

Division

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Date: 23 November 2014

[0 : 00] Division. Division. We're talking about division this morning.

Luke 12 it says from verse 51.! Division. Division. We're talking about division this morning. And I'm talking about a good kind of division. If that's a following here. I'm talking about a good kind of division. Of course there is a bad kind of division which we're not supporting.

But there is a good kind of division. Division. Jesus says I'm not come to bring peace but division. And the biblical Jesus has come to cause division.

It's not the kind of cosmic buddy Jesus we're talking about here. We're talking about the biblical Jesus. The biblical Jesus. The biblical Jesus has come to cause division.

[1 : 30] He has come to be the redeemer and the saviour. He has come the one who says I am the way, the truth and the life.

The biblical Jesus. He's not some cosmic buddy Jesus. There's a Jesus that is very popular this time of year. Isn't there?

Everybody sins about him. And he's mates with the man in the big red suit. You know, there's that kind of Jesus. Or there's the biblical Jesus. The biblical Jesus. Jesus divides.

And it's always been this way. Jesus was radical. He threw the money changers out of the temple. He didn't pussyfoot around. There is a rightful division. A rightful division because of him.

Division. Jesus has come to bring division. And it's always been that way. Right through the Bible. In Exodus 8 verse 23. Moses told Pharaoh, speaking of God's people.

[2 : 29] I will put a division between my people and thy people. Tomorrow shall this sign be. Because we know there's numbers of signs that it was different for God's people and the people of Egypt.

The people who are not God's people. So five things that divide in a good way. Five things that divide in a good way. Not talking about discord and disunity and ungodly division.

But a godly kind of division. Jesus divides. He calls his people out. He says, come out from among them and be ye separate. He's called out a people for his name.

Acts 15 verse 14. He says, come, follow me. That means you leave the crowd and you go with Jesus. He makes them his own special people.

We're not to live and think like the world. Certainly not to be unequally yoked together with them.

Young person, if you're thinking of burying an unsafe man or woman. Jesus divides.

[3 : 31] He says, don't do it. Don't do it. Don't even think about it. Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. The word of God calls us to be a separate, separated people.

It calls us to division. Some of us define separation like this. True biblical separation begins and ends with a right relationship with Christ.

A genuine ardour for the truth. A heart's focus on godliness. And the Lord Jesus is our perfect example of a separated walk with God.

He set the example in Hebrews 7. It says he is separate from sinners. Of course, on the same token, he loved the sinners. He had a perfect balance, grace and truth.

He was full of grace and truth. John 1.14. So Christ was both full of grace and truth. In perfect relationship. Jesus divides.

[4 : 32] He is Lord. He is Lord. Jesus, the biblical Jesus, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus divides.

When Jesus stepped in, there was division. John 7. So there was a division among the people because of him. John 9. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, this man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day.

Others said, how can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. John 9. John 10. There was a division, therefore again, among the Jews for these saints.

When Jesus stepped in, he brought division. The Holy One is set apart from all that is sinful and defiled and impure. Yet he loves the sinner.

It is his nature and character of holiness. God is separate. See that right through Leviticus 19. Ye shall be holy. Ye. For I, the Lord, your God, am holy.

[5 : 35] Turn ye not to idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods. I am the Lord, your God. In 1 Peter 2, he says, But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.

You know, some of us are more peculiar than others. But we should be peculiar, shouldn't we? We should be different, is what it's saying. We should have a division, as it were, from the world. Why? Because he hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

And he is God, our Father, so he begets holy children. A separated people. There's a wonderful inward holiness that has a transforming effect.

God works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure, so you should shine as lights in this darkened world. God separates us, the light from the darkness, and he separates the children of light from the children of darkness.

Jesus divides. So I urge you this morning, Jesus divides. I urge you to stand with him.

[6 : 42] Stand with him, no matter what. No matter what. Number one, Jesus divides. Number two, truth divides.

Truth divides. There's what's called absolute truth. Absolute truth. And you can see that, for example, in Psalm 31, verse 5.

