, the Anglican, the Uniting, the Catholic churches, they've got a combined, theological school, in Adelaide. The Anglicans, Catholics, the Uniting, they've got this, one school, where they train, and they're all, in the same boat. We see today, the sixth day, of the Ecumenical, Uniting Church. The Ecumenical, Uniting Church, is woeful. They acknowledge, several of their ministers, are living in, same-sex relationships, yet they take no action. Friends, this is abomination. That's what the Bible calls it. That's what the Bible says it is. And I would trust, what the Bible says, and what these ones would say. So, friends, it's important, that we see, and act upon, the Word of God.

[6 : 17] The Bible urges us this, in Amos 3, verse 3, it says, can two walk together, except they be agreed. They cannot. You can't walk with someone, who's going in a different direction.

You can't walk hand in hand, with someone, who's taking a different road. And the ecumenical movement, it calls for a unity, that's at the expense, of biblical truth. The ecumenical movement, it breaks down, the walls of separation, between truth and error.

Now, some would say, we should be building bridges, not walls. But there is a necessary wall, between truth and error. There is a necessary division, a necessary separation, between what is right, and what is wrong.

And the Bible tells us that. The ecumenical church unity movement, today, is working to unite, what they call, evangelicals, and Roman Catholics. Trying to reunite, trying to unite them.

And Roman Catholicism, has turned Christianity, into a form of idolatry, with its doctrine of the mass, the papacy, the saints, effectively the worship, of Mary.

[7 : 23] These things are not biblical, they're not in the Bible, they're the conjuring up, of men, of tradition of old, that has nothing to do, with the Bible.

It's contrary to the Bible. Here's a picture, of the Pope, of Rome. And Pope, means father, so really we shouldn't call him father, or Pope, because it's unbiblical, to call anyone father.

But the word of God, urges us not to call anyone father. But here we have the so-called Pope, the Papa, Francis, embracing Sheik, El Tayyib, the grand Imam, in Cairo.

He's giving him an unholy kiss, you could say. The Pope, and this Imam, this Muslim man, in Cairo. And friends, you wonder, what on earth is going on?

The Bible tells us of such a thing. Many so-called Protestants, don't take their Bible seriously anymore, in their daily lives. They're being swept along, by many erroneous teachings.

[8 : 22] And this is just, an example of just that. The ecumenical movement, I put to you, it is dangerous, and destructive. It does not follow the Bible. I know some Christians, might never have heard such a thing, or never really thought, that yeah, this is actually something, I should be waking up to, and being aware of.

But it's actually, the Bible warns us of such a thing. And it urges us, instead of that false unity, where we're embracing, literally embracing error, that we embrace the truth.

We stand fast on the truth. We stand on true unity. And true unity, takes its stand upon, the inerrant word of God. It takes its stand upon, the biblical proclamation, the doctrine and practice, of the word of God, of God's word.

And speak thou the things, that become sound doctrine. Paul urges Titus, in Titus 2, verse 1. So friends, tonight, the Bible talks about, a false unity.

We see we're exhorted to, a biblical unity, a true unity, a right unity, but we're exhorted to be, warned against, to stand against, to be opposed to, a false unity.

[9 : 32] And the Bible talks about it, foretells a time, where there will be, a false unity, under the Antichrist. We see that in the chapters, of 17 through 18, of Revelation.

It forewarns us, friends, the Bible tells us, it clearly shows us, there's going to be, a growing apostasy, a falling away, from the faith. A falling away, apostate churches, a growing deception, as we approach, those last days, of our Lord's return.

And some of the scriptures, that warn us, of such a thing, I've just got a few, we'll just, touch on here, in 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 3, Paul tells the Thessalonians, he says, let no man deceive you, by any means.

For that day, the day of the Lord, shall not come, except there come, a falling away, first. And that the man of sin, be revealed, the son of perdition.

I believe that, falling away, is exactly what it says, it is there. It's a falling away. Some would try, to change that. The Bible says, there's going to be, a falling away. We're seeing that, aren't we?

[10:39] There's a falling away. Apostasia, apostasy. That's what it means. I can't, I can't interpret that, any other way, than what the word of God says, what the King James says, there's a falling away.

