

S.O.H.L.

WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS

Pronounced "Soul"

May 27, 2013

Church Divisions and Splits

JAMES 4:1-3 NKJV – (1) Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? (2) You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

Divisions that lead to church splits are a sad and all too common occurrence in the body of Christ. The effects of a church split, regardless of the cause, can be devastating. Church splits distress and dismay mature believers, disillusion new believers, cause havoc in the lives of pastors and their families, and bring reproach upon the name of Christ. But there is hope; churches that split can experience healing and restoration.

Churches are like hospitals, full of wounded and sick people, but in the church the sickness is sin and the wounds are those we inflict upon ourselves and one another because of sin. One sin that causes multiple problems is a lack of forgiveness. No Christian is perfect, and no pastor or elder or deacon is perfect. When all these imperfect people get together, disagreements, hurt feelings and misunderstandings are inevitable. If our expectations of others are too high, disappointment is inevitable and can cause further feelings of hurt and resentment. Our response to one another should be forgiveness, kindness and compassion, in Christian love, which covers a multitude of sins, followed by an increased commitment to serve one another. **Once we are committed to forgiving, loving, and serving one another, we will see each other's differences in a new light.** However, if we react to differences of opinion by taking sides and gossiping, the split will widen, more harm will be done to church members, and the Church's message to the world will be further compromised.

A church split may happen when someone seeks to manipulate people and/or events for their own ends; or, it could be pride in rule-keeping and those who do not keep the same rules are ill-treated; maybe a pet interpretation of doctrine is emphasized and used as a litmus test for belonging to the "in" group; or, it could be that someone wants to wrest leadership from the pastor or elders and rallies a group of people to accomplish a *coup d'état*. Sadly, difference of opinion regarding music and worship style is also a frequent cause of division in the church. The excuses for the conflict are numerous, but they all stem from the same root cause—pride and selfishness. Also, remember that not all who sit in church week after week are truly Christians.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT: The foundation of the church was established over two thousand years ago. This foundation was established with Christ as the cornerstone. It was established with order and now we see how things have changed dramatically! Do **your part** in the church. People will either be for God and His agenda or they will have to explain one day the havoc they caused. Remember the yellow high-lighted area above. Love those who persecute and despise you. This is scriptural. Remember, love conquers a multitude of sin.

This will help you in many ways. Put your trust in Christ. Communicate to Him and allow Him to guide you through. Do not give up! Satan wants to see that very thing happen (**JOHN 10:10**). There is no perfect church. You will discover that Satan is trying hard to bring havoc and disorder in all churches.

SCRIPTURE READING

JOB 31:1-4

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

A church is a hospital for sinners, not a club for saints.

January 1, 2008