Where it talks about the God of truth. Absolute truth. Or you can have subjective truth.

Subjective truth. In other words, your truth is different than mine. Everyone's got their own truth.

Depends on how you feel. Depends on what time of day it is.

Truth divides. It divides. We're called to be a holy people, a people of truth. We need to have a pure testimony. And not settle for the world's kind of definition of truth.

[7 : 50] Which is kind of variable. We've all got our own version of it. Truth is divisive. And God's people are called to an absolute standard of truth.

Of absolute truth. Because why? We believe, thus saith the Lord. We believe there is an absolute standard of absolute truth. Thus saith the Lord.

And we will stand for this truth. It offends people. When you say, I believe in the truth. It offends people today. But we will stand for the truth anyhow.

It's an inconvenient truth. It's an inconvenient truth. To those who would rather think that the cosmos just evolved itself. Who would rather deny God exists.

Really because he's inconvenient to their lifestyle. They're just kidding themselves. And to such sad people are saying, truth matters. Truth is important. We need to have a right view of truth.

[8 : 47] Of absolute truth. Not downplay or redefine God's truth to make it more palatable. Less offensive. Easy to swallow. There's no near revised sensitive new age version of the truth.

The truth is the truth. It always has been the truth. And truth will be truth whether you believe it or not. And truth divides. But I would rather stand on the side of truth, wouldn't you?

Rather stand on truth. Truth is objective. It's absolute. Not subjective. Truth is absolute. There's no sliding scale. And the truth may not seem politically correct.

Because it does not tell people who cling to false versions of the truth. That they're safe in believing lies. The truth is not trendy. And it's not our job to make the truth easier or more attractive.

But rather to be faithful to it. We desperately need discernment in these days. Where truth is blurred. And our children have been educated in lies and liberalism.

[9 : 49] We need discernment today. As we draw closer to God. And we'll draw further away from what's contrary to Him. And we'll know the truth and believe the truth. Now, you might think, well, maybe there's kind of a bit of a continuum of truth.

But a half-truth is a lie. A half-truth is a lie. And there's no place with toleration of such things. David said in Psalm 119, verse 30, I have chosen the way of truth.

The God we follow is called the God of truth. Psalm 31, verse 5, rather. Psalm 31, verse 5. And God creates in us a hatred of every false way.

In Psalm 119 it says, Through thy precepts I get understanding. Therefore I hate every false way.

There's a good kind of division. And there's a good kind of hatred. We should hate every false way.

The pillar and ground of the truth is the church. The faithful church. The pillar, in other words, the support and the ground, the foundation, is truth. So God's church is founded on that.

[10:58] The church itself is not the source of truth. Some think it's about church traditions or church practice over the years. No, God is the source of truth.

But the church must stand and deliver and defend God's truth. Truth and doctrine are important. The New Testament emphasises truth and doctrine. Truth, 77 times.

Doctrine, 29 times. The church continued in the apostles' doctrine. God's plan has not changed. God's method is still that we should deliver the message.

And in Ezekiel 3, from verse 4, we see that God told Ezekiel, the preacher, the prophet, to preach it, to deliver it, to give the message, even if people refuse to listen and even get hostile.

God calls the preacher to give the people what they need to hear, not what they want to hear. Truth divides. It did in Ezekiel's day. When he told the people that the Babylonians were coming in Ezekiel 5, 12 through 17, to carry many of them captive, that was not what the people wanted to hear.

[12:08] Yet the false preachers of Ezekiel's day chose to deliver an upbeat, positive message, to please the people, to tell them, contrary to the word of God, that all would be well.

Now, these false preachers seduced the people with their sweet words. They said, peace, peace, when there was no peace. Truth divides. It did in Ezekiel's day.

It did in Paul's day. Paul preached the whole counsel of God. In Acts 20, 31, it says that Paul, by the space of three years, he says, I cease not to warn everyone, night and day, for three years.

Imagine coming to a church where for three years, all you got was warning from the preacher. It would have been negative by its nature. And night and day for three years.

