

A House divided will not stand - (is there not a cause)

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Date: 06 November 2022

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- [0 : 00] Greetings to each of you this morning. It's good to be here. Abraham Lincoln once said that a nation divided cannot stand.
- And I think that was right after or during at the close maybe of the Civil War. A nation divided cannot stand.
- And a lot of people have repeated that after him. But that's not original with him, that thought. Let's turn to Matthew chapter 12 and see where, at least in one place, where that thought came from.
- It was by our Savior, Jesus. In Matthew 12, verse 22.
- Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.
- [1 : 18] And all the people were amazed and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils.
- And Jesus knew their thoughts and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, And every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.
- There it is. Long before Abraham Lincoln. Then he went on to say, And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself.
- How shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.
- But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or how else?
- [2 : 27] Or else how can one that, one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then will he spoil his house?
- You know, there's a couple of things here. One of them is, Even the kingdom of darkness can't be divided to be effective.
- Even the devil doesn't work against himself. And I heard the statement this week about a house divided.
- That's why I cannot stand. And this is, I guess, the burden of my message this morning. And it's not because I think we are divided.
- I want to be clear with that. But that it's a tactic or a strategy of the enemy to divide us so that we can't stand.
- [3 : 40] And so it's more a warning or a maybe just to be reminded this thing of division versus having unity.
- Let's look at some of the ways that the devil will try. In this last verse I read, the devil will try to bind the strong man so that he can bring division.

How are some ways? Who is the strong man? What's he talking about? Jesus gave the illustration of a man in a house and that the enemy wants to come and spoil or take his goods or destroy the house.

But he doesn't do so until he first binds that strong man. I'm not sure exactly what Jesus had in mind there. There's different ways of looking at it.

But I would say that for one thing it would be the man of the house. It would be the one in authority.

[4 : 51] The one that's supposed to be in charge. Satan knows that it's hard to get into that house without finding the strong man or the man in charge.

Some of the ways he might try to do that is to get him to be focused on the wrong things. Things that will make him weak.

Maybe things that are, maybe it's work or just wrong things. To weaken that person, that man.

And then comes the attack because this man is bound up. The next verse there in Matthew, verse 30, is he that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

In other words, if we're not with Christ, if we're not in tune with Christ, and we don't have the vision of Christ, and we're not walking with Christ, then we're against him. Automatically, Jesus says.

[6 : 13] We're just against him. If you're not with me, you're against me. And if you're not gathering with me, then you're scattering abroad. The devil came to kill, to steal, and destroy.

And he has a strategy with a purpose. And he'll do everything he can to bring division into the kingdom of God. Into our marriages, our churches, our families.

And what are some of these tactics? We need to be aware and awake of Satan's snares and purposes to defeat him through the name of Jesus.

We're on the winning side. The devil knows that. But he wants to know if we know it. We're on the winning side.

How many homes are destroyed because Satan has bound the strong man in the marriage, the one that's to be the leader? There is no unity in the marriage which always, when there's no unity in the marriage, it always comes from selfishness.

[7 : 32] The house is divided and cannot stand. How can this be restored in a case like that? How can unity and strength be restored in a marriage?

Only by repentance and dealing with self can we have the blessing of God. We heard about that blessing of God this morning.

Only then, by repentance, by brokenness, by humility, then Jesus will fight on our behalf. And remember, a house divided cannot stand.

Pride is one of those chains that the enemy uses that the enemy uses to bind up the strong man. And I'm using the word strong man because that's what Jesus used.

We might not always feel strong as men, but we are called to be leaders. We're called to stand in the gap. Now for the church, how will a church be able to stand when the house or the body is divided?

[8 : 45] Where the vision is so different, or maybe there is no vision, how will that church stand? Jesus said, it cannot stand.

And He's right. Jesus is always right. What He has spoken is right. It's true.

There's no way around that. If Jesus said that a house divided cannot stand, then that's just how it is. We can try as we might. We can fight for it.

We can try to make it stand. But I have to think of the illustration also of the house that's built on the rock and the house that's built on the sand.

