

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Disease of Division

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Code: 1817

If you have your Bibles, turn with us to 1 Corinthians Chapter 3, for our lesson this morning in the Word of God. 1 Corinthians chapter 3, we're gonna look at verses 1 to 9, a very familiar portion of Scripture to students of the Word of God, a portion that has been used as a basis for understanding much of what is taught regarding the Christian's behavior. In fact, the whole third chapter really is loaded with some very, very pertinent, important things, regard to Christian life. In our continuing study of 1 Corinthians, we come to chapter 3, in the middle of a section on division in the church. We've entitled this particular message "The Disease of Division," or if you will, "Carnal Christians."

Just to introduce the thought, I was reading a book entitled "New Life" written by Michael Green, and in the book he said that a friend of his came to him and explained to him his attitude toward his new found Christian life in these terms: "It is rather like a cyclist, who, when he has climbed a long hill, feels he should be able to freewheel down the other side. It is not until he reaches the top that he sees his task has only just started, and that the road winds on with even steeper hills than the one he has just climbed. When people accept Christ, they tend to think it is freewheeling from that point, but then they discover it is only the beginning."

You look at the Christian life, and I look at the Christian life, from our perspectives. So did this young man. But the interesting thing about it, from all of our perspectives, the Christian life is not easy. It is difficult. And maybe when you first became a Christian, you thought that it might be freewheeling. And somebody told you that if you'd come to Christ, he'd solve your problems. And He does do that. If you come to Christ you have peace and joy, and the answers to life. And you did and you do, but in spite of all of that, it's not easy. The Christian life is difficult. In fact, maybe it's harder to live now than it was before you were saved. Why? Why does a young Christian find that he thinks he might be able to freewheel it, and then as soon as he gets into the thing he finds out there's greater difficulty all the time? Why is it not easy to live a Christian life, with the power of God within us? Why is it difficult to do the thing we know we want to do, to do the thing that is right to do, that God says to be done? There are two reasons, and really everything can be reduced to these two. Two things make the Christian life difficult.

No. 1, you are going against the grain of the world. You are trying to breathe different air than exists in your atmosphere, and that isn't easy. You are finding yourself like a spiritual salmon. While everything else is floating downstream, you're fighting the current. You keep slamming against the wall of worldliness, just trying to break through. You aren't swimming the way the rest of the fish are

swimming. You are going against the current, and it isn't easy. The world is geared to go a certain direction. You are going the opposite way, and that makes it hard. Now that's the external pressure.

Secondly, the internal. You are also going against the grain of the flesh, your own humanness. Paul put it this way in Romans 7: "I love to do God's will so far as my new self is concerned. But there is something deep within me in my flesh that is at war with my mind, and wins the fight, making me a slave to the sin that still is in me." That's the internal. You see, men are born sinful. That's because they're born of sinful parents and it goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. Because we are born with a tendency to sin, with a domination to sin, this creates a problem. Salvation comes - now watch- and when we are saved, God breaks the back of evil, neutralizes, in a sense, sin, gives us the Holy Spirit to subdue sin, but he doesn't remove the tendency to evil that is in our humanness. And so with all of those things that he does, we still, though the triumph is ultimate, struggle on the path to that ultimate triumph.

So you see Satan has two things that he works on in the life of a Christian: the world, that's the external; the flesh, that's the internal. And those two things make it very difficult. We are going against the grain. We are breathing different air than exists in our atmosphere, we are spiritual salmon going against the stream, and secondly we have within us a tendency to evil. And though the Spirit of God is there to subdue that, ultimately and practically, it is still there and it rears itself and though we win the battle, ultimately we lose a lot of skirmishes on the way.

Now that's why the Christian life isn't easy, and the Christian has to watch for two things. We have to look outside and watch the world. You have to look inside and watch the flesh. And incidentally, sometimes they are very closely connected because the world becomes the thing that tempts the flesh. But Satan uses these two avenues to get to us: outside and inside.

This was precisely the problem that the Corinthians had. The problem the Corinthians faced was this: they had been able to avoid neither the world, nor the flesh. They were succumbing to the world; they were succumbing to the flesh. And as a result of that, all kinds of sins were occurring. And from the beginning of 1 Corinthians, to the 16th chapter, is just dealing with one sin after another: Sins that were issuing out of this inability to deal with the world and the flesh.

Now one of the sins that was creating problems in Corinth was division. Division is a sin. Now I hasten to add that no sin is an isolated sin. Sins are always combinations of other sins. Just file off that somewhere on your computer. It will come up once in a while. There's no such thing as an isolated sin. Sins are combinations of other sins. And in Corinth, division was not an isolated sin that existed in a vacuum. It was a product of other sins. Pride, envy, jealousy, etc., etc., create division. But division was a very serious thing and Paul knew that if he could correct division, he could take care of a lot of other things. So he spends a tremendous amount of time on division.

