

PEACE IN THE CONGREGATION

I Cor. 14:33

Sermon by Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION

1. God wants His people to be at peace with one another -- II Cor. 13:11; Col. 3:15
2. When there is peace in a congregation it is "*good*" and "*pleasant*" -- Psa. 133:1
3. So often the work of a local church is greatly hindered by INTERNAL DISSENSIONS -- I Cor. 3:3
4. Some congregations have a history of prolonged fussing and fuming over one thing or another.
5. These congregations have very little influence for good in the community, for they have become so lost in their own conflicts that they have lost sight of the fields "*white unto harvest*", and are completely taken up in "biting and devouring" one another -- Gal. 5:15.

I. THINGS WHICH DESTROY PEACE IN A CONGREGATION

1. BEING EXTREMELY SENSITIVE AND MOODY.

- (1) Some act like children if they don't get their way, or if things don't go to please them they are moody.
- (2) They can go several weeks being cold, sullen, and seemingly indifferent to the people of God and the work of the Lord.
- (3) They come into the meetinghouse SULKING and they want folks to know they are not pleased.
- (4) The New Testament teaches that we are to act like "*men*" not "*children*" -- I Cor. 16:13.

2. ENVY AND STRIFE -- James 3: 14 - 18

- (1) Members of the church become envious of one another -- Rom. 13:13.
- (2) They do harm to the influence of people they envy -- Gal. 5: 15

3. BEING SOON ANGRY.

- (1) Some have explosive tempers which can be ignited with very little spark.
- (2) Some cause trouble because they don't control their anger.
- (3) We are to put off anger -- Col. 3:8.
- (4) An elder is not to be "*soon angry*" -- Tit. 1:7
- (5) Eph. 4:26

4. SELFISHNESS

- (1) There are some who are determined to have their way at all cost.
- (2) In matters of judgment all will not agree.
- (3) Someone must yield.
- (4) The cure for selfishness is "*love*" -- I Cor. 13:5
- (5) Paul said an elder is not to be "*self-willed*" -- Tit. 1:7.

5. THE DESIRE FOR PREEMINENCE

- (1) John wrote of "*Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them*" --3 John 9
- (2) He loved the chief place.
- (3) He behaved HAUGHTILY.
- (4) Some men and women are determined to rue things or else they "will not play".

6. SELF-JUSTIFICATION

- (1) It is difficult for some to admit wrong.
- (2) A position is taken, wrong words are uttered, or improper acts performed, and rather than confessing the error and changing their life, one begins to justify himself.
- (3) When we do wrong and take a wrong position we need to say "I am wrong." or "I have sinned".

7. IGNORANCE

- (1) Some disruptions come because of ignorance of what the Bible teaches.
- (2) Matt. 28:20

II. THINGS WHICH PROMOTE PEACE IN A CONGREGATION

1. A GENUINE LOVE FOR THE TRUTH

- (1) John 8:32; Prov. 23:23; 2 Cor. 5:7; Matt. 5: 6; Matt. 7:21; 2 Thess. 2: 9 - 10

2. A GENUINE LOVE FOR THE CHURCH

- (1) Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it -- Eph. 5:25.
- (2) The welfare of the body of Christ is much more important than any of our opinions.
- (3) The church is the "*pillar and ground of the truth*" -- I Tim. 3:15
- (4) The church ought not to be retarded in its work to satisfy the whims and fancies of selfish members who want their own ways.

3. SINCERE INTEREST IN THE SOULS OF OTHERS.

- (1) Discord hinders in reaching the souls of aliens.
- (2) It hinders in fulfilling our responsibilities to each other as Christians.
- (3) Many weak members and babies in Christ have been destroyed because of thoughtless disturbances caused by hard-hearted brethren who would rather argue than work.

4. RETALIATION IS FORBIDDEN

- (1) Rom. 12: 19 - 21
- (2) Has someone in the congregation slighted YOU?
- (3) Have you been shamefully mistreated?
- (4) Forget about "getting even".
- (5) Leave that up to the Lord.

5. TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE OTHER PERSON.

- (1) Ezekiel said he went to those of the captivity and "*SAT WHERE THEY SAT*"--Ezek. 3:15
- (2) All of us are different.
- (3) All of us have different circumstances.
- (4) Some are in poor health.
- (5) Some are up in years.
- (6) Some are distraught over family members of which others do not know.
- (7) There are babes in Christ who have not had time to grow.
- (8) There are those who are weak and who need patience and understanding.
- (9) Each of us should give the other person the same understanding we desire for ourselves -- Matt. 7:12
- (10) It is sad when brethren must come to the parting of the ways over matters of faith.
- (11) But, it is really SAD when brethren divide over nothing more than personality clashes and matters of judgment.

CONCLUSION

1. Brethren, "*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace*" -- Rom. 14:19
2. Let us be "*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" --Eph. 4:3
3. Let us follow Paul's instruction in Phil. 2: 2 - 4 (I Pet. 3:8).
4. Let us dwell in good and pleasant unity. -- Psa. 133:1
5. Are you here and out of Christ??

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