Wow. What's the sermon tonight about? Warning. Warning. What's the next sermon about? Warning. But warning is a manifestation of genuine love.

[13:05] A loving father warns his son lest he be harmed. And we, if we see danger approaching, get off the train tracks. If you fail to warn, it's not showing love, but hatred.

And there's a desperate need for warning in our pulpits today. I don't want blood on my hands for failing to warn you. Amen. I'd rather upset some people than have blood on my hands.

Faithful biblical preaching and teaching must include warning. That's what the truth encompasses.

And in Colossians 1, 28, Paul says that he was warning every man to present them maturing Christ. Truth divides. Error must be exposed. Sin must be dealt with. I don't want to pat you on the back saying, if you continue to live in sin, you're okay. The Bible says don't sin.

Sin no more. Go and sin no more. We need to wake up. We don't need to be mamby-pamby in your own. We need truth today. We need what God says.

[14:12] We need faithful preachers who will warn men and women night and day with tears. And we need a people who consider one another, exalting one another, edifying one another, encouraging one another.

So much the more as you see the day approaching. We need to get real. Amen. We need to get serious about truth. And to exalt one another. To defend, to uphold, to boldly proclaim truth.

Yes, truth divides. You might think, well, I'd rather have my half-truths. Sadly, some prefer lies. But it is God who is the author and the source of all truth.

He is the God of truth and we should determine to serve Him. One of the names of the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. John 14, 15, 16.

The Spirit of Truth. Jesus divides and truth divides. But we must stand with the truth no matter what. For us to be able to separate from what is false, we must recognise truth from error.

[15:15] How do we do this? How do we know what is true? How will we decide? By the Bible. The Bible. The Bible divides. The Bible divides.

It's divisive. If you actually believe the book, it's divisive. It's divisive. God's word is called the word of truth. 2 Corinthians 6, verse 7.

Either you believe it. Or you doubt it. It's divisive, isn't it?

Which side of the line are you going to stand on? Which side will you stand on? Will you believe the Bible? Churches like ours are called Bible-believing churches.

We actually believe the book. We believe what it says. We believe it is the word of truth. 2 Corinthians 6, verse 7. We believe it is the word of truth.

[16:11] And division is a good thing. The Bible says so. The Bible draws a line between wheat and chaff. There's division right through the word. We know we should rightly divide the word.

There is division in God's word. We need to get a hold of it. There's a division between righteousness and unrighteousness. There are things that are right and there are things that are wrong.

Who says so? God says so. Amen. In many churches discernment has gone out the window. Why? Many are perishing for lack of knowledge. Amos 8 tells of a time when not a famine of bread or thirst for water, but there will be a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

The Bible divides. The Bible divides. As a people, we've neglected God's word, the Bible. So biblical illiteracy prevails. People know so much more about their sports and moving heroes. They could tell you their birthdays and their greatest strike rates or whatever it be, the greatest records and achievements and whatever it be in great detail.

[17:17] And yet they know very little about the biblical heroes of the faith. People scarcely fellowship whether they'll hear the word of God soundly preached or taught. There is truly a famine in the land.

And the churches are filled with people with very little knowledge of the Bible, let alone obedience to its message. And the Christian bookshops and numbers of popular preachers largely feed such ignorance.

I'm not saying that of any of you today. I don't want to offend you, do I? The Bible divides. We need to take it seriously, don't we? The Bible divides. It rankles people.

Thus saith the Lord. That rankles people. I'd rather have it my own way. It rankles people. It gets under their skin. It divides the joints and marrow. It's sharp, it's incisive, it's painful.

It says sin is sin. It says repent. Repent. It penetrates deep down into the very core of a man and surgically severs the spiritual cancers that threaten to kill you.

[18:22] It transplants in us a new heart. Hebrews 4.12 it says, For the word of God is quick or alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing, piercing, piercing, even to the dividing, dividing, dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Bible divides. It's a divisive book. No wonder people don't like it. The liberals of our world don't like it.

But we will stand with the Bible. We must. We believe that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible word of the living God.