Now he says to them, in effect: "Your division is caused by two things." Now what are the two things I just told you cause sin? Worldliness and the flesh. Division, first of all, in the church at Corinth, was caused by worldliness.

Now we think of worldliness, usually, as things you do, you know, playing cards, getting drunk, you know, whatever you categorize as worldliness in your little category. But that isn't really what worldliness is. Worldliness is simply buying whatever the world's philosophies are, whatever their attitudes are. And in the case of the Corinthians, it wasn't that they necessarily behaved like the world - they did do that - but that isn't the issue here. It was that they were following the world's philosophies. They were defining things, in an ultimate sense, by the world's definitions. And you see, Paul says to them from 1:18 through 2:16, the end of the first chapter and the whole second chapter, "Your problem is you're divided because you are buying the world's philosophy. Everybody brings into the church philosophies of the world. You can't agree because you all have your own different worldly philosophies and you've got discord."

That was their first problem. First cause of their division was their worldliness. They were still hanging on to old worldly philosophies they'd been taught by their worldly philosophers before they were saved.

But there's a second reason. The second reason for their division is in chapter 3, and that is the flesh. The second reason that they were divided was because instead of functioning in the Spirit, they were functioning in the flesh. And whenever the flesh functions, watch this, one word will characterize it. Inevitably, it starts with "s" and it ends with "ish": selfish. Division is manifest selfishness and that's what carnality always is. Carnality says, "I will do what I will do; I don't care what God wants me to do. I will work in the flesh, do what my body says, my nature says, regardless of what God says."

So carnality and worldliness were creating the division in the church. They were buying the world's philosophies and they were behaving in the world's patterns. Selfishly, internal, fleshy desires were overruling the statements of the Word and the revelation of God. So you see, folks, perennially, the enemies of the Lord's work are the world and the flesh, both in the collective and corporate base and individually.

Now in our text, Paul is going to tackle the disease of division from the standpoint of carnality, from the internal, from the standpoint of the flesh. This really is the key if you can overrule the flesh, you can also overrule the world.

You kind of have to feel like Paul's a doctor here. Maybe he'd been hanging around Luke so long he felt that he was sort of learning everything Luke knew, and he sort of sees himself as a doctor. But

he's sort of a spiritual physician, and he's in the business of diagnosing. He is absolutely the greatest spiritual diagnostician there ever was, apart from our Lord. This guy could see through the symptoms of what was going on and get the issue better than anybody.

You know the word "diagnosis" - some of you are doctors and you use that word a lot - the word "diagnosis" - you can throw this in your file - comes from two Greek words: dia and nosis. Nosis is the Greek word "to know" and dia means "through." It means, "to know through something," and that's what "diagnosis" is. You look at the symptoms; you go behind the symptoms through to the real problem. You have diagnosed the problem. You have seen through the superficial to the real problem. You know through the problem.

And this is what Paul did. Incidentally the word is used in the book of Acts in reference to Paul's defense before Agrippa, and him being able to make a proper diagnosis of what he was saying. But here we find Paul diagnosing the Corinthians all the way through the book. He says, "This is what you do; here is what it looks like; here is what is causing it; and here is how to cure it." He is a spiritual physician all the way through 1 Corinthians, diagnosing, then describing symptoms, and then offering cures.

Now he comes to the disease of division, and that's an ugly disease....really ugly. And it's very, very contagious. You can have division at the church at a small level, and boy, that thing can spread. Not only does it affect the church but it affects the world, because an un-united church, a divided, wrangling, fighting church loses its ability to testify. And so division is a very, very serious disease.

Now Paul's going to give three things. It's a simple outline. Follow along. The cause, the symptoms, and the cure. The cause of division, the symptoms of it, how it manifests itself, and the cure for it.

No. 1, the cause. Let's look. I want you to hang in with me, because this is a very important passage and we must make clear some very basic theological principles. The cause is in verses 1 through 3a: "And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." Now here he tells them what was causing their division. It wasn't just environment; it wasn't just worldly pressure. It was the weakness of their own flesh. "I couldn't speak to you as spiritual, but carnal." And here he introduces the problem.

Now let's notice the verse specifically. He says "brethren." And by saying that, that is a term of love, affection. It's also a term of equality, so he identifies with them on an equal level. But in addition to that it's sort of a softening of the rebuke. Also, indicates to us to whom he speaks: Christians. He speaks to Christians but he says, now watch this, "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual." The word "as," folks, is very important. "I couldn't speak to you as if you were spiritual. You are brethren,

you are Christians, but I can't talk to you like that."

