

Division - 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

In our continuing study of **1 Corinthians**, we come to chapter 3...

This is of a section on division in the church. We've entitled this particular study - "Carnal Christians"

CHAPTER 3

- <sup>1</sup> And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.
- <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?
- <sup>4</sup> For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?
- <sup>5</sup> Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?
- <sup>6</sup> I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.
- <sup>7</sup> So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.
- <sup>8</sup> Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one:  
and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.
- <sup>9</sup> For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.
- <sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon...?

I read about a man who explained his attitude toward his new found Christian life in these terms.. .

"... It is rather like a cyclist, who, when he has climbed a long hill, and feels he should be able to freewheel down the other side. But... It is not until he reaches the top that he sees his task has only just started, and that the road winds on with even steeper hills than the one he has just climbed. - When people accept Christ, they tend to think it is freewheeling from that point, but then they discover it is only the beginning..." – How True !

You look at the Christian life, and I look at the Christian life, from different perspectives...

*The interesting thing is..* from everybody's perspectives, the Christian life is not easy. It is difficult.

\*\* Maybe when you first became a Christian, you thought that it might be freewheeling... all downhill .. And somebody told us that if we came to Christ - He'd solve our problems... And He does do that. If you come to Christ you have **peace** and **joy**, and the answers to life - But it's Still not an easy life.

The Christian life is difficult. In fact... Probably it's harder to live now than it was before you were saved.

So... *Here come the ' Why Questions ' ..*

*Why does a young Christian find that he thinks he might be able to freewheel...*

*and then... as soon as he gets into the thing ... he finds out there's greater difficulty all the time?*

*Why is it not easy to live a Christian life... when we are told we have the power of God within us?*

*Why is it difficult to do the thing we know **we want to do**... to do the thing that is right to do.. to do that God says to be done ?*

There are two reasons, and probably everything can be reduced to these two.

Two things make the Christian life difficult.

No. 1 – **We are going against the grain of the world...**

We are trying to breathe different air than exists in our atmosphere - and that isn't easy.

We are like ' a spiritual salmon ' .. While everything else is floating downstream...

We Are fighting the current... We keep slamming against the wall of worldliness,

*It's because ...* We aren't swimming the way the rest of the fish are swimming.

We are going against the current, and it isn't easy.

The world is geared to go a certain direction. ... - We are going the opposite way, and that makes it hard.

That's the **external pressure** – we all experience it.

Secondly, **the internal**. ...

We are also going against the grain of the flesh, our own humanness.

Paul put it this way in Romans 7: "...<sup>15</sup> For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.<sup>16</sup> If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.<sup>17</sup> Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.<sup>18</sup> For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.<sup>19</sup> For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.<sup>20</sup> Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.<sup>21</sup> I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.<sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:<sup>23</sup> But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.<sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?<sup>25</sup> I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin...

So... Paul says... I love to do God's will so far as my new self is concerned.

But... there is something deep within me in my flesh that is at war with my mind, and wins the fight, making me a slave to the sin that still is in me." That's the internal.

*The Reason ?* - men are born sinful.

That's because we are born of sinful parents... and it goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. So... we are born with a tendency to sin... this creates a problem.

\*\* So *When* Salvation comes ... and when we are saved... God breaks the back of evil... gives us the Holy Spirit to subdue sin... but he doesn't remove the tendency to evil that is in our humanness.

And so with all of those things that he does, we still ( although we will win in the end) – We still struggle on the path to that ultimate triumph.

So ... Satan has two things that he works on in the life of a Christian:

**the world**, that's **the external**..

and... **the flesh**, that's **the internal**.... And those two things make life very difficult.

We are going against the grain.

We are spiritual salmon going against the stream -

and then... we *a/so* have within us a tendency to evil.

And though the Spirit of God is there to help us... ultimately and practically...

it is still there ... and though we win the battle, ultimately we lose a lot of skirmishes on the way.

That's why the Christian life isn't easy.... the Christian has to watch for **two things**. ..

So... We have to **look outside** and watch **the world**..

And.. We have to **look inside** and watch **the flesh**....