In other words, it's totally without error. We're on this side. We believe it. We believe it. We believe the Bible. The Bible that we have today is the inspired word of God.

And we can implicitly trust it and teach from it that it is entirely trustworthy. God's word, the Bible, is absolute truth.

[19:30] Given to us by God, the God who cannot lie. And God gives instruction in every area of life. Someone say, I'd rather have it my way. Yes, the Bible is divisive.

The word of God should be our spiritual filter through which we discern and decide what we do and what we do not do. God tells you what to do and not to do. It brings discernment.

Sadly, some water it down and butcher the Bible and paraphrase and corrupt it such that there's scarcely a Bible anymore. But rather, let's receive the word and believe it.

We are Bible believers. The Bible divides. It teaches us what God wants us to know. It's called the word of his grace. And grace teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldliness, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

Grace teaches us. That word teach is the sense of like child training, which encompasses discipline. Sometimes there's a discipline from God's word. He trains us like a parent will use discipline sometimes to guide a child lovingly to choose what is right.

[20:40] So let's God, God's word, work within us. It's called the washing of water by the word. He purifies his church. Jesus divides.

Truth divides. The Bible divides. Another one, there's not lots we could mention, but another one is doctrine. Doctrine divides. You know, start teaching doctrine and you're going to upset some people.

Right. Doctrine. Doctrine, it means teaching. Many in Christendom today are permeated with false doctrine. And like children who prefer lollies, modern churchgoers prefer to load up on fluff, fairy floss.

False doctrine acts like a poison. False doctrine acts like poison. So doctrine, will it be sound doctrine?

Or will it be unsound? Now, of course, we know there's some things we could differ somewhat on. [21 : 47] But some things are very plain. The fundamentals of the faith. That's what we're talking about. It would be easier for me to give you a feel-good message and not to teach sound doctrine. Not to preach against sin.

Not to declare that God wants his people to be separate from religious apostasy. Things like the false religious systems of our world today, such as Roman Catholicism. That's murdered millions of people. And it's filled with idolatry and false teachings. God hates false religion. And we rebuke it, as the Bible does.

We reject false worship. When the children of Israel were living in Egypt, a land filled with false worship and idolatry, God sent Moses to Pharaoh to say, Let my people go. Pharaoh repeatedly tries to compromise with Moses, but he would not. God demanded a complete, immediate separation of his people from false religion.

[22 : 46] The bondage of Egypt. Now, maybe it would have been a lot easier for the Israelites just to set up their altars next to the heathen altars of Egypt. But doctrine divides.

God teaches us how to live, what to do, how to worship, how to conduct ourselves. And we should abide with sound doctrine. In Exodus 11, it says that the Lord had put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.

A difference. God had to teach Moses that. He sent him into the wilderness for 14 years to get him ready to shake off what hung on to him from Egypt until he was sold out for the Lord.

And God calls out a separated people for himself. Not to compromise to stay in Egypt, but to get out of Egypt. Get out of Babylon. So how divisive is that?

But that is doctrine. That is teaching. That is standing for what is right. Elijah had the same mission. He was called a troubler of Israel.

[23 : 46] He was a preacher that was called a troubler. You know, he troubled people. It wasn't easy for him. It was a price that he paid. Loneliness, tears, reviling hatred.

Elijah paid the price. But he stood on the right side of the line. Compromising Obadiah received Ahab's favours. He was a preacher who didn't speak against the apostasy.

His message was inoffensive. Elijah was the troubler of Israel. So we must think about such things as doctrine. False doctrine or sound doctrine.

False doctrine is like a leaven. Left unchecked, it can do much damage. It leavens the whole lump. Doctrine divides, doesn't it? You know, it would be easier for us to have a church where just anything goes.

Just believe what you like and do what you like. Nothing to stand for. But the Bible says heretics must be rejected.

[24 : 55] That's strong, isn't it? Titus 3, that's divisive. Those who cause divisions, doctrinal divisions, are to be avoided. That's a bit unkind. Romans 16.