There's going to be, a falling away first. And so we're seeing that, I put to you. We see in 1 Timothy 4, verse 1, it says, the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith.

Giving heed to, seducing spirits, these seductive spirits, these doctrines of devils. People are going to be seduced. They're going to be ensnared, taken away, like a seductive woman, would defile a marriage.

It's seducing spirits, that we should be aware of, and avoid. In 2 Timothy 3, 13, it says, but evil man, and seduces, that word again, shall wax worse and worse. It's going to get worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

They're deceived themselves, as well as deceiving. You know, there's well-meaning people that are deceived, such that they believe the lie. They're deceived, and they are deceiving.

[11:41] And it tells how, the time will come, when people are not going to endure, sound doctrine. They're not going to want to hear, teaching, which is a bit confronting.

But after their own lust, they shall heed to themselves, teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears, from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. In some churches, it's all about stories, of trips to heaven, of miraculous encounters, of goose bumps, and experiential, all of this talk, was scarcely, an opening of a page of the Bible.

They're turned unto fables. They're turned from the living, precious word of God, to all manner of, fanciful stories, fables. We see, likewise, John exhorts, beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits.

Test them. Try them. Check it out. Check what these spiritual encounters are. What these so-called spiritual experiences are. And there's real ones. There's good ones. There's biblical ones.

But it says, he says, try the spirits. Is it the spirit of God? Are they of God? Because many false prophets have gone out into the world. The revelator, John says, that he was carried away in the spirit.

[12:58] In Revelation 17, it says that he was carried away and he saw this woman and was sat upon a scarlet-coloured beast. And this beast was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, it says. And she was decked with gold and precious stones and pearls. She had a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications.

And upon her forehead was the name written, Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the, blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And here's how someone's pictured such a spectacle that John saw this, this fearful beast with this scarlet-dressed woman holding a golden cup.

Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And we see the explanation of that, effectively the one world religion, a false religion, a conglomeration of false belief.

[14:16] And we see Mystery Babylon, it pictures for us, I believe, very much the Church of Rome and the martyrs of the saints through the violent acts of the Church of Rome.

And we see the Mystery Babylon is how that might emerge into this end-time false system. So our question must be, in the light of all of this, in the light of these prophecies yet to come to pass, is the unity that we have, a unity in the faith or a unity that is compromised?

In contrast to false ecumenical unity, we know that we can truly know truth-based unity. And that's something we should aspire to and long for and hunger and want and to encourage and to build up, that we have that, that unity that's a good thing, a good kind of unity.

And the psalmist tells us in Psalm 133, of such a good kind of unity, he says, Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren, brothers and sisters in Christ, to dwell together in unity.

It's like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, the picture of him getting anointed there, that went down to the skirts of his garments, as the Jew of Hermon, as the Jew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.

[15 : 38] For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore. You know, there's blessing there, there's life, there's a richness there, there's an anointing there, there's God's blessedness there as we, as brothers and sisters, get together in unity.

That's a good kind of unity. So how can we tell, we talked about the false unity a bit here, about the mystery Babylon, the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.

We've seen about this interfaith stuff that's happening, this compromise even in ministers, fraternalists and such, where there's some mishmash of all kinds of beliefs that, and sometimes people are not saved, are treated as if they're saved.

And that's a woeful thing. There's a false unity for sure. How do we then look at, what is Bible unity? What is the good kind of unity that God wants us to aspire to?

How can we tell a false from the truth? I put to you, we can tell this by, number one, Bible truth. Bible truth. If God's truth is not the foundation, the unity is false.

[16 : 47] The foundation has to be the Bible. It has to be biblical. We have to say chapter and verse. Is it Bible? In contrast with the ecumenical movement, God's church is based on the authority of the word of God.

This is our authority, not some authority of men or authority of church tradition or authority of who knows what you might believe or what your warm and fuzzies tell you to believe.

We've got the authority of God's word. And that's what we trust, the message of salvation. Why is there a dictionary? So that there might be a standard in spelling. Why do we have a Bible?

Because we have to have a standard of faith. This is the standard. There is no other book. There is no another testament of Jesus Christ. There is no revised, added to kind of Bible.

