

PEACE IN THE CHURCH

Int.

1. Aim: To show that Peace is desirable in the Church and what we must do to have it.
2. Luke 2:1-15. It was the mission of Jesus to save lost humanity, build a family of believers, and send those believers into the world to spread the greatest message ever heard.
3. Jesus prayed for the unity of those believers, and taught that they should exercise love for each other.

a. John 17:20, 21 **Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one: as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**

b. John 13:35 **By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."** A key purpose of this love was to show the genuineness of the message of Christ in our lives.

4. Paul tells us **Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."** 2 Cor. 13:11

Discussion

I. WHEN PEACE IS ABSENT

- A. Progress is halted! Efforts at reaching the lost are effectively stopped. There is no joy in introducing someone to the church.
- B. Other Sins Find A Presence.
 1. Other Christian's character is damaged - Galatians 5:15 **But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."**

- a. Bite and devour - this is the way wild animals treat one another
 - b. Rule of the jungle - the strongest survive - there is no peace with them
 - c. In the church we must not act like wild animals - biting and devouring
 - d. Consumed = destroyed
2. Bitterness can lead one to disorder and every evil practice.
- a. James 3:14-18
 - b. Bitter envying and strife
 - c. This brings confusion = instability, disorder, commotion, tumult
 - d. There is no peace
- C. Members Become Discouraged.
1. Those who are not a party to the division are disrupted in their relationships, become discouraged, can become inactive, and perhaps be lost forever.
 2. "...and every evil work." Jas. 3:16b
 3. Those responsible for division destroy souls that Jesus loved and died for.
- D. As a result, God condemns division!
1. Proverbs 6:16-19 things which God hates "...**and he that soweth discord among brethren.**"
 2. 1 Corinthians 1:10, 11 **'Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.'**

II. THINGS THAT ROB THE CHURCH OF PEACE

A. Selfish Ambition

1. A dogmatic spirit - seeking to have one's own way without regard to the rights or wishes of others in matters that are of no special consequence is sin.
2. For those who are spiritually minded, this is not desired.
3. III John 9, 10. **"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."**
 - a. The word preeminence means - fondness for being first
 - b. "...he who is loving the first place among them--Diotrephes- Youngs Literal T.
 - c. When anyone in the congregation wants to be first this will destroy the peace of a congregation.

B. Rule of Opinion

1. There are areas of expediency, where the Bible gives a command but no direction as to 'how' to fulfill the command.
 - a. For example: "Sing" - we sing four-part harmony - yet singing a single melody line would be as scriptural.
 - b. "Teach" - the methodology of teaching is left to us.
2. Matters of judgment and opinion: we should gracefully adjust ourselves to the conditions. Example: Wed. night to Tue. Night at Thanksgiving
3. Our customs and traditions are not matters of faith
4. When we make them matters of faith, we will surely rob the church of peace.

C. **Inactivity**

1. Inactivity on the part of Christians leads them to a spirit of discontentment and unrest and dissatisfaction.
2. Ill feelings are the natural result.
3. Every member needs to be involved in a service area that takes advantage of his or her talents. Ephesians 4:16 **"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."**

D. When Christians behave in ways that rob church of peace:

1. Romans 16:17, 18 - those who cause divisions are to be marked
2. Titus 3:9-11 - avoid these things - "contentions"
3. Romans 2:8-10 - peace to every man that worketh good

III. PEACE IN THE CHURCH

A. **Is desirable**

1. Psalm 133:1 **"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"**
2. Romans 12:16 **"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."**
3. 1 Corinthians 1:10 **"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."**

B. **Peace can be had when** [4 things that bring and keep peace]

1. Each Christian pursues peace!

- a. We must want unity - and pursue it!
- b. This may mean that we have to hold personal preferences in subjection.

Ephesians 4:1-3. - **"endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."** v. 3

2. Peace can be had when we work together for the Kingdom.

- a. We keep trouble down in the church by keeping waves on the baptistery!
- b. Get involved in serving someone else!
- c. Philippians 2:3-4 **"[Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."**

3. Peace can be had when the Bible is our guide

- a. 1 John 1:7 **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. ."**
- b. Let's let our lives exhibit that Christian walk!
- c. Jas. 3:17-18
 - (1) Wisdom from above
 - (2) First pure, then peaceable, - that means peace loving
 - (3) Song # 710 "The Lord Bless you and keep you" from Numbers 6:24-26
 - (4) v. 18 The Fruit of righteousness is sown in peace

- (5) Peace is the fruit of righteousness and it produces the atmosphere to produce righteousness.
- d. Let the fruit of the Spirit be produced! Galatians 5:19-23.
4. Peace can be had when we have an attitude of self denial.
- a. Ephesians 4:31, 32. **"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."**
- b. There is not one person in this room who always gets their way in either the church, home, school, or workplace!
- c. Romans 12:10 **"[Be] kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;"**

Conclusion

1. God wants the church to be at peace.
2. It is in keeping with the mission of Jesus to be a peaceful and loving people.
3. When there is not peace, there are some very real consequences that hurt the church.
4. It is a matter of our own sin if we cause disunity within the church.
5. In truth, it is up to each individual member to carry themselves in such a way that peace is the outcome. Each of us needs to commit to follow the most peaceful course.
6. Jesus came to bring peace to his followers. John 16:33 **"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."**

- a. In him we have peace
 - b. Peace with:
 - (1) Ourselves
 - (2) One another
 - (3) God
 - c. Obey the Gospel - Live by the Truth - then you will have peace here and hereafter
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Sources

- 1. Central Church of Christ December 10, 2000 John Dobbs
 - 2. Commentaries and notes on verses
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Sermon by Arthur Pigman -
Evans Church of Christ
515 Gibbs Road
Evans, Ga. 30809
706-855-1249
arthurpigman@cybrtyme.com