Now, the term "spiritual" is very, very important. When we use the term "spiritual," we use it in many ways. The world talks about the "spiritual" world and what do they mean? They mean the occult, don't they? We talk about someone who is "spiritual" and we mean a guy who is really moving in the Spirit, a guy who is "spiritual" as opposed to carnal. Or when we say a "spiritual" man, we may just mean a Christian, as opposed to a natural man. We have to be careful how we use it, and we want to know how Paul uses it here, so watch. This demands some careful observation.

The word for "spiritual" is numaticoi, or numaticas; icasis the ending. Anytime you see an icasending - most of you saw an icasending, you wouldn't know it was an icasending - but anyway, an icasending, at the end of the word, it means "characterized by or controlled by." So numa means "Spirit." So numaticas means, "Spirit controlled by; controlled by the Spirit."

So here is somebody controlled by the Spirit, a spiritual man. All Christians are numaticoi. All Christians are controlled by the Spirit. Did you know that? There is no such thing as a Christian not controlled by the Spirit. Now not all Christians obey the Spirit, who is in control, but they are all controlled by Him. Sometimes you may have seen a little diagram that shows a Christian, and it's got himself on the throne and the Holy Spirit down at the side. Can't happen. Once you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit takes over the control of your life. He remains in control of your life until the day you die. He will always be in control of your life. The only issue is whether or not you're submitting to His control.

And I'll tell you something else, in a minute, that may help you to understand this. I'll explain it in broader terms; just introduce it here. The Holy Spirit will control you to the end that He wants, whether you cooperate or not. But you should cooperate. It's a lot less painful. Okay?

Now, all Christians are spiritual. You say "How do you know that, John." Verse 15 of chapter 2. Let's go back to 14 and see the contrast. "The natural man" - now who is the natural man? The unsaved man. A sucacoi: controlled by - there's _____ again - controlled by suca, his own soul, his own humanness. He receives not the things of the Spirit of God. He's not even sensitive to spiritual things. He's on the outside looking in and not even knowing what he's seeing. So the natural man, in contrast to the natural man who can't know the things of the Spirit, verse 15 says there is a spiritual man. He can discern all things. Now there, my friends, the term "spiritual" refers simply to a Christian. Simply to a Christian, not to a special kind of Christian; not to a good one as opposed to a bad one; not to a mature one as opposed to an immature one. Just to a Christian, period. All Christians are spiritual as opposed to natural. That is, what used to be controlled by the human nature, we are now controlled by the Holy Spirit. That is true of every Christian.

Now, mark this. That is a positional statement. Remember how often we've talked about position in practice, that a Christian positionally, before God, is perfect. But in practice we don't always live up to what we are. When God looks at you, He sees you as if He were looking at whom? Christ. He looks at you, He sees you in Christ. In fact, in 1 Corinthians, He says to the Corinthians: "You are holy ones." And then he proceeds to tell them how rotten they are. Well what's he saying? He's saying before God, in Christ, positionally, holy. Practically, you're rotten. You're not living up to what you are. This is why we believe that you don't lose your salvation, because your practice never affects your position. Those are two different things. You have to make a distinction in Scripture. The practice of an individual - for example he says, "Now are you sanctified," then he turns right around later to the Corinthians and says, "Now cleanse yourselves from filthiness." Well you see, positionally before God, they are pure, they are in Christ, they are righteous. When God looks at you, does He see sin? He sees absolute righteousness. You're covered with the righteousness of Christ. Is there sin in your life? Yeah, practically. See your difference between your practice and position.

Now, the word "spiritual" here is used of your position. Before God, you are a spiritual person. You are under the control of the Spirit. You are characterized by the Spirit. As opposed to an unsaved person who is not, and thus he can't know God's truth at all. You can. You can know the word. You can discern the Word. You can read the Word. You can study the Word. You are controlled by the Holy Spirit.

The word then, "spiritual," is used in the New Testament to speak of this positional aspect. Just as an illustration, look at verse 6 of chapter 2. Now when I say the word "mature," what kind of Christian do you think of? You think of a mature Christian right? Somebody who really knows the Word, _____. Did you know that every Christian is mature? Every single Christian is mature. You say, "Wait a minute." Why do you keep telling us to grow up to maturity then? Well I'm using it in the practical sense, but positionally you're all full-grown. Did you know that? When you became a Christian you were a whole thing. There's no one who's a half Christian. Never met a half Christian, not even a three-quarter Christian. As I told you, my grandfather put it simply: "There's only two kinds of people: the Saints and the Aints, and either you is or you ain't." There is not any half way about it. A Christian is somebody who's a Christian. And he's a total Christian. That's why 2:6 says this: "We are speaking among them that are telaouis," that are grown up ones, that are mature ones, that are total ones, that are mature. So there, maturity is used positionally. Elsewhere it is used practically, isn't it, as illustrated in Ephesians? We oughta mature the body. We are to build it up.