There is the Bible that we can be assured of. And we can stand in faith, not in doubt and unbelief, but in assurance. And that's something that strikes me lately. The Bible tells us some things we can absolutely know.

[17 : 48] I've been talking with some people lately and I've touched on it before. Some people, they don't even know that they're saved. They don't know that they're saved. They don't know that they're going to heaven. They don't know that they're born again.

They think that somehow it's going to happen without them simply trusting Christ. And they don't have that knowledge. They don't know that they're saved. But friends, I put to you tonight, we can know for sure.

We can be certain of this. We don't have to stay in doubt and unbelief. We can have an assurance, an assurance that's not some flippant, kind of careless thing, not something that you claim that you have it when you don't, but that on the Bible basis, the Bible authority, you can say, I know that I'm saved.

I know that I'm God's child. I know that I'm going to heaven. And for example, the apostle says that we can know the only true God. It says we can know the Son of God has come. We can know that judgment is against iniquity.

We can know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can know where he has gone and the way.

We can know him, the way, the truth, and the life. We can know the Father. We can know the Spirit of God.

[19 : 01] We can know the voice of the shepherd. He wants us to hear his voice and to follow his word. We can know that we've passed from death unto life. That's a blessed one, isn't it? You know, you can know if you're in that place of uncertainty, you're shaking, you don't know you're going to heaven or not.

The Bible says we can know that we've passed from death unto life. It says that we've actually made that transition while we're still alive. You can actually know that I'm going to heaven here and now on this side of eternity.

You can know you've already got eternal life. The Bible's very clear about that. It says that we can know whom we have believed. And we are certain, we are certain of these things. There's a certainty you can have because of the Bible basis for your faith.

The Bible alone is the basis for our unity, for what we believe, for what we do. And so the church stands fast in the one spirit, that one mind, that one accord.

As Paul tells the Philippians, he says, Philippians 1, verse 27 in part, it says that you stand fast, stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

[20 : 10] We know these days there's much disunity. There's many different views about all kinds of things. There's different views amongst us about all kinds of issues.

You know, some would be, you know, for example, the current one, you know, you're pro-vaccine, you're anti-vaccine. You know, you understand that COVID is a risk or you don't think it's a risk at all.

I think seriously, we know there is a risk, but sometimes it is overplayed. But nevertheless, we've all got different views about all of such things and we respect that we can accommodate differences of opinion on such matters as that.

But as far as Bible truth, there's only one opinion we can have about salvation, that Jesus saves. He is the saviour. We can trust in the Lord and we can know that we've passed from death unto life. We can know that we have everlasting life if we are a believer in Christ. If we've believed on the name of the Son of God, it says, this is the record. You can know that you have eternal life, you that believe.

[21 : 12] So these things are very clear and certain. There's no doubt about it. And if we've got doubt and unbelief, then we're not saved. We have to believe and they will know we're saved.

You can know this side of heaven. So the Bible is very clear. We should stand fast in one spirit and having that one mind and that one faith, the faith of the gospel.

It's simple faith. It's the simple gospel. And we can be joined in that same judgment. The Bible tells us about speaking the same thing in one mind, in one judgment.

And it talks about believers being united in this bond, the bond of love, of peace, as one church.

That's the true kind of unity. That's what we want. I think we've got that, but we could do better.

We could do better to be more unified. We could do better to be that one body. Don't you think we could do better to be one, to be that true united body in Christ? Believers together as one family.

[22 : 10] There was a cartoonist who drew a picture, a cartoon. This isn't actually the one, but just to kind of picture it, of two people. And it was a picture of two people shaking hands in the old-fashioned days when you could shake hands in this church setting.

And there was a caption to the cartoon and it said, the preacher said, now while the instruments play, shake hands with two people who aren't in your clique. It's a bit true, isn't it?

Sometimes, you know, they say, well just shake hands with people, but you automatically go to the people you know. You go to the people that your friends, your family, the people you've already met. And the one who is new to the church gets left sitting on their own.

That's a big problem, isn't it? Can you believe that? Can you agree with me? I thank God for those that go out of their way to say hello to a newcomer, to someone who's maybe less there and say, yeah, thanks for coming, you know, and have some interchange because we know church can be like that.