And *by – the – way*... sometimes they are very closely connected ( because the world becomes the thing that tempts the flesh... )

So... Satan uses these two avenues to get to us: outside and inside.

This was precisely the problem that the Corinthians were having !

The problem the Corinthians faced was... they had been able to avoid neither **the world**, nor **the flesh**.

And as a result of that, all kinds of sins were occurring.

And from 1 Corinthians 1 .. through the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter.. - Paul is just dealing with one sin after another:

Sins that were happening because of this inability to deal with **the world** and **the flesh**.

One of the major sins... that was creating problems in Corinth was **division**...

*By the way*.... There's no such thing as ... an isolated sin.

Sins are combinations of other sins.

So... In Corinth, division was not an isolated sin that existed in a vacuum.

It was a product of other sins. **Pride, envy, jealousy**... etc. but it was creating division...

In any Church situation... division was a very serious thing...

Psalm 133: <sup>1</sup> Behold, how **good** and how **pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity** .”

Ephesians 4: <sup>3</sup> Endeavouring to **keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace..

<sup>13</sup> Till we all come in **the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ..”**

Romans 14... verse 1 speaks about those who cause “... **doubtful disputations** .. “

Paul knows... that if he could correct the division.. - he could take care of a lot of other things.

So he spends a tremendous amount of time on division.

Worldliness ... and the flesh.

Division, first of all, in the church at Corinth, was caused by worldliness.

\*\* Now we think of worldliness, usually, as things **you do**.. *Stuff*...

*Everybody is different .... like whatever... playing cards, getting drunk...*

( whatever you categorize as worldliness in your little category... ) -

But **that isn't really what worldliness is**...

Worldliness is simply **buying whatever the world's philosophies and attitudes are.**

And in the case of the Corinthians... It was that they were following the world's philosophies.

They were defining things, in an ultimate sense, by the world's definitions.

And we saw that... from chapter 1:18 through 2:16.. !

Everybody was bringing into the church – The philosophies of the world. ...

That was their first problem... They were still hanging on to old worldly philosophies they'd been taught by their worldly philosophers before they were saved.

The second reason for their division was the flesh.... Was Carnality

Carnality says, "... I will do what I will do... I don't care what God wants me to do.

I will do what my body says, my nature says, regardless of what God says."

So carnality and worldliness were creating the division in the Corinthian church.

They were buying the world's philosophies and they were living in the world's patterns.

Now in our text... You kind of feel like Paul's a doctor here.

*Maybe* ... he'd been hanging around Luke so long ..

That he felt that he was sort of learning everything Luke knew, and he sort of sees himself as a doctor.

So... he's in the business of diagnosing... the word "**diagnosis**" comes from two Greek words:

Gr. dia and Gr. nosis...

Gr. Nosis the Greek word "to know" and Gr. dia means "through" so "to know through something"

You look at the symptoms; you go behind the symptoms through to the real problem.

You have diagnosed the problem... You know through the problem.

And this is what Paul did.

Incidentally the same word is used in the book of Acts... in Paul's defense before Agrippa..

in reference to Paul being able to make a proper diagnosis of what King Agrippa was saying.

But here we find Paul diagnosing the Corinthians all the way through the book.

He is saying... "This is what you do... here is what it looks like... here is what is causing it...

and here is how to cure it.. !"

He is ' a spiritual physician ' ... all the way through 1 Corinthians..

diagnosing, then describing symptoms, and then offering cures.

O.K.... In chapter 3.... he comes to the disease of division, and that's an ugly disease.... really ugly.  
And it's very, very contagious... !

There can be division in a church at a small level... but how quickly that can spread.... !  
And so division is a very, very serious disease.

First... the cause... verses 1: "... **And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.**"

Paul tells them what was causing their division....

It wasn't their environment.. it wasn't just worldly pressure...

Notice He says " **brethren** " - And by saying that, that is a term of love, affection...  
( So... He's sort of a softening the rebuke... ) -

Also, indicates to us to whom he speaks: **Christians**.

So... He speaks to Christians but he says... " **I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual.**" -  
You are brethren... you are Christians... but I can't talk to you like that...

Next week we want to see why he can't talk to them As Spiritual People ...

### Prayer Requests Tonight

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