We know that the sand was the foolish man when it was built on the sand. That was foolish. And great was the fall of it.

[9 : 49] If there is a division in the church, then the worst thing, one of the worst things that we can do is to pretend that it doesn't exist.

And I'm not talking about just little things that we need to have grace with each other and overlook. I'm not talking about that. You know, where we have maybe different personalities and different ways of looking at the same thing and so on.

But when there is division, one of the worst things we can do is to ignore it and to just pretend like it's not there. It's better to stop everything and do whatever it takes to find unity.

Even if it's painful, and it usually is, but unity must be required for a church to stand strong. Too many in the church have taken up the sword and are fighting each other.

They've taken up the sword, but they've laid down the cross in their lives. That is without a vision.

[11 : 15] Only when we embrace the cross is our vision correct. We can't have a vision without the cross, not a spiritual one.

We'll look at that. We'll look at the cross a little bit later. Here's the shortest, or one of the shortest chapters in the Bible, but a very powerful one.

I want to read it. Psalm 133. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments as the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.

For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore. The Lord commands his blessing where there's unity.

Did you get that? Without the blessing of the Lord, what's the point anyway? Without God's blessing, there is nothing.

[12 : 30] It's useless. But here we see that the Lord commanded his blessing. We must have purpose in our hearts when doing battle against our enemy.

We too must have a strategy and a vision. What is our cause? David, a man after God's own heart, asked that question.

This morning we heard about David and I was so blessed with that song, Only a Boy Named David. I was like, wow, Brother Dan, I don't think we talked about what we're sharing today.

But I almost came up to put this picture up then, but I'll put it up now. It's just a very simple little picture of David and Goliath and the question that we find in Samuel, is there not a cause?

My wife informed me that our printer's out of ink, almost. Had enough, but it didn't quite get the big guy.

[13 : 57] Goliath kind of ran out of ink there, but you can see his silhouette. So, children, you see how big he is compared to little David. Five little stones he took, put one in the sling, right?

I read somewhere that the tip of that spear weighed 15 pounds. Just the tip.

Can you imagine going up against that in battle? But David had a vision. David had a cause.

Let's look at some of those things. Let's turn to 1 Samuel. Chapter 17 there. We could read the whole story there, but I think I'll just start in verse 29.

It says here, 1 Samuel 17, verse 28 actually. And Eliab, his eldest brother, heard when he spake unto the men.

[15:10] And Eliab's anger was kindled against David. And he said, Why camest thou down hither? And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? He rebuked his little brother.

He said, I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart. For thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. So David was supposed to take care of his dad's sheep.

He was too young and too small to be in the army of God. And his brother just chastened him or rebuked him, I guess. He said, So what are you doing here?

Who did you leave those sheep with? You left your responsibility. But didn't David's dad tell him to go check on his brothers? Seems like he did.

And he also said, I know that you're proud and you're naughty and you came to watch the battle. So what was David's response? What have I done now? Is there not a cause?

[16:20] And he turned from him toward another and spake after the same manner. And the people answered him again after the former manner. And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them to Saul, the king.

And he sent for him. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him, talking about this giant. But thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for thou art but a youth. And he is a man of war from his youth.

And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep. And there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after him and smote him and delivered it out of his mouth.

And when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and smote him and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear. And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

[17:34] He threw in the uncircumcised Philistine. Just to point out, he's none of God's. He doesn't belong to, you know. He's on the wrong side. David said, Moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.

And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee. And Saul armed David with his armor, and he put on a helmet of brass upon his head.

Also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armor, and as he assayed to go, for he had not proved it, or he had not tested it.

And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them. And David put them off of him. And he took his staff in his hand and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in a shepherd's bag, which he had even in a script.

And his sling was in his hand, and he drew near the Philistine. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David, and the man that bare the shield went before him.

[18:57] And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth and ruddy and of a fair countenance.

And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field.

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, yeah, with a fifteen-pound tip, and with a spear, and with a shield.