I can be like that. We all can be. Though we might neglect to say hello to some that maybe you haven't got to meet them before, there's people here tonight you don't even know their names. Let's be honest.

[23 : 24] You know, let's try to love one another. Let's have that kind of unity that we care about and we're not going to be clicky as in just kind of keep to the people you're familiar with. Reach out.

That's a good thing. Bible truth calls for Bible unity. The Bible truth is the basis for Bible unity.

Here's what Paul tells the church at Ephesus. He says, Ephesians 4, verse 3, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.

There's that oneness again. The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He says, there is one body and one Spirit even as you're 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.

And he says that we should come to that unity of the faith, of that knowledge of the Son of God, that perfect man, that mature body unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

You don't have to measure up to my standard, you've got to measure up to his standard. Amen. We've got to measure up to his standard. I've got to measure up to his standard. You know, that's the standard we want to measure up to, isn't it?

[24 : 36] To be more like Christ, to measure up to that stature, that awesome stand of our Lord, that strong and faithful example, that model that he is to us, that we should measure up to that and aspire to that.

So how can we tell the false unity from the truth? I said number one by Bible truth. This is the standard. This is the measure. This is the authority. This is the plumb line how we say, yeah, that's right, that's straight up and down or that's a bit skew-whipped.

That's how we tell by the standard. That's the plumb line that we use, Bible truth. And we can tell this false unity from the true unity by Bible unity.

What are the characteristics of Bible unity? What does Bible unity look like? Bible unity, I put to you Bible unity, it doesn't look like that.

Bible unity doesn't look like that, friends. Here's what Bible unity looks like. Bible unity. It's a unity that's in the Holy Spirit.

[25 : 44] Paul says, keep the unity of the Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit. There's a unity. We're united in that Spirit of God, the unity of the Holy Spirit. It's a unity in the one faith, says Paul.

And that's the faith that we're to earnestly contend for. We should want to fight for it because this is too important for us to accommodate or deviate from.

This is something we're willing to fight tooth and nail for, to contend earnestly for the faith. There's no unity, no N-O unity between those who believe and follow the Bible and those who do not. We have to be straight up and down on that. There's a unity, there's unity in the Spirit, a unity in the one faith, and it's a unity that's based in the local church. You know, some people that are just butterflies have got no commitment to a local church.

They just don't, they don't have that commitment, they're just floating around. But friends, there's a unity that is in the local church. We're accountable to each other.

[26 : 45] I'm accountable to you. You're accountable to others here. There's a biblical discipline, there's a biblical oversight, there's a biblical leadership there and interdenominational unity is contrary to that, is compromising of that.

You know, I don't have unity with the Seventh-day Adventists, for example. They're not even saved. They don't have Bible salvation because they trust in their baptism to save them, which is unbiblical, it's untrue, it's false.

They don't have faith in Christ that saves. They have to add baptism or whatever else they've got to and they've got to keep it by their own doing of works. That's false.

We don't have unity with such, for example, as much as we could give many other examples. Biblical unity is maintained by God-given leaders. That there is a place for biblical leadership and rightful submission to that.

Not that I'm one to be putting you under my thumb or exerting a diatrophies kind of leadership where I'm overbearing or overlording but that it's a good kind of unity, a good kind of leadership I trust.

[28 : 00] And then we see the picture of the church that it's a symphony. It's like a symphony. We're different instruments. The Bible talks about how we are alike to different instruments playing in harmony, playing together.

And we warned against disunity. As we've read before, there's talk of contentions. There's contentions among you. 1 Corinthians 1 verse 12. There's doubtful disputations.

Romans 14 verse 1. There's preferences. There are personal preferences and squabbles like happened in Philippians 4 verse 2 where Euodius and Sintichi that he was exhorting them to be of the same mind in the Lord.

Some kind of paraphrase Euodius and Sintichi as she's soon touchy. Some people are soon touchy. You know, they're touchy, they've got this easily offended, easily make a big fuss about something or other.

And these are things that kind of act contrary to Bible unity. They cause disunity. We're against that. We don't want people to have contentions that are pointless or not biblical contentions but unbiblical contentions.

[29 : 09] The Bible talks about how we should be united together. That's what we want, isn't it? United. I believe we are. We want to be more so united.

