



Collusion or Collision
The Divided Church
From Sermon 7.25.21

Read *Galatians 3:26-28*

Review from Sunday's sermon: As difficult as it is to look at and consider, we must see the reality of Church's condition before we can chart a course to persevere in it. Most of what calls itself "Christianity" is woefully lost in tradition, religious rituals, idolatry, poor to false doctrine, worldliness, and neglect of the Scriptures. We must always be on guard from slipping into the wayward majority or being divided over wrong cause.

1. Review the breakdown of "Christianity" stats on the back of your sheets. What were the two amazing "Trends in Protestantism" noted on Sunday? Charismatics became largest single group over the past 100 years. Non-denominationalists surpassed Baptists in the last 50 years.

1a. What was the estimated percentage of remaining faithful churches? 7% or less and shrinking

1b. Share your thoughts, surprises, questions, and concerns.

2. What is denominationalism? When did denominationalism begin? The dividing the Protestant church into large organizations founded by a movement, personality, or distinction. It began very shortly after the Reformation of the early 1500's. [Luther, Calvin, Knox, Anglican...]

3. Is denominationalism a good thing or a bad thing? It depends on the reason for the division. "The reason determines the value of the divide". If the divide is based solely on...

...men/personalities/personal benefit, usually = bad. See *1 Corinthians 3:3-8*

...truth, doctrine, correcting error, leaving abuses = good. See *2 Timothy 3:1-5*

4. What is meant by "the local Church". That individual body of believers who gather united each week to worship, pray, learn, serve, and fellowship. Membership is required for certain ministries. The Elders are accountable to the Church and the members accountable to the Elders.

4a. Can one community have more than one authentic local church? Of course. They meet separately and have some stylistic and non-essential differences, but are united in Christ and are part of the same historic, universal Church.

5. What does the devil want us to divide over? Petty human issues and selfish suspicions and power.

See also *Galatians 5:15*

5a. What does he want us to unite over and unite with? Shaping the Church into the values and image of the world and culture.

6. What are some far-too-common causes of unbiblical division in the local church? Money, Voting, Cliques, Low view of Authority (Scripture and Elders), Neglecting Discipline....

Which have you witnessed or experienced? Various Personal Answers

7. Why is focusing on church division so critical at this time in history? Collision, conflict, and persecution have a way of dividing the Body. We must be united in Spirit and in truth, caring for one another, forgiving, and never forget who the enemy is and his schemes. See *2 Corinthians 2:10-11*