

Lesson No. 39

DIVISION IN CORINTH

References:

Notes For Servants:

- 1.
- 2.

Objectives:

General:

Specific:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Instructions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Bible Verse:

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”

(1 Cor 3:6-7)

Lesson:

DIVISION IN CORINTH

ST. PAUL IN CORINTH

St. Paul, the Great Apostle, taught and preached in many parts of the world. He made several journeys and visited many churches. During his second journey, he visited Athens and Corinth. He stayed in Corinth eighteen months. St. Paul had a vision from God telling him : "Do not be afraid, for I have many people in this city". Many people in Corinth became, Christians through his words. The people of the city loved him and they liked to hear his teaching and preaching.

After a while Paul left them, and another Apostle named Appolos came to Corinth. He also

preached and taught. Appolos was eloquent and many people in Corinth liked his teaching and preaching. Very soon, The Church of Corinth was, divided into two groups. One group called itself "The followers of Paul the Apostle", and the other group was known as "The Group of Appolos".

ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

Some members of the Church of Corinth were very sad of the split in their Church. The family of Chloe, a good Christian lady, reported the dissensions in the Church of Corinth to St. Paul. He was very sad and immediately wrote his first letter to them. This letter is a part of the New Testament. In the first chapter, he says to them, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1:10)

St. Paul explains to them that their divisions are caused by pride, jealousy and lack of love. He said that they are not behaving as true Christians but like ordinary men. For the true Christians should love one another in humility and open heart. But when each one thinks of his own group or of his own work as if it belongs to him alone. then the quarrel begins. He will be proud of his own work, and will be jealous of the work which the others are doing. He will envy the others and criticises their work. He will end by becoming a fanatic person who accepts only the things that are in accordance with his own desires. "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Cor. 3 :3)

When we become spiritual persons, then we shall be able to give the Glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in any good work done in His name, for the building of the Church His temple. Even when we differ from one another in our views, each of us will express his opinion with full respect to the views of the others.

GOD'S FIELD, GOD'S BUNDING

The Church is God's field. It does not belong to any human person. The Church leaders and teachers are workers in this field. God has given each of them a special mission in this field. One has to plant the seeds, another puts the water to the plants, a third takes care of the plants everyday and others collect the harvest, and so on. The same thing in the Church, there are Patriarchs, bishops, priests, deacons, preachers, lay leaders and administrators and so on. The Church needs all of them. Each of them has a special service to do in the field of God. Each of them is doing his work, and each one will receive his wages from God according to the work he has done in the Church and for others. (1 Cor. 3 :3-9).

We are God's building. This building is not built of bricks and cement, but of the spirit. The Christians are the bricks in the buildings They are cemented to one another and unified in one building by the Word of God. The solid foundation for the building is Our Lord Jesus Christ. The workers in the Church are building on this foundation. The building is not their own. They are only the builders whom God has commissioned to work in His temple, and gave each of them a special mission to do in Ms Church.

THE CHURCH FOUNDED BY JESUS

When the Lord Jesus came to our world, he meant to reform what sin has done to man. Some of the effects of sin were individualism, disputes and pride. The picture of humanity at the tower of Babel was a clear model for the effect of sin on man. Man in his pride wanted to build a tower with

its top in the heavens, and God came down to confuse the tongues that no one could understand his brother.

On the Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, as the apostles were gathered with one accord praying, the Holy Spirit filled all of them. They started speaking tongues. Each one heard them speaking in his own language. Contrary to Babel, these tongues gave a model for unity. The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul. Jesus gave them His sacred body and blood, to live on this new covenant, the covenant of union, friendship and love.

LET US PRAY FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Every Christian has an important task to do with others to reconcile the conflicts between different Churches and inside each church. We must grow the spirit of self-denial, knowing that the church belongs to God and not to us. Everyone of us is given Ms little share to do in the church. We can reach unity only through the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. We need to share in the prayers with humility before God. Then we shall know that ft is good to work. We should also join in the annual prayers for Christian Unity which takes place allover the world during the month of January each year.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were the causes of the split in the Church of Corinth ?
2. How did St. Paul deal with this split and what are the principles he laid for Christian Unity?
3. How is the apostolic Church considered a blessed model for unity with no divisions?
4. What are some of the signs of conflict and division ill our churches today? How could we overcome them ?
5. What can you do in order to share in reconciling any conflicts inside your Church?

Conclusion:

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(1 Cor 3:6-7)