That we've got the same faith, we've got the same purpose, we've got the same mind, we care about the same things, we care about the same Bible truth, we care about the same mission that we have to reach souls.

Someone said this, ten men banded together in love and unity can do what ten thousand separately would fail to do. I think that's true of the church too. Ten men bonded together in love and unity are more effective than ten thousand that don't have that.

So the unity in the church will help us to be a powerful church. The gates of hell shall not prevail against such a church, the church of God. So we stand true on that.

There's a story about this martyr, I'm not sure all of the details of the man but this is, and we don't believe in halos but this is the only picture I could find.

[30 : 14] This is a man called Lucian of Antioch and he was asked, where do you come from? And he said this, I am a Christian. He was asked, what is your business?

What is your family? To which he answered, I am a Christian. To Lucian, Christ was all. Whether of country, of occupation, of family, the church, the cross, it revolutionises all of our relationships of life and our allegiances to Christ alone.

I'm a Christian. That's where I'm from. That's my family. That's who I am. I'm a Christian. That's where I belong. That's my home. I'm a Christian. It's the sense of it that Christ is all.

He is all. Christ is all and he was a martyr so he died for his faith. So the biblical truth upholds the truth of God's word. It's governed hopefully by right government.

We're doing what is biblical, what is proper, what is fitting and we're united in like-minded fellowship like Acts 2, 47. The church, there's a blessed unity there where they were joined together in faith and in prayer and in ministry and in doctrine and that we'll be like that church of Philippi standing fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

[31 : 32] There's a funny story about two men who are riding a tandem bike up a big steep hill. They had this bike, a two-person bike, a tandem bike. They're going up this big steep hill and it was a great struggle for them and it took a great deal of struggle for them to prove and get through that very steep climb and when they got to the top the man in the front said, boy that was sure a hard climb and the fellow in the back said yes and if I hadn't kept the brakes on all the way we'd have certainly been rolling backwards.

There's a sense where we might be working together but not really of the same mind and friends we want to be heading in the same direction and having the same heart, having the same spirit, having the same love and there's not a false unity but a rightful one.

It's a biblical unity. So Bible unity is another example how you can discern false unity from the truth by Bible truth, by Bible unity and thirdly and lastly by Bible contention.

Bible contention. Let me put to you as I referred to before this is a faith worth fighting for. Amen?

This is a faith worth fighting for. We can get strong and forceful with this faith that matters more than anything else that as we read Jude it says Beloved when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

You know I've seen some kind of funny videos lately kind of picking on certain TV preachers how they're just so wishy-washy just a lot of flim-flam there's no Bible there's no salvation message there there's no challenge against sin there's no confronting and urging to holiness and it's just such a weak flossy fairy floss kind of kind of message.

[33 : 38] We should be the opposite of that. We should be forceful I'm thinking that one compel them to come in we should be forceful that we want to drag people out of the fire pulling them out of the fire that's the picture of it we should be like firemen like firewomen pulling people out of the fire with a rescue team there's people burning or at risk of burning they're sat there in a burning house their house is about to crash down and burn them to death that's the picture that we should be snatching them pulling them out of the fire that's the picture for us there's something we should be perspiring and exerting and intense and earnest earnestly consenting for the faith because this matters more than anything else that we can ever do and this is no time for positive feel good messages for me to pat you on the back and pamper you and tell you you're saved when you're not you've got to trust Christ trust Christ alone I don't want to give you any kind of false assurance unless you are trusting trusting Christ and trusting

Christ alone I must earnestly contend for that we all must and the gospel message we present must be crystal clear it's a time to stand for the absolute truth of God's word Paul addresses the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 and he talks about how none of these things moved me he knew that he was going right out into the front line right into Jerusalem's danger zone sorry Rome rather as he was heading to Rome and he says I count not my life dear to me I want to finish my course with joy the ministry that God's given me to testify the gospel of the grace of God he was committed he was absolutely committed he was earnest about this and he says I've gone preaching the kingdom of God I'm going to see your face no more where I take you to record this day that I'm pure from the blood of all men for I've not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God sometimes it's hard to declare all the counsel of