So you see the words of Scripture sometimes speak of our position, sometimes of our practice. So then, "spiritual" is used in 15 to speak of our position. It is also used that way in 1 Peter 2:5 where he says, "All Christians are a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices." That's us, in our position. We always don't act like a holy priesthood, do we? But we are positionally.

Further, let me show you Romans 8, because I think it illustrates the point. Romans 8:6, here's a distinction: "To be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life." Here he equates, watch this, spirituality with life. Who has life? Christians. Who then is spiritual? Christians. He even says in verse 9, "You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." Well who's he talking to? "If so be the Spirit of God dwells in you." Whoever the Spirit dwells in. Well, you say, "Who does the Spirit dwell in? Some Christians?" "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is of Him." Let's go backwards in the verse. If a man has the Spirit, he belongs to Christ, right? If the Spirit of God dwells in you, you are in the Spirit, and not in the flesh. That is saying no Christian is in the flesh; all Christians are in the Spirit.

So you see, there's a positional thing. Even though we're in the Spirit, we can do the deeds of the flesh once in a while. But here he's talking about our position, not our practice. In fact, in verse 4, he says, "We do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit." All Christians walk after the Spirit, positionally, in our position before God. Look at verse 14, Romans 8: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." How can you tell if you're a son of God? If you're led by the Spirit of God. All sons of God are led by the Spirit. Therefore, all Christians are spiritual, led by the Spirit. That's all he's saying.

Over in verse 26 - and here's this idea: "The Spirit helps us in our weakness." Even when we goof it up in practice. "We don't know what to pray for, but the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that can't be uttered, and God," verse 27 says, "hears those prayers" and the result, "we know that all things work together for good." Did you know something? That stuff in your life - hold on to your hat - is going to work together for good, whether you cooperate or not. Did you know that?

But as I said earlier, it's a lot better to cooperate. Listen, your life is so controlled by the Holy Spirit. He so rules that your life, that because of you, with you, or in spite of you, it's going to work out together for good. I'm glad, but I'd rather be in on it, because otherwise I'm winding up in Hebrews chapter 12 getting chastised.

Don't you see? Every Christian is controlled by the Spirit positionally, walking in the Spirit, positionally he is spiritual, as opposed to natural. In fact, Galatians 5:25 says, "All Christians live in the Spirit." That is our life, isn't it?

So Paul says in 2:15 - say, "When are you going to get to the third chapter?" I'll be there in a minute - in 2:15, he says, "You are spiritual, you are characterized by, you are controlled by, you are walking by the Holy Spirit, as opposed to the natural. That's what salvation did for you. It gave you God's Holy Spirit to control you. Now, in spite of the fact that you are positionally spiritual, practically you're not living spiritually, so I could not speak unto you as I should have been able to speak unto you, as to spiritual. In fact, I have to speak to you as I would to carnal, as unto babes in Christ." So he says "I couldn't speak to you as spiritual." They were spiritual but he couldn't talk to them like they were.

You see? The word "as" is important there.

"Spiritual" sometimes means practical. In here it does. I wish you were as spiritual in your practical as your position, right? Sometimes the word "spiritual" is used that way. Galatians 6:1, the brother's overtaken in a fall, "He that is spiritual restores such a one in love." There it's talking about a certain level of a Christian. I should say, a Christian who is walking in the Spirit, practically, who is practicing his position. You pick out the Christian who isn't practicing his position, you see? So "spiritual" in 6:1 of Galatians is used to contrast two kinds of Christians. So you see it just depends on the passage. Now here he's saying your position is spiritual, 2:15, your practice isn't, 3:1.

"Now I have to talk to you as unto carnal," he says. And here the Greek word is sarkenos, not icas ending, but an enosending. And an enosending means "made of." "I'm talking to you as if you were made of flesh." Down in 3, when he says, "You are yet carnal," he uses icas. "You are controlled by the flesh, but I have to talk to you as if you are made of it." He says in effect, "You're so messed up I gotta deal with you like I was dealing with a bunch of unbelievers." Wow. Carnal, it's the word flesh. Sarks. It is used in this reference to refer to the basic nature of man, to refer to that which is subject to sin, his edamic self, his rebelliousness toward God, his self-centeredness, his proneness to sin. And when you were saved, that was not eradicated. It doesn't dominate you anymore. It's been neutralized. You can use it or not use it, but it's still there. And he's saying, "I have to talk to you like you were carnal." He doesn't say man's dominated by the flesh; he says "I gotta talk to you like you're unsaved, like you are sarkenosis, made of the flesh." Fleshy-that's the definition of unbelievers.

