

Divide and Conquer

By Al Diestelkamp

There is little doubt that one of Satan's tactics, in his effort to "kill and destroy" (**Jn. 10:10**), is to divide and conquer. He knows that if he can get Christians to "bite and devour one another" (**Gal. 5:15**) that he will not only win the parties involved, but will also turn others away from Christ.

Satan doesn't care whether the division among Christians arises from personal disputes, cultural differences, or doctrinal issues. He's willing to use any and all avenues of driving wedges and splintering the body of Christ, one congregation at a time.

Knowing this to be one of Satan's devices should motivate Christians to foil his plan by being determined to "be of one mind" (**2 Cor. 13:11**). Of course, in order to do this we must have "compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (**1 Pet. 3:8**).

Diverse personality traits will sometimes provoke disputes among brethren. When that happens we need to remember that we are commanded to "pursue peace with all men" (**Heb. 12:14**). That means work at it! Otherwise, it is bound to result in bitterness, which will "cause trouble, and by this many become defiled" (**Heb. 12:15**).

The handling of doctrinal differences is another area in which we need to work hard in order to maintain, if at all possible, peace among our brethren. There is no doubt that we must be willing to "contend earnestly for the faith" (**Jude 3**), but we can do that without being contentious. Our defense of the truth must be accompanied by a sincere desire to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (**Eph. 4:3**).



Classes This Week

Thursday 7 PM
Evangelism Class at the Building

Sick

Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Lori Holloway	Chick Wade	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Amber Moseley (Toni Herd's niece)	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Joe Perry (Anna Miller's Relative)	Jerry Sandlin (Megan Lee's Grandfather)
Richard Call Seth Humphrey's Uncle	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Mary Smith (Nathan Smith's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher's and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's brother)	Larry Alexander (Friend of Phillip Box)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frank Johnson (Debbi Coleman's Uncle)	Dale Wilkes (William Herd's Uncle)	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)

June Birthdays

- 1 - Kenlee Burton
- 3 - Phillip Stephens
- 4 - Stephen Smith
- 9 - Kay White
- 11 - Hannah Alexander
- 12 - Orié Cecil
- 12 - Riley Jones
- 12 - Madeline Morton
- 13 - Marcus Harrell
- 14 - Jeremiah Johnson
- 17 - Wesley White
- 17 - Sarah Norman
- 17 - Brooks Pender
- 22 - Seth Buchanon
- 22 - Paul Tam
- 25 - Corey Hunt
- 26 - Chris Wilson
- 28 - Craig Davis
- 28 - Clint Davis
- 28 - Allison Chandler
- 29 - Lisa Lanier

News and Notes

- Congratulations to Tim and Britany (Holley) Thomasson on their marriage yesterday!
- Betty Bradford continues to recover from her surgery.
- We welcome Daphene Whatley, Lisa Lanier's mother, as a new member here! Her address is: 2307 Morgan Dr., 36830
- Let us remember Matthew Johnson, David Golden and Tim Morton in our prayers as they are deployed overseas.
- Let us remember Jared Burton and Chris Davis as they undergo treatments.
- Let us remember our expectant mothers in our prayers: Anne Morton and Jana Hall.

A weekly publication of the University church of Christ in Auburn, Alabama

The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

Volume 2, Issue 32

June 12, 2011

When Good Men do Nothing

By Wayne Greeson



Thoughts to Ponder

The bite of legalism spreads paralyzing venom into the body of Christ. Its poison blinds our eyes, dulls our edge, and arouses pride in our hearts. Soon our love is eclipsed as it turns into a mental clipboard with a long checklist.

Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or
E-mail:
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." - Edmund Burke

So much of the history of the struggle between good and evil can be explained by Edmund Burke's observation. Time and again those who profess to be good seem to clearly outnumber those who are evil, yet those who are evil seem to prevail far to often. Seldom is it the numbers that determine the outcome, but whether those who claim to be good men are willing to stand up and fight for what they know to be right. There are numerous examples of this sad and awful scenario being played out over and over again in the scriptures.

When good men do nothing, they get nothing good done. To be good, one must do good. The Lord commands His people to do good (**Lk. 6:35; Eph. 2:10**). Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (**Tit. 2:14**).