God because you might tread on toes but that's what we must do that's what I must do so don't take it personally or whoever your preacher is if they're a bit confronting because they must declare unto you all the counsel of God the whole counsel of God if a preacher doesn't do that they're not worth 10 cents but friends we've got to take heed Paul says to the Ephesian elders take heed to the flock take heed to yourselves take heed to the flock of which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood for I know that after this after my departing shall grievous wolves answer in among you not sparing the flock of your own selves men shall arise speaking perverse things to draw disciples after them therefore watch and remember by the space of three years I cease not to warn everyone night and had to speak strongly to some people that were bringing false doctrine into our church trying to teach baptismal regeneration for example or that you can lose your salvation these are false doctrines we stand against them friends there's some that would try to come in and speak perverse things error falsehood and

I've had to speak strongly to them as Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders to watch out there's grievous wolves these are days when we've got to say this is the truth and this is error and we'll stand against error we're not going to cooperate or compromise with error these are not days for softness or weak and wishy washy or watered down words these are days to stand to stand fast to rise up to be honest to condemn error to fight sin to speak!

to speak up for the cause of righteousness and truth to call sin sin that can be hard it's not easy to be confronting but we must be faithful to declare the absolute truth to be willing to carry the reproach of the cross to be willing to be outspoken to be angry at the devil we've got to fight him sister we've got to fight the devil we've got to fight him tooth the nail fight him long the battle is the Lord's he'll give you the strength brother he'll help you win that battle that you're fighting be zealous for the truth prove!

[38 : 06] Rebuke! Exhort! Friends these are times we've got to stand fast there's a contention happening if you're not contending then there's something wrong with you we've got to contend we're told!

to contend amen and as in Christ's day some don't want the hard sayings they want something that's palatable something that's sugary sweet that'll just go down easily that's palatable it's not going to taste difficult and John 6 60 it says even of our Lord it says many of his disciples heard this hard saying when he says you're going to eat my flesh!

and drink my blood he said who can hear this and from that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him some people have come to this church and they've gone mind you they're still sending me emails criticising what I do had someone say oh that potentially some of the things that I've been deciding as in today might be weak or whatever they haven't come to church for four months so there's a lot of armchair critics out there they'll pick on this church for whatever reason they fancy they'll walk no more with us because they're not of us friends we've got to contend we've got to contend we've got to fight and sometimes when you stand for the Lord you'll be misunderstood those people are to hate you or criticize you and attack you it is a fight it is a fight we're in let's face it get ready for fighting don't think of fighting it means you should throw in the towel you should further resolve to combat to battle to defend says we should contend means fight and we are to do it how earnestly earnestly look back at the record of history the men and women of history how they stood for

Christ against all the odds stood against all the majority they stood in the minority establishment of the day they had been willing to stand and head and shoulders above the others they had been willing to poke their heads above the trenches they had been willing to stand to live to die for the

truth we see the example of Phineas he was zealous for his God it says let's be like him in that regard let's be zealous for our God and we see in friends tonight as we close consider this we're to earnestly contend it means to fight Paul says fight the good fight of your faith we're to fight against some things there's need to fight to fight sin in our own lives I'll put to you I can be my own worst enemy you might identify with that we're fighting the flesh there's a fighting within there's a fighting in our lives there's a fighting about sin against falling away there's a fighting against false teachers and false teachings in

Galatians we see a fighting against hypocrisy and falsehood so there's a need to fight we're in an army we are in an army we're drafted we're in the army we must stand and stand even though there's spiritual quicksand we're going to stand for Christ we're going to stand no matter what we're going to stand stand for the right stand for the cause of truth fight error fight deadness fight apostasy name it state it for what it is when we see situations of this one world religion that's emerging of signs such as that this is the time we should be militant in battle this is falsehood compromising churches will never become spiritually strong and mature they'll be weak and powerless when challenge comes after D-day in world war ii someone said to general eisenhower it was complimenting him it's great how you are able to coordinate all the teams in that great enterprise

[42 : 14] D-day they'd invaded the mainland again taking back europe from the nazis and general eisenhower was pivotal in that and so they were wanting to praise general eisenhower you're able to coordinate all the teams and he said this not teams but team they were one team of course it's a picture there of as that the strength came as they were one team from different nations different military units different countries they were one team so let's be that strong invading force we won team to you today we've come from different places some have come from particular churches from particular backgrounds we've come from a mishmash of all places but we're one body we are one we are one in Christ one team one invading force welded together as a fighting unit lastly I thought that was the last point but lastly