Now to illustrate that this is the way "carnal" is used, all you have to do is go back to Romans 8 again. And you don't need to turn to it; I'll read it to you. Romans 8 says this: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Now here he's talking about a saved and an unsaved man. And he calls an unsaved man "somebody minding the flesh." Verse 6, "To be carnally minded is death." Why? That's an unbeliever, isn't it? Verse 8, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh." You see, he's distinguishing a Christian and a non-Christian and here he doesn't call a non-Christian natural, he calls him carnal. He doesn't say man is carnal. He's functioning on his flesh. But he can say to a Christian: "When you do the things you are doing, you could be defined by the same term. You're not natural anymore, because you do have the Holy Spirit and no Christian is ever called natural. But you are carnal, because you are functioning on the basis of the flesh." And you know when a Christian sins, there's no difference in quality, and there's no difference in definition between his sin and the sin of an unbeliever. Did you know that? If a Christian lies, is that a different quality of sin than an unbeliever? Christians sin better sins, huh? We have a higher level of sinning. If anything, what? It's worse. You see the sin is sin, and the same flesh that functioned before you were saved will produce the same kind of sin, defined in the same terms with the same degree of heinousness to God, after you're saved. It will be less frequent but just as bad when it happens.

So a Christian who is spiritual could never be natural, but he could behave carnally, but carnally truly is the definition of an unregenerate man. So he's saying to the Corinthians, "You know, you're so messed up I have to treat you like a bunch of unbelievers." That's tragic, isn't it? But you know that can be illustrated in Matthew 18. Remember he said, "If there's anybody that's got something against a brother, you go to him, and then take two or three and then if he doesn't come through, then treat him as an unbeliever." Sometimes that's the only way you can treat a Christian is like an unbeliever. Why, Paul did that, didn't he? When he said, "You take the person that's doing what he's doing" in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 "and turn him over to Satan." And _____ and Alexander, he says, "I've taken him and turned him over to Satan. He might learn not to blaspheme. I've treated him as if they belonged to him. That's how they're acting."

So believer's spiritual positionally; he may not be spiritual practically. And if he isn't he's carnal, and if he's carnal, he's acting like a carnal man who is an unbeliever. He's behaving like somebody who wasn't saved. Now that is terrible, tragic. Carnal Christians are behaving like they never were saved. That's not much gratitude to God who redeemed you.

Now let me summarize: Christians are positionally spiritual. They can be practically carnal. And that is the case of the Corinthians.

Now he goes a step further and adds at the end of verse 1 this statement: "As unto babes in Christ, I have to treat you because you're babes in Christ?" No. "As, as" again. "As if you were. You people know too much to be treated this way. I'm treating you as babes." Now who is a "babe?" Well, I've heard people say a "babe" is a new Christian. Nowhere in the Scripture is anybody ever called a babe because he is a new Christian. Did you know that? That's right. "Babe" implies spiritual stupidity, ignorance. New Christians could be called "babes", but they wouldn't be called "babes" because they were new Christians. They would be called "babes" because, as new Christians, they didn't know much. See the difference? Because the term "babe," it's even used in Hebrews 5 to speak of an unbeliever who doesn't know much, and they don't know much. But Hebrews 5 even calls unbelievers "babes." These people are Christian because it says "In Christ." The "babes" means they're ignorant, state of spiritual ignorance.

You say, "Well maybe they were new Christians. Go easy on them." No, they were as babes. They weren't new Christians. How long had Paul been there when he was there? 18 months, a year and a half. Do you think a year and a half of Paul's teaching and somebody should still be a babe? No, not when in three years he taught the whole council of God in Ephesians. A year and a half would give you a lot of good stuff. If you were still a babe, you weren't listening. You say "Well maybe when Paul left they never had anybody in the meantime." You know who the pastor was the followed him? Apollos. The Bible says things about Apollos it says about no man. He was so eloquent he was probably above all men in eloquence and teaching of the Word. You say, "Well maybe enough time

hadn't elapsed." Would you believe four and a half to five years since he left? Now maybe some of those people were around for over 5 years, under the ministry of Paul and Apollos. Some of them obviously had met Peter. Some of them had met Christ. And he says "I've gotta talk to you like babies. You are spiritually stupid."

How could they be spiritually stupid if they'd been under all that teaching? Good question, glad you asked. Do you want to know something? If you walk in the flesh long enough, you will shift your spiritual gears into reverse and you will become what James 1:25 calls a "forgetful hearer." And you will literally lose the ability to function on the things you once knew. You will go in reverse. First, neutral, then reverse, backwards. They forgot the things they should have known. Their carnality had stunted their growth. The Word of God they couldn't receive.