Those who bring false doctrines about the person and work of Christ are to be rejected. 2 John. That's harsh. The saints are to come out and be separate.

That's a bit strong. That sounds a bit divisive to me. You know, it says turn away from those who've got a form of godliness. 2 Timothy 3. So if we tolerate false doctrine, it will ruin the purity of the church.

That's why we want to guard what material we circulate in this church. So there's a need for doctrinal purity. You know, doctrine divides, but it's for the sake of God's church.

And it's to his glory. One commentator said that one third of the New Testament is taken up with the battle against error. That's strong, isn't it?

[25 : 59] Right through the New Testament. And we see it in the Old Testament. In Nehemiah's day, he had both a sword and a trowel. He held a sword in one hand to defend, and he had the trowel to build.

And it's the same. You've got to find the balance. Of course, there's a building up with doctrine, and there's a defending of sound doctrine. There's a contending for the faith. And sound doctrine speaks of the body of truth that is the faith that we are to hold fast.

There's no deviating on that. Now, I can't join hands with a Mormon and say that I follow the same Jesus. It's not the same Jesus. That's the other Jesus, or one of the other Jesuses.

I want to stand with the biblical Jesus. And to contend for the faith, the truth, the Bible, sound doctrine. As much as we can say, I've got much more than I can fit in this sermon here. We're fighting a battle today, brothers and sisters. And it says in the Word of God, 1 Corinthians 15, that evil communications corrupt good manners.

[27 : 08] In other words, that fellowship that is corrupting us will hinder our walk with God. We need to be very aware of that. Sometimes the devil works in subtle ways too.

And some of you folk have told me this, that you like certain TV preachers, including female ones. And they might say some nice things.

But friends, we've got to be very careful. Very, very careful. Very, very careful. And people, we need to be very, very mindful that there is false doctrine, there is unsound doctrine, and there is sound doctrine.

And no matter how easy listening and how helpful it might be, we've got to measure it and test it. And be very careful about such things. Because it happens subtly, subtly. In 2 Peter 2 it says how false teachers bring in deadly doctrines privily.

[28 : 08] In other words, kind of secretly, unnoticed. That's 2 Peter 2 verse 1. By stealth, due to fall, false teachers crept in, unawares. They kind of snuck in while we went watching.

There's a kind of stealth attack. A stealth attack, like German warfare. You know, they don't use the bombs and such anymore. Sometimes they use chemical warfare, as it were.

You know, where it just happens more kind of secretly. Just creeps up on you like gas in the trenches. And we've got to be careful that sometimes doctrine can sneak in.

We need a zero tolerance to false doctrine. Because there's a battle that we're in. And it's about leather. And it's about separation. Now, if you had gangrene in your leg, it would be unkind of me not to cut it off.

I've got to cut that off your leg. You've got to cut your leg off. Sorry. It's going to hurt. It's going to be painful. But you're going to be better for it. And there's that kind of sense where, as a church, we've got to cut off the gangrene.

[29 : 13] The leg must be amputated. It's going to cause some pain and suffering. It's going to be divisive. Yeah. You're going to lose that leg. I'm going to divide that leg from your body. But you're going to be better for it.

If I was to leave it untreated, it would kill you. And there's that sense where the leaven has to be taken out of the lump before it does its harmful work.

And that happens with doctrine. So we see that Jesus divides. He's come not to bring peace, but division. Truth divides. We've got absolute truth from the God of truth.

We've got the Bible that tells us what God says to do. It tells us what to do, what to live, how to do, how to decide things.

And lastly, another area, there's much, much more we could say. But just another one to kind of wrap up, which is probably the most important one of all. Because it's very important that you're on the right side of the line on this one.

[30 : 11] Saving faith. Saving faith divides. Salvation divides. You know, you're either with God or you're not with God. You're either a sheep or a goat.

You can't be a kind of half sheep, half goat. It talks about saving faith. What happens when we get saved is we pass from death unto life. It says that there's a radical transfer.