They Get Nothing Good Done

In the parable of the talents, Jesus described a man who did nothing. When he received his Lord's money, he "went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money" (**Mt. 25:18**). When his Lord returned, he returned to the Lord just what he had been given (**Mt. 25:25**). Notice, the servant did not do any outright evil, such as stealing the money, but then neither did he do anything

good. He did nothing and he got nothing good accomplished. His Lord condemned him as a "wicked and slothful servant" (**Mt. 25:26**)

Jesus rebuked the church at Laodicea for doing nothing. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (**Rev. 3:15-17**).

Too many Christians and too many churches are do nothing. They are standing idly by, they are mere spectators. They sit on the sidelines in stead of actively participating and working for the good. If good wins, they join in the celebration though they did nothing to produce the victory. If evil wins, they will complain long and loud though their own apathy helped produce the undesirable result.

When Jesus found a fig tree with "nothing thereon, but leaves only" he cursed the tree and "presently the fig tree withered away" (**Mt. 21:19**). What will he do with those, who claim to be good and yet who do nothing? John the Baptist warned, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (**Mt. 3:10; Jn. 15:2**).

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They Help Evil To Triumph

When good men do nothing, evil triumphs. Evil, sin and sinful men must be opposed. God commands those who are good, not just to avoid evil but actively oppose it.

Christians are to not only to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but (also) . . . reprove them" (**Eph. 5:11**). Those who do nothing about sin and evil, help the sin and evil to prevail. One who is silent when there are those around him in sin becomes a partaker with them (**Eph. 5:7**).

In the days of Elijah, the silence of many had allowed the evil of Ahab and Jezebel to prevail throughout the land of Israel. "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (**1 Kgs 18:21**). The silence of the people spoke volumes of their indecisiveness and inaction. Their failure to stand up, speak up and speak out and permitted evil men to run rampant.

Jesus told of a traveler who was robbed and beaten left him half dead. The men who did this were wicked and did a very wicked thing. But the Levite and priest allowed this evil to continue unanswered by doing nothing but they each "passed by on the other side" (**Lk. 10:31-32**). Fortunately for the traveler there was one man who was willing to stand up for what was right (**Lk. 10:33-36**).

Jesus warned "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (**Mt. 12:30**). In the fight against evil there is no middle ground, no gray area, no neutrality Those who are not actively and vigorously working and fighting against evil are helping evil to triumph.

They Are No Longer Good

When good men do nothing, they are no longer good. Many have the mistaken notion that good is merely the absence of doing that which is wrong. Not so! One is good not merely because he does no evil, but because he is actively working for what is good. "Let him eschew evil, and do good" (**1 Pet. 3:11**). James explained, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (**Jas. 4:17**).

The eldest of Israel, Reuben, knew his brothers' murderous plot against their younger brother Joseph was wrong. He started an attempt to deliver Joseph, but as he hesitated and vacillated, the other brothers sold Joseph into slavery. When Reuben heard what they had done, he realized his failure to act had helped to

bring about this evil result.

Instead of correcting his error, Reuben sought to cover his guilt by agreeing with his brothers to lie to their father about Joseph's disappearance (**Gen. 37:18-35**). Reuben had "good intentions" and he was not even present when Joseph was sold into slavery, but he knew his inaction and absence made him just as guilty as the rest of his wicked brothers. This guilt continued to haunt him through the years (**Gen. 42:21-22**).

The prophet Obadiah severely condemned the Edomites for do nothing when evil was befalling their brethren, the Jews. When Jerusalem was invaded by her enemies, the Edomites "stood on the other side" doing nothing but watching the slaughter as spectators. God said by their failure to act and to help "even thou west as one of them" (**Obad. 11**).

Today, there are preachers and Christians who fail and refuse to meet the real foe, refute error and fight the enemy. Instead, they have turned to viciously savaging their own brethren. They are filled with bitterness and hatred and they maliciously attack, slander and misrepresent other Christians and gospel preachers.

Paul warned about such men and behavior among those professing to be Christians, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (**Gal. 5:15**). Those who engage in such behavior are spiritual cannibals.

