

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION?

Part Two: March 10, 2021

Definitions

- **Terms:**
 - Ecclesiastical
 - “Of or relating to the _____”
 - Separation
 - Withdrawing from _____ with people who claim to be Christians
- **Ecclesiastical Separation**
 - Withdrawing from fellowship from professing Christians in the context of the church

Ecclesiastical Separation:

- **What does the Bible say about the need to _____ ourselves from other people who name the name of Christ?**
- **Several applications:**
 - Fellowship _____ the local church
 - Fellowship between professing Christians in different churches
 - Fellowship between _____ churches
 - Or movements of churches, associations, denominations, etc.
- **Important Clarification:**
 - Not separating from brothers and sisters in Christ over _____, ethnic, cultural, economic, social, or class differences.
 - Col. 3:11: _____

 - See also Eph. 2:11-18: _____

 - If the gospel of Christ was powerful enough to bring _____ and Gentiles together, it's powerful enough to overcome racial and similar divisions today.
 - But separating believers from _____ within the context of the church;
 - Or separating from professing believers based on critical doctrine or practice or clear _____ to the Word of God.

The Priority of Unity

- **Although separation may be necessary and Biblical;**
- **God's first desire is for His people to worship, fellowship, and serve together in unity.**
 - The prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - The clear teaching of Scripture

- The _____ of the early church
- Observations:
 - Our unity is the glorious work of the indwelling Spirit Who gives us the love, peace, and single mind of Christ through the Word of Christ.
 - Therefore, we can expect that practical unity will be realized most fully in a _____ environment saturated with the Spirit.
- **The example of the early church:**
 - Acts 2:42-47: _____

 - Communion—they had fellowship.
 - Companionship—they were _____.
 - Compassion—no _____ was overlooked.
 - _____—they shared their possessions.
 - Convincement—“with one accord” (mind).
 - Consecration—“singleness (sincerity) of heart”
 - Acts 4:24: _____

 - Acts 4:32: _____

 - Acts 5:12: _____

The Threats to Unity

- **What happened?**
- **The peaceful unity of the early church was disturbed by:**
 - Internal _____
 - False _____
 - Honest disagreements
 - Divisive _____
 - A.k.a. “wolves”
- **Internal strife:**
 - Acts 6:1: _____

 - It seems there was fault on both sides.
 - The Hebrews failed to practice perfect _____.
 - The Greeks failed to practice perfect _____.

- Internal strife still one of the greatest _____ to church unity today.
 - James 4:1-2: _____

- **False teaching:**
 - Acts 15:1-2: _____

 - This dissension was over essential doctrine.
 - The _____!
- **Honest disagreements:**
 - Acts 15:37-40: _____

 - Sometimes even the _____ Christians can disagree sharply.
- **Divisive leaders:**
 - Acts 20:29-30: _____

 - The basic motivation for these leaders is personal _____ or ambition.
 - They will say all sorts of “distorted things” to gain a following for themselves.
 - Paul personally dealt with such people in Rome:
 - See Philippians 1:15-17: _____

Concluding Thought

- **Are you endeavoring to keep the _____ of the Spirit in the bond of peace?**
 - Are you _____ in the Spirit?
 - Are you seeking and displaying the lowly _____ of Christ?
 - How do you handle:
 - Internal strife
 - Honest disagreements
 - Are you endeavoring to practice perfect love and perfect peace?