Bible unity it means Bible separation it means separation and again people might think oh you're I know I've had it put to me as I kind of tried to explain to someone and he was in like a mainstream kind of church that we're independent baptists and tried to explain what that meant and he said oh you're one of those kind of churches you know come out and be separate kind of laughing about it oh you're one of those churches you come out from among them and be separate I said yeah effectively yes that's what we are we we do come out and be separate not that we're any better than anyone else not that we're trying to claim some higher standing in their ratings but because we want to be biblical that's why because bible separation is biblical it's a separation it means we separate from sin and error we're not going to accommodate that we'll name it we'll address it when the sin will address it when the error will confront it we'll speak against it we'll we're living in a time when bible truth is unpopular and neglected it's a very important bible doctrine separation is a bible doctrine very very important it's taught right through the scripture right through the book the separation the sheep from the goats you know the safe from the lost the darkness from the light those that are found those that are lost it's a clear separation you're in one camp or the other and it's a bible doctrine that's neglected some ignore it today but it's important for every child of God so the question friends tonight is what is our emphasis is it unity or purity if we get the purity right we'll get the unity right James says James 3 17 the wisdom that's from above is first pure that's number one there's a purity we believe there's a pure unadulterated truth there's a pure gospel that's not added to or a mixture it's a clear saving message there's no mixture of error with it it's clear it's pure it's crystal clear pure it's it's purer than this there's a purity and James says the wisdom from above is first pure the kind of unity that God honours is first pure it's not a unity at all costs when we get the purity right when we get that place right with God when we have and hold sound pure doctrine truth then the unity follows the right unity follows it's not a unity that's based on compromise because that's false

I can't join hands with the nuns and the priest the local catholic church and call them my brothers and sisters in Christ because their gospel is not pure it's scarcely a gospel at all friends there's no unity there and it's not that we don't love them we want to reach them we want to see them saved it's not that we're saying I'm holier than thou it's we can't call them a brother or sister because they're not this is the truth of it the bible says keep yourselves from idols in other words the attractions and snares of this world we're in the world but not of it so we fellowship not with that

which is disobedient that which is false the god of this world would want us to worship any which what we choose any kind of spirituality we might choose there's a whole lot of new age stuff out there there's a whole lot of weird doctrines out there weird teachings we should be very clear is it biblical keep yourselves from it just keep right away steer clear of it and it says in Ephesians that we should rather reprove the unfruitful works of darkness don't accommodate that I think it's a great sadness when we see the church of Wesley as it had some good elements in the early stages and now it's the uniting church and virtually anything goes they're flying rainbow flags it's just totally lost the plot even the salvation army started good with William Booth he was rock solid in many ways he was faithfully declaring the gospel on the streets it was evangelistic it was built on the gospel message going forth and now they're just clinking cans and they've lost the plot friends and that's not to say I'm not meaning that in a critical way I'm just telling you how it is that we can lose the plot and lose track we should reprove that which is of the evil one and when we try to exhort people we've had occasion talking with friends and some people you just can't get through to them you tell them you tell them again they still don't get it they deny [48 : 19] Bible truth and it comes to a place and a time when you say actually enough is enough I'm not going to talk about that anymore because you're not receiving the truth there's a rejection we can't compromise with error if people won't be exhorted then we can't help them and Timothy is told by Paul of some that their teachings are going to grow quickly and eat people they are going to cause a corrosion an eating away a canker a spreading eating sore that's what error can be like as Paul talks about these two here Hymenaeus and Philetus so being separate means withdrawing from error not yoking together we can't yoke together because we're going in a different direction we can't walk together they're going on a different road separation means we set apart and that's a good thing it's sometimes a difficult thing but it's a necessary thing to separate from the world but to separate unto

