

LAND OF THE RED AND THE BLUE

Division. It's everywhere around us and I am not talking about the two dots separated by a line in math class. Unfortunately, wherever we look we see people who have similarities and choose to separate themselves from others who are different. While we are taught that with unity will be more successful and we should all work together, never in our history has our country ever been more divided. Even in our pledge of allegiance, "one nation" has never been more false. Nothing showed the evidence of our country's division like the last Presidential election. While the world watched, our country was completely split between blue and red states. There was a distinct separation among the two with the red states being on the eastern and western coasts, while the blue states made up the "Bible belt" and mid-west.

Paul knew that division would exist and that unfortunately it would even exist within the church. He knew the human nature of people and their difficulties with compromise and agreement. That is why in the book of 1st Corinthians, Paul begins by discussing the divisions that they had in the Corinthian church. He knew that until they resolved their division, no other problem would be able to be resolved. Paul urged them to become one in Christ and to not divide and argue over petty and insignificant issues. Even today, this lesson is very prevalent to Christians throughout the land. We should choose to unify with our brothers and sisters in Christ, rather than finding our differences.

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

Paul Was Thankful

Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ and wrote this letter specifically to the church in Corinth. He wanted them to realize that He thanked God for the church and all the individuals in it. He thanked God for the grace that He gave the believers and the price that Christ Jesus paid to allow them even to fellowship together. He wanted them to realize that God prepared and placed each and every believer within that particular church for a specific purpose and reason. He reaffirmed to them that Christ had given them each a spiritual gift. We need to realize that if we are in God's will for our lives, then God has us in the place of worship in which He wants us to be. Evidently we are needed, and need to be in this congregation of believers. Paul wanted them and us to know that each of us have gifts, and we are all needed to build up and edify the body of Christ. We need to thank God for the gift He has given us and the place in which He has put us in our local body of believers.

God Is Faithful

Paul also desperately wanted the Corinthian believers to realize that God is faithful. He had never let Paul down and He would never let them down. We must realize that through His Word we are able to know that He has kept every single promise He gave. If we look through the Word of God, there is not one

promise that God gave to one of His believers with which He did not follow through. Paul wanted the Corinthians to realize that God is faithful and would keep them strong until the day of His return. God had called the believers in Corinth, as He calls each and every one of us into the fellowship with His Son. We must understand today that God is faithful. He has not, and will not, let us down. There might be things that we go through about which we do not understand the situation at the time, but He has it all in His hands and is faithful. He will never let us down and we can constantly put our trust in Him and never fear being disappointed.

We Should Be Careful

After Paul spoke of his thankfulness and God's faithfulness, he turned to the true matter at hand. He spends seven verses discussing the divisions at hand and the problems with division within the church. Paul warns them of many things and many reasons as to why they had divisions within the church. Paul warns them that they cannot follow a man and truly be focused on Christ. These Corinthians were dividing over which important man they were following, whether it was Paul, Apollos, or Cephas. We should make sure as we grow in Christ, that we do not begin to follow a human being, but continue to keep our main focus on Jesus Christ Himself. Too many people get led away from God by putting too much faith and too much focus on a man rather than on Christ. We also should be careful not to get pulled away by emotion. Our faith in Christ should be constantly grounded in the Word and should not be dependent on the type of emotional atmosphere present. Finally, we should be careful not to focus so much on religion and forget about God. Too many people go to conferences, events, and camps and find religion, but completely miss out on our loving God. We need to constantly focus on Jesus Christ and unify in Him. No, we may not always agree about everything, but we can always find an agreement to which to come if everyone is living and acting as Christ would. We should constantly be Christ-minded instead of pride-minded.

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