You know we like 1 Peter 2:2, "As babes desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow." But you can't get to verse 2 without verse 1, which says, "laying aside all evil." And if you don't lay aside all evil, you're not a receptacle that can contain the truth. You can't receive it. And what happens here, all this walking in the flesh, all this carnality, results in them being as if they were spiritually stupid, even though they were in Christ, even though they were Christians, and even though it had been a long time, they were, because of their carnality, spiritually stupid. Maybe they didn't know these truths, because they'd forgotten them, or maybe they'd just forgotten the ability to apply them. Have you ever faced that? You know, I've gotten into a lot of counseling where you say to people "Do you know the Spirit?" "Well yeah, but I just can't seem to apply it." Spiritual stupidity. The practice didn't match the position. They were carnal; they were manifesting terrible immaturity, even though they were in Christ. This is really a strong rebuke.

Now, Paul goes further. Verse 2: "I have fed you with milk, not with meat." Solid food, he means. "For to this time you are not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able for you are still carnal." Now here Paul is not really rebuking them at the first of the verse. He's just recalling. He says "You know I've feed you with milk when I first came there. I didn't give you meat, for unto this time you were not able to bear it. But the thing that amazes me is that you're still not able to bear it and you're still carnal. I could expect a little carnality when you were in your infancy right? Having just been saved, you can't expect a guy to know everything. And you know where he's ignorant, Satan's gonna zap him and so he's going to manifest carnality. So I can understand if you were just a spiritual infant and you'd just been saved, you'd have a little carnality, and I gave you some milk and brought you along. But the thing that shocks me is that you still can't handle the meat. Here we are years later, here we are truths later, and you're still on the bottle."

What's amazing, this is so applicable for so many Christians, I tell you. They show up on Sunday morning "ahhhh," want somebody to stick it in, see? They can't feed themselves and they don't want the meat. They like it real simple. Sometimes I hear, and I'm not defaming anybody else, but sometimes I hear sermons that are so simple, they insult you. Sometimes I turn on the television and

I hear sermons that are so simple. Why - I say look at the text and all they get out of that text is superficiality. Man, there's meat in there. You say, "Well, we don't want to get too deep." What they mean is you don't want to study.

Well you know the Catholics felt that way. They don't want to get too deep. They made a distinction in this verse between milk doctrine and meat doctrine. And they said the only thing the people could have was the milk doctrine, and the meat doctrine was for the clergy. And they kept the whole of the Catholic Church in ignorance for centuries.

And then you say, "Well there are other people that feel that we shouldn't tell the new Christians every doctrine. There are some they wouldn't understand." Really? Paul, in Ephesus, in 3 years, taught the whole council of God. Anything that's good to know is good to know by anybody that needs to know it. Anything that's truth is helpful.

What is the difference between a milk and a meat doctrine? There's no difference. What? What you do mean there's no difference. No difference in the doctrine, just a difference in the depth of it. The same thing that's milk to you might be meat to somebody else.

Some of you are new Christians and I can say to a brand new Christian, "Jesus bore our sins, in His own body, on the tree" and a new Christian will say "Jesus bore my sins in His own body" and he'll understand the whole truth, right? You go up to a theologian with a string of degrees, spent all his life studying the Bible, and you say "Jesus Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree" and he goes "_____." He thinks about all kinds of things, the kinosis, the God, man, who was really suffering the separation between the Father and Son, the ascension into Heaven, and while he was there, he thinks about justification, sanctification, atonement, propitiation, and all the terms go running through his mind. That's meat. The same statement to the simplest Christian is the same food the angels feast on. It isn't that there's a difference in the doctrine itself, but in the depth of understanding and depth of perceiving what's behind it, what's beneath it.

And I'm saying when Christianity really gets exciting is when you begin to know the deep things of God that the Spirit searches out. Beloved, look at it in verse 10, and wants to reveal to you. To keep spiritual ignorance is a crime against the Holy Spirit. To get up and do nothing but give milk, milk, milk, milk, you're going to have a whole lot of people with bone disease, spiritual bone disease. They won't even be able to stand on their own 2 feet. You're going to have to haul them in and out on stretchers. And you are insulting the Spirit of God when a guy gets in a pulpit and gives nothing but milk, milk, milk, all the time. He is absolutely ignoring the ministry of the Spirit in divine revelation. It's a crime against the Holy Spirit. I'm sure it grieves Him. In every sermon there ought to be milk and meat and there will be. So we go deep and lose you. You can hang around and stick with the milk while we're gone. We'll be back. I wouldn't do that to the Holy Spirit. If you wonder why sometimes we go deep and we stay in a verse a long time, it's because the Holy Spirit wrote that thing, and in it

is the deep things of God, and I want to give you what He gave me, and you in the Word.

So he says, "When I was with you a few year ago, I expected you to take milk. I can't stand the fact you're still on it." And I can relate to this. I really can. He says, in the end of verse 3, he says: "You are carnal and walking as men. You know you are acting like you are unsaved. This is ridiculous. Prolonged, pitiful, infancy."