He takes us out of darkness into his marvellous life. And he positions us in his own beloved son so that we're fully accepted by God. It says in 1 Corinthians that we're sanctified, set apart in Christ. Called to be saints. Separated, set apart ones. God has placed us in his son. Now this is a great comfort for us.

When you think and realise this truth. That when you're saved, you are in Christ. Now what more holy place in the cosmos can you be than in Christ?

[31 : 14] If you're in Christ, you're in his holiness. And you are saints of the most high God. It's a radical shift, isn't it? To think that if I am in Christ, that means I'm in the very holy of holies.

Of the temple, of the tabernacle. I'm in Christ. There's a transfer, there's a change of position. And grace makes it happen. Grace makes it happen. Salvation, saving faith divides.

Changes our relationship in so many ways. We're in the world but we're not of it. And friends, the big question is, have you got saving faith?

Either you are on this side of the line, saved. Or lost. You can't be half way.

You can't sit on the fence. You're either saved or you're lost. It matters what side of the line you're on. Christ is divisive.

[32 : 25] The truth is divisive. The Bible is divisive. Doctrine is divisive. The saving faith is divisive. One day he's going to say, come and enter into my kingdom.

To others he'll say, go. I never knew you. Saving faith matters. It matters and it should be something we should earnestly consider.

Make an honest self-assessment today. Which side of the line am I on? And as you are saved, he'll help you to grow. He'll help you to live.

He'll help to give you that sensitivity to that which pleases him, to that which is acceptable to him.

So you won't be on the world side of the line. Being a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

You'll want to stand with God. You won't want to stand with this evil society that calls evil good and good evil. Just changes the label. Doesn't make any difference. If God says it's sin, you can put gay on there.

[33 : 27] You can put pride on there. If God says it's abomination, that's what it is. That's what it is. You can call evil good and you can call good evil. But it doesn't change what it is.

All too easily, we make an accommodation to the culture. Saving faith divides. God tells us he's put a difference between the holy and the unholy.

Leviticus 10, verse 10. Friends, where are we today? It's divisive. And the point that I'm making really is if you stand with Jesus, it doesn't matter whether people will mock you and scorn you and ridicule you.

If you're standing on Jesus' side, the Lord Jesus' side, then you're on the right side. You're on the right side. If you're standing for the truth, you believe that God actually says what is true and what is not true.

Separation is a key to spiritual strength. The Bible, we actually believe it. We believe the book. We must.

[34 : 45] Doctrine. It might be unpopular to speak against certain doctrines these days. But we'd rather spurn the praises of men and seek the will of God.

There will be a division because of Jesus. Stand on the right side of the line. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid to stand for what is right. To be bold.

To walk worthy of his calling. To glorify God in your body. To make a difference. It makes a difference which side of the line you will stand on. There is a dividing line.

A dividing line cheers you this day whom you will serve. Step over the line. Step over the line. Let us pray. Father, we thank you that you are the God of truth.

You love us. In Christ you came. And division happened because of you. Some rejected you.

[35 : 44] Others followed you. Lord Jesus help us to walk in your steps. To follow you. Help us Lord to find the truth that makes an eternal difference.

Help us to find that truth that shall set us free. Help us to have sound teaching sound faith sound belief to have a Bible we trust and can stand upon.

To have a faith that transforms us from the inside out. Help us Lord to know you. If there's any here today they get to trust you for the first time. They're still lost.

Lord we pray they'll be saved today. Not by any doing of themselves but by what you have done. By your bleeding and dying and rising again. Carrying our sin the weight the guilt the penalty the shame the suffering that we deserve.

Lord thank you. We trust you. We live for you. We pray help us open our eyes that we might trust you and find that life changing truth that makes life make sense.

[36 : 47] Lord help us to live as we'd be honouring to you. And though we might be called divisive and people might misunderstand people might consider us too extreme too fundamentalist Lord yet there are fundamentals that are true as much as there are fundamentalists today that are sick and vile.

Lord we know that there is fundamentals of your Bible truth that we need to hold fast to help us to do that we pray. If there's any who need prayer this morning they'll seek it we pray in Jesus name Amen.

Amen. Amen.