

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Mr. Mathis, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Winns.
Out of town: The Longs

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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The Sin of Division

By Derek Long

We live in a world which is divided. People are divided politically, economically, geographically, and even religiously. The Bible gives us clear statements about the danger of division but sadly many accept division as completely normal. Jesus tells us, "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:24-25). Division is not a sign of strength but makes us susceptible to weakness.

Religious division is plentiful in our world. We live in a world where religious pluralism is held up as a good thing. We are called upon to accept all paths as equally leading to God. We need to remember Jesus said, "I am the way" (John 14:6) and Peter stated, "Nor is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12). If we are going to be right with God, there is only one way we can follow. The way we must follow is laid out by Jesus. Among those professing to adhere to Jesus' teachings though many divisions exist. We live in a world where there are several different "Christian" denominations. We have Catholics, protestants, and others. Within each of these categories we would find several divisions as well. Many people support the concept of denominationalism but the

apostle Paul called upon people to be of the same mind, same judgment and to speak the same thing (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Religious division is a serious matter because it is failing to live up to God's expectations for His people. Jesus prayed for His disciples to be "one" (John 17:20-23). We should be people who have "one mind" (Philippians 2:2). Part of walking worthy of the calling with which we are called is to be "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Religious division is sometimes caused by an individual failing to have the proper attitude toward others. In Ephesians 4:1-2 a list of attitudes is given we must have if we are going to maintain unity. If we fail to possess these attitudes we will fail to remain united as the people of God. It is true there are people who are divisive. The Bible teaches us to reject a divisive man after two admonitions (Titus 3:10-11). If a divisive person is allowed to remain within a group of people, he will quickly bring about problems within the group. We need to remember one of the things God considers an abomination is "one who sows discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19). Let's make sure we are not the type of people who are divisive and cause discord among others. Let's make sure we are instead peacemakers so we can be called sons of God (Matthew 5:9).

Religious division is sometimes caused by false teaching being introduced. We are commanded to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11). We cannot greet someone who teaches something outside the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). When an individual introduces a teaching which does not align with the word of God, division is often the result. If the person refuses

to repent and there are those who do what the truth teaches, a division will take place. God is not pleased with division in this area no more than division caused by a poor attitude on the part of an individual. God commands us to "note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18). We cannot sit idly by while error is promoted instead we must "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3). We need to remember the source of division when error is introduced is not those who contend for the truth but those who introduced the error.

If we have been guilty of being divisive among the people of God, whether due to our attitude or an erroneous position, we need to seek forgiveness. God is pleased when His people dwell together in unity and we should be as well (Psalm 133:1-3). If we have been promoting the concept of denominationalism or religious pluralism, we need to reconsider our position and instead call upon people everywhere to be united upon the teachings of Scripture and forsake everything which would cause division.