I'll tell you, you know, we love the little baby and we think a little baby is terrific, and there's nothing like a little baby. But when you see a 20-year-old person with the mind of a baby, that isn't anything to think highly of. That is a supreme tragedy, isn't it? That breaks your heart. Just exactly how it is spiritually. The saddest thing in the church is to see somebody who has grown up physically and grown along in years in Christianity, and has the mentality of an infant, and never known the deep things of God.

Listen. Spiritual ignorance is the result of carnality. Spiritual ignorance and carnality are tied inseparably together. And here are these people, in their carnality, had absolutely voided the things they were hearing. They didn't even have the receptivity to take them in. They were carnal, and the carnality caused the disease of division. "You are still carnal," he says in verse 3. I can relate to that because I really believe that the greatest tragedy in the church is manifest immaturity from people who know better, who know more, and have been around long enough to be mature. It's a grieving thing. The deep things, the rich things are here. Once you were babies, some of you, and it was good. You were babies. We expected carnal manifestation from babies. You didn't know that much. But really, you're not acting your age now. You've been saved far too long to be on milk. You ought to be feeding yourself. And so much of the ministry, I mean, personal ministry that we have, so much of it is dealing with those who are immature. Not because they're new Christians but because they've been carnal. So Paul tells us the cause of the disease, carnality. "You have division because you're carnal."

Now the symptoms, point 2. Verse 3: "For whereas there is among you," and only two of them are in the best manuscripts here, "envying and strife," or, if you want a different definition, "jealousy and wrangling." What are the symptoms of division? Jealousy and wrangling. Attitude and action. The attitude, jealousy; the action, fighting, wrangling, hassling.

Now, carnality doesn't just cause this particular symptom. When he says "You are carnal because there is envy and strife," you can be carnal and it will manifest itself in other ways, right? Carnality causes many diseases, like cancer. Cancer causes many malfunctions in many ways to many different organs. You can have cancer that is called Leukemia. You can have cancer that's caused Adenocarcinoma. You can have cancer that's called Odd Cell Carcinoma, Basal cell carcinoma, Hepotoma, all of that referring to different organs in which the cancer makes it's attack and having different results. And the same thing is true of carnality. Carnality is a general evil that can attack

different areas. For example, the flesh in Galatians 5 attacks all kinds of areas. It will attack you in your morality, it will attack you in your relationship to other people, factions, seditions, heresies, envying, all that. It will attack you in your behavior, drunkenness, wild parties. It attacks in all different ways and has all different manifestations. One of the ways it attacks, manifesting one style of symptom, is it attacks in the area of envy and strife and produces division. One of the diseases caused by carnality is division in the church, and its tragic.

You know there are people in the church that like that division and who fostered it. They pride themselves on belonging to a certain faction or a certain party. I say this, whenever there is division in the church, it is the manifestation of carnality. Mature Christians rejoice in the total unity of the church. They do everything they can to strive for that unity. They don't ever start little groups that disagree with somebody else. They don't ever polarize around a person over here, while another group polarizes around a person over here. They are totally involved in what the Lord wants, and He wants unity.

Whenever you see division, it's always babies. You know the most selfish people in the world, far and away? Babies. You got one at home? Selfish, isn't he? When he wants it, he wants it now. You go over to the nursery, want an illustration on selfishness. "Mine." Right? One little kid's in the corner with a ball and 8 kids are on top of him. You see it is infantile to be totally self-absorbed.

Carnality manifests itself in selfishness and selfishness is the mother of division. I want it the way I want it. We believe this way. This is our group. See? Division. You're babies. Babies are like that. When you just give milk, milk, milk, milk, you get a whole church full of babies and you got a whole church fighting over their little ball and their blocks. Havoc. You get mature people, and you know what mature people are doing? They're too busy concentrating on God to be worried about everybody's little group.

Verse 4: "One of you is saying, 'I am of Paul,' another 'We're of the Apollos group.' Aren't you carnal? You're operating in the flesh." Division can only happen where there's carnality. Carnal, immature people split over personalities, hero worship. You don't want to get your eyes on personalities. You want to get your eyes on God.

This has been said to me several times, but someone particular said, "Don't you have any fear that in a staff like yours, of capable people, that it will polarize and people will start following people. You know, you'll have a group coming along saying, 'I am of Fred' and another group will say 'I am of Jerry, I am of Lenny or I am of Jack, I am of whatever, I am of Auggie.' Then everything will polarize, see." Well, I suppose it could happen but if it does happen, it will manifest carnality and we know where the problem, so we'll attack it.

Those kind of factions are manifestations of carnality with regression to spiritual infancy and ignorance. You know why? Because men aren't the issue, you see? God is the issue. And if we all worship one God, there can't be any division. There can only be unity. And that leads us to the cure, verse 5-9. It's going to be a quick cure. That's the best kind, isn't it? You don't want to take a long time getting well.

