

Party Spirit in Disagreement

1 Corinthians 3 - The danger of
brethren falling into partisanship
instead of standing only on God's Word

1 Corinthians 3:1-7

- “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

Party Spirit in Disagreement

- Two factors have contributed the present struggle we have with party spirit:
 - Difficulty discerning between matters of revealed doctrine and matters of Divine liberty and personal application, and
 - An almost Pharisaic fear of anyone who differs from us in matters of Divine liberty and personal application

Party Spirit in Disagreement

- What attitudes facilitate party spirit?
- How is party spirit incompatible with being a Christian?
- What is the impact of party spirit on a local congregation?

Hallmark Attitudes Of Party Spirit

- Party spirit is addressed in Gal. 5:19-21 in Paul's outline of works of the flesh
 - Did you ever wonder why the Gal. 5:19-21 list of works of the flesh contains nine sins against brethren and only eight sins of personal immorality?
 - Do you suppose that it is more likely that Christians will engage in mistreatment of others than in acts of immorality?
 - As Christians become morally pure, Satan tempts them to think they are morally superior, and they become vulnerable to the sins of self-righteousness and other Pharisaic behaviors.

Hallmark Attitudes Of Party Spirit

- Eritheia - selfish ambitions, disputes, strife; a self-centered attitude in the performance of any good work
 - Phil. 1:16, 2:3-5
 - Christians put away the compulsive need to be in control of everything when they put away the other works of the flesh

Hallmark Attitudes Of Party Spirit

- Dichostasia - dissensions, seditions; literally means “standing apart”; describes a condition where all fellowship and togetherness are gone
 - 1Cor. 3:3, 1:12; Rom. 16:17
 - This sin is committed when we confuse prejudice with principle, unreasoning stubbornness with unwavering resolution

Hallmark Attitudes Of Party Spirit

- Hairesis - heresies, factions; most commonly denotes a body of people belonging to a particular school of thought or action; sectarian
 - Acts 5:17, 15:5, 24:5, 24:14, 28:22
 - 2Peter 2:1

Why Party Spirit Is Incompatible With Being A Christian

- Because of what Jesus did on the cross.
 - He died to reconcile man back to God
 - 2Cor. 5:18-21
 - Also to reconcile man back to man in one body
 - Eph. 2:13-16

Why Party Spirit Is Incompatible With Being A Christian

- Because we are instructed to preserve this reconciliation.
 - 1Cor. 6:5-8 - “I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! 7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!”

Why Party Spirit Is Incompatible With Being A Christian

- Because it is a violation of the law of love:
 - John 17:20-23 - “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

Why Party Spirit Is Incompatible With Being A Christian

- Dividing over party spirit is a denial of the law of love and a dismissal of the command to be united by the bond of love
 - 1Cor. 1:10-13 - “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, or I am of Cephas, or I am of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”

The Impact Of Party Spirit On A Local Church

- The great weakness of the scribes and Pharisees was their inability to distinguish between greater and lesser matters and between the purpose of principle and the practice of persons
 - Matt. 23:1-12

The Impact Of Party Spirit On A Local Church

- They honored the gold of the Temple more than they did the Temple itself
 - Matt. 23:16-17 - “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.' 17 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?”

The Impact Of Party Spirit On A Local Church

- They cared more about tithing spices than practicing justice, mercy and faith
 - Matt. 23:23-24 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!”

The Impact Of Party Spirit On A Local Church

- “You take great pains to avoid offence in very small matters, superstitiously observing the smallest points of the law, like a man carefully straining out the minute insects from his wine; while you are at no pains to avoid great sins--hypocrisy, deceit, oppression, and lust--like a man who should swallow a camel.” (Calmet’s Dictionary)
- “He eats an elephant, and is suffocated with a gnat.” (Arab Proverb)
- “They were majoring on minor things” (Gary Ogden)

Churches And Preachers Who Major On Minors

- What are we doing in this age with the stewardship God entrusted to us?
 - Jesus said:
 - “What will a man give in exchange for his soul?”
 - “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness“
 - “Upon this rock I will build my church“
 - Why are so many majoring on minor things, neglecting the weightier matters?

Churches And Preachers Who Major On Minors

- Some churches develop an orthodoxy on personal scruples, matters of individual conscience, and variations on individual applications of truth, and focus an inordinate amount of time and energy on getting the disciples to line up on these matters of liberty.
 - The above conditions lead to party spirit, self righteousness, religious arrogance, hypocritical inconsistency, and an un-loving treatment of fellow Christians who differ from them.
 - All of these are hallmarks of the Pharisaic party spirit.

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- Failure to discern the better part
 - Luke 10:38-42 - “Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me. 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- Following the practice and forgetting the purpose
 - Luke 13:10-17 - “But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day. 15 The Lord then answered him and said, Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? 16 So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?”

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- Practicing the exception while condemning it in others
 - Luke 13:10-17

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- Looking with contempt on those who do not tithe mint, anise, and cumin, or wash couches and copper vessels.
 - Luke 18:10-14 - “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men-- extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- Why rebuke erring brothers... because they are wrong only?
 - Matt. 18:15-17 - “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.”
 - To win them back to Christ

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- Why discipline an unrepentant brother... because he is wrong only?
 - 1Cor. 5:5 - “Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”
 - To save his soul

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- If these are not our motives, then our works profit nothing
 - 1Cor. 13:3 - “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- Damaging the kingdom with hobbies
 - Rom. 14:17-20 - “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.”

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- Making scruples, traditions, and expediencies equal to law
 - Rom. 10:1-3 - “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- Binding scruples, traditions, and expediencies as law
 - “Communion bread must be pie crust and broken into quarters”
 - “Obeying the gospel can only come after invitation song”
 - John was “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day.”
 - The Spirit dwells in us literally or through the word?

Symptoms Of Phariseeism (Majoring On Minors)

- If by your words, attitudes, or actions you manifest that your scruple is a test of fellowship, you are guilty of party spirit. You have elevated a personal belief to the level of doctrine.
- We must never forget that we became morally pure through the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and obedience to the gospel, not through some strict code of scruples developed and enforced by misguided men