Christ yes you want to lay hold of Christ you want to embrace Christ you want Christ to be your all in all that you're a Christian right through that being a Christian and as a born again believer that matters to you more than anything else that your allegiance to Christ and your separation unto him is the most driving force of your life and God commanded the Israelites to get out to separate from the heathen nations as again we've touched on this verse to not be yoked together with unbelievers of course if you're married to an unbeliever at the moment God will help you with that but don't go looking for an unbeliever to get married to what fellowship of righteousness with unrighteousness what communion of light with darkness what concord of Christ with Belial the devil you know what agreement has the temple of God with idols you are the temple of the living God he said I'll dwell in them I'll walk in them they should be my people he says wherefore come out from among them and be separate saith we should cleanse ourselves from all filthiness there's that purity again we want to be like this crystal clear we want to be right with

God we want to have a clean conscience a clean heart we want to live clean on the personal level of separation where a believer will avoid sin in his own life we'll separate because we want to please our Lord we want to honour him not that we can have something to brag about or show off about or be a big shot about we want to honour our Lord because it's the right thing to do on a personal level separation is a dear and blessed thing it's a godly thing it's a good thing and at a church level too in our beliefs and doctrine our practice so I think I'm almost in closing here we should prove all things hold fast that which is good judge between the right and the wrong the right and the true and so we see friends as the Bible declares again in that context of the mystery Babylon John heard a voice from heaven that said come out of my people we can't stay in a compromised church

I thank God there's people amongst us that have left a compromised church I've left a compromised church I've seen the error for what it is and I've said no I'm not going to be part of that because it's not honouring our Lord and it's a hard thing to do I know people you can identify some of our number here you've left a compromising church you've seen no that's not biblical it's not right it's not honouring my Lord and so that's the right thing to do it's the biblical thing to do God's command is to separate to come out come out so here's a quick review just to recap we're talking about the false unity the ecumenical movement and the true unity in contrast as bible believers we've got bible truth we've got the absolute standard it's not what I say!

it's! what! this church says it's what this book says it's bible faith bible truth it's bible unity that will work together we'll be that one team that one mission that one mind that one army that one fighting

unit that we are we're one people here today we're one in Christ and we've got to work to do together there's a bible contention we've got to fight to fight together we've got enemies of the gospel there's enemies of bible preaching churches and they want to attack and criticize and find fault there's bible contention we want to contend and we want to contend earnestly Earnestly for the faith!

[53 : 18] The faith! Once delivered! It's the same faith that started in the book of Genesis it's the same faith we see in the book of Revelation it's bible faith! We want to contend earnestly The faith!

The trust in Christ that saves us nothing else we want to contend for that because it's worth fighting for and there's a separation and we should stand out be separate friends tonight we want to be such a biblical church I pray that we are I believe that we are we could be more so and we want to be not separating in the sense that we are holier than thou and kind of showing off but because we want to honour our Lord we want to be biblical we must be biblical that's what drives us we want to stand with the truth rock side firm uncompromising working together fighting together separating such that we separate from and separate unto our Lord and as brothers and sisters we've got a strength that we're one body one people one family so be encouraged in that I pray tonight consider how can we be a more separated people unto the glory of God let us pray and firstly let me just leave this little challenge here tonight we've been addressing really believers here tonight if you've yet to trust

Christ as your Lord and Saviour this is the most important thing that you can ever know the saving faith that saves! your soul I pray you would simply know Jesus died on the cross for your sin that you will know that this happened for you that you'll trust his payment was made for your sin and you'll receive that payment you'll receive that gift that he extends to you in his nail pierced hand as he says trust me and I'll save you believe on me and you shall have everlasting life believe that promise tonight believe his word believe and receive that him alone as your saviour as your lord and he will save right then in that moment of faith and he'll keep you saved because that's his job friends let's trust him now lord we pray each one might know that trust that saves a soul from sin and hell lord we know that we can have that assurance that we can know that we have everlasting life pray that each one might have that assurance right here right now lord right here in the here and now that our here after is assured because you have saved us by your grace and not by any works of our own lord help us to be a

Bible church that is not afraid to contend not afraid to stand together lord help us not to make fights about non issues but help us to fight for the faith not to fight one another about different opinions about this or that but lord to fight the good fight of the faith to fight the devil our common adversary to fight the good fight to contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints lord we thank you for that bless each heart each home each one here tonight that we might rally to this call and be a separated people unto the glory of God in Jesus name we pray amen