Here's the antidote for the disease of division. Simple statement: Recognize that we all glorify one God, right? Get your eyes back on the one God. The human instrument is irrelevant. Watch verse 5, and the word should be "what" rather than "who" here: "What is Paul, and what is Apollos, but diaconoi, servants, by whom you believe even as the Lord gave to every man." You know what he says here? In Chapter 1 verse 13, he says, "Did Paul die for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" What he was implying was: what did they ever do for you? Here he says they did nothing, he says they are nothing. They are diaconoi.

You know what that originally meant? Busboy. Yeah, table waiter, clean up the dishes. You know what we are? Spiritual busboys. Don't call me Reverend MacArthur, call me busboy. I'm a busboy. We want to exalt the instrument. You ever gone into a great city square in a great city in America and seen a statue of a busboy? I never have. Always a General or President. Oh nobody makes statues of busboys. Well, don't exalt ministers. You see, when you say "Well I go to John MacArthur's church, well I go..." you miss the point, friend. We are servants. We are servants through whom you believed. You know, if you get the water of life, you don't glorify the faucet. We are tools, we are channels. Can you imagine to see the world _____ a great artist, so they would paint a picture of his brush? You see you don't honor the man; you honor God. And as long as the church keeps its focus on God, everything is okay. As soon as we polarize to man, that is a manifestation of carnality, because you are functioning in the flesh rather than the Spirit, because the Spirit would point you to God.

He says this: "We're ministers by whom you believe. We're just agents, even as the Lord gave to every man. The only reason I am what I am is Lord gave it to me. The only reason you came to Christ through me is that's the way the Lord designed it. Don't honor me; I'm just being used as a tool." "I have planted," verse 6, He uses an agricultural illustration, "I have planted, Apollos came along and watered, but God gave the increase. Don't honor me; don't honor Apollos. Honor God." No more comparisons of ministers. No more saying "Well this one - well we go to this one - and this one isn't as good." Wait a minute, wait a minute. The things that are happening are happening where there are faithful men. You have to assume that because sin can violate a man's ministry and ruin it. But where you have two faithful men with differing ministries, it's God's decision. It's not that one of them is better than the other.

And so he says, "I plant, Apollos waters, God gives the increase." So, verse 7, "Neither is he that plants anything or he that waters." We are nothing people. Get it. Absolutely nothing. That's why I

so reject titles. The Revered Holy Father, whatever, or Bishop somebody, or the Exalted and Honorable. No. Just plain ole busboy will do. We're nothing. We are nothing, it says it in verse 7: "Neither is he that plants anything, or even waters. It's God that gives the increase." If anything happens, who did it? God did it. "And if anything, in this ministry, you focus on God," he says, "not on men."

And he says -if you think Paul and Apollos are fighting, look at verse 8: "He that plants and waters are one." We're in agreement with each other. We're working together. "And every man will receive his own reward according to his own labor." You don't need to honor us. We'll get our honor from whom? From God. He will reward every man according to His own success. Is that what it says? Your rewards aren't based on your success. They're based on your what? Labor. And some guys work awful hard and have little success.

A missionary in India for 35 years saw one convert, but God will pay him for his labor in eternity, not for his success. And there are of people that have all kinds of things happening. Maybe they don't labor like that man. "So," he says, "don't think we're fighting, we're one and the Lord's going to take care of rewarding. You don't need to pass on the laurels, God will do it." Get it, folks.

Verse 9, "We are just working together with God. You are God's field and you are God's building, not ours." Do you see what he's saying? He's saying "Get your attention off us, on Him." And believe me, if you really get your attention on Him, not only will eliminate division, it will eliminate carnality.

Let's pray. While your heads are bowed just a moment before we close, there may be some of you this morning who do not know our Lord, and you know you're not a spiritual man, led by the Spirit, controlled by the Spirit, redeemed by Christ, but you desire to be. Why don't you express that, silently in your heart, who hears every unspoken word and reads every thought. And just say "Lord God, I desire through Jesus Christ and His death for me, to follow Him, to receive the Spirit, to be led of the Spirit, controlled by the Spirit." God will respond and do it.

Some of you as Christians have been walking in the flesh; you've been manifesting carnality. Why don't you pray and ask God to deliver you from that, to transform your life into the walk in the Spirit that he intended it to be all along, consistent with your position, who you are.

Father thank you for our time this morning, for the clear word of God. We pray that you'll bind it to our hearts, as frontlets to thy law, were bound to Israel of old, to the priests, that it might be constantly before us and in our mouths, when we stand and sit, and walk in the way and lie down. We pray that your truth will govern our behavior, and our lives, for your glory. We pray that if there be any division, you'll heal the disease, that might be honest, objective, understanding of the cause of that division, carnality, and there might be a refocusing on you and you alone. We commit ourselves and the Word to you, to be used. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

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