While the conduct of these so-called Christians is shameful, what about those supposedly "good" men who do nothing? Those stand on the other side and do nothing but watch as their brothers are being slandered, slaughtered and devoured, they cease being innocent bystanders and idle spectators. Their failure to act not only allows evil to triumph, but makes them just as guilty as the spiritual cannibals they refuse to reprove and rebuke. In God's words, "even thou west as one of them" (**Obad. 11**).

Conclusion

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (**Gal. 6:7**). Those who fail or refuse to do good in the face of evil are sowing some dangerous seeds. They are do nothing good as Jesus commanded them to do; they are helping evil to triumph and they have ceased being good themselves and they have become partakers of the evil they did nothing to stop.

Do not allow evil to triumph. Do not do nothing. Stand up and be counted, speak up against evil and speak out against evil men and their sinful deeds.



Local Churches Need Godly Elders

By Gene Lyles

To appoint unqualified men to serve in this office would be more disastrous than to continue for a while without elders. But we must not be content to allow this condition to continue without special efforts to correct it.

That a local church can exist for a time without elders is seen by the fact that churches established by Paul and Barnabas did exist for a time without such (**Acts 14:21-23**). But from this same context it is clear that it was God's will that in due time each church should appoint elders. It is easy for us to understand why each local church needs a plurality of men to serve as its spiritual leaders, yet such is truly lacking among many churches of Christ today. It seems amazing to us that the churches established by Paul and Barnabas did not exist very long before they had men who qualified as elders. Obviously, something is lacking in our teaching when we fail to measure up to the pattern of elders in every church (**Tit. 1:5**).

It is certain that we can't appoint men to this office who are not truly qualified in accordance with **1 Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1:5-9**. To appoint unqualified men to serve in this office would be more disastrous than to continue for a while without elders. But we must not be content to allow this condition to continue without special efforts to correct it. It takes time for men to prepare themselves for this office, and it seems that very few are willing to truly prepare themselves for it. It is amazing how the early churches were able to appoint elders so soon after their establishment. Apparently there must have been Jewish converts from the various synagogues who already had a good knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, for it is not likely that Gentile converts had much knowledge of the Scriptures. But it is certain that the apostles would not have appointed men who did not truly qualify.

It is a sad condition that, in our day when the Scriptures are so readily available and our educational standards are a top priority in our society, so few men have a basic knowledge of the Scriptures. Even a generation ago such knowledge of the Scriptures was better than it is now. Obviously, there must be reasons for this unjustified condition among us. Let us here list what this writer considers to be some of the reasons for this condition among us:

- Failure on the part of preachers to teach men the need to prepare themselves for this office by obtaining a good knowledge of the Scriptures.
- Preachers who don't like to work under qualified elders and thus neglect to encourage men to qualify themselves for this office.
- Preachers who feel they know the Scriptures better than most elders and thus would like to change God's divine arrangement of a plurality of qualified shepherds over the flock.
- There are so many events going on in the way of sports and entertainment that many men are unwilling to put these secular matters in their proper place, thus fail to set aside time to study the Scriptures as they should in preparing themselves for this divine office.
- Some men feel they really do not have to meet the qualifications given in the Scriptures, and thus make no serious effort to qualify themselves for this spiritual office.
- Some who are very successful in business leadership seem to feel they should be appointed on this basis without the need of the scriptural qualifications, and therefore make no genuine effort to qualify themselves for this spiritual office.
- Some desire the office thinking this gives them recognition within the congregation as its rulers rather than providing the needed spiritual leadership that God intended they should provide. Having scriptural qualifications doesn't seem to have entered their mind.

Yes, each local church needs elders, but it needs the kind of men that God's word calls for. Nothing will enhance the growth of a local church more than godly elders. However, nothing can hurt the cause of Christ more than appointing men to the office who have neither the qualifications, nor the proper concept of what this office places on their shoulders as spiritual leaders. Until men who desire this office clearly understand the spiritual function of this office, and the need to have a good foundation knowledge of the Scriptures, they have no business being appointed to this divinely ordained office of work.