But I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee and take thine head from thee, and will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give him into your hands, into our hands.

[20 : 27] And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and he ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

And David put his hand in his bag, took thence a stone and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine and slew him. But there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran and stood upon the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of the sheath thereof and slew him and cut off his head therewith.

And when the Philistine saw their champion was dead, they fled. What a story of a young man with faith in God.

with faith in God. I come to you, how? In the name of the Lord. You have this power.

[21 : 44] You have this strength. You are mighty. The whole army was shaken. They would draw back daily. But one man came.

I call him a man because he was indeed a man. He came in the name of the Lord. He had a cause.

What was his cause? Have you ever thought about that? We should read Psalms more. We should read Psalm 19 more and see what was the cause David had, the purpose in his life.

It wasn't just that day that he had a cause all of a sudden. No, he was a man that had a heart after God's heart. That's the kind of person he was. So this going down and taking care of this Philistine, that was just his life.

That's just who he was. He didn't all of a sudden become strong. No, he just walked with God daily. Even when he was just taking care of his dad's sheep, he walked with God.

[22 : 57] And so when the giant stood before him, it was just, oh, there's that guy. You know, it wasn't different than, like he was telling Saul, it wasn't different than when he saw a lion or a bear.

Maybe those items were more scary than the giant. But that was his life. He knew his purpose in life.

He knew who he was serving. That mattered most. There were definitely some virtues that David had. I want to look at a couple of them. One of them was that he was a very obedient young man.

David's brothers were in Saul's army. And when his father commanded him to take supplies to his brother, he took and went as Jesse commanded. That's what it says in chapter 17, verse 17.

David was also punctual. For the next day, he rose up early in the morning to go to his brethren, in verse 20. It was David's obedience and his promptness that providentially put him at the front to hear Goliath's challenge.

[24 : 16] David was also conscientious in his duties. For when he left for Israel's encampment, he ensured his responsibilities were covered and left the sheep with the keeper.

So his brother's accusations were completely vain. He took care of the sheep. And his carriage, he kept in the hand of the keeper of the carriage.

He was a responsible young man is what we're saying. He wasn't just out to show off. He was also zealous.

And he was a picture of a dedicated, determined servant. Four times, David is described as running his duties.

David was selfless. He was the youngest of eight sons, and he was often overlooked and slighted. In spite of his brother's petty jealousies and mistreatments that he suffered, his greeting to his brothers expressed a genuine concern for their well-being.

[25 : 34] He didn't allow or let or allow the accusations and the disgust that his brothers had, their jealousies.

He didn't allow that to determine who he is. He was just a good young man that loved God, that had God.

Wow, isn't it amazing? And you know, I'm not here to lift up David higher than we should, but he was a man after God's own heart. It's a work that God did in his life.

So let's give God the glory for that. Now let's remember the words of Paul I think it was to the Ephesians when Paul said to submit to God to resist the devil and he will flee from us.

We must do that. If we want to have unity, if we want to stand, we must resist the devil. I was also thinking of this this morning of how amazing it is to see how much purpose and effort people put into their job or their business, the amount of time men put into planning and trying to figure out how to make more money.

[27 : 07] And people have become very clever by simply putting their minds to the task and staying focused on their vision or their goal. And it's okay to give it our best shot.

I'm not saying it's a bad thing. In fact, we're called to do everything with our might but as unto the Lord. Here's something that I found this morning.

I actually preached this in 2019. For you hunters, Proverbs 12, 27, The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting, but the substance of a diligent man is precious.

A good hunter knows the importance to have a plan, a goal, and a purpose. He does everything intentionally. The reason I'm sharing this is for a hunting season.

I thought it might fit. He does everything intentionally. A new hunter, if he is smart, will watch an experienced hunter and ask all the questions he can.

[28 : 21] Wow. If only Christians would show as much interest and passion for living the Christian life and all godliness as that of a hunter or a climber or a sportsman.

If that would happen, the church would be alive and the devil and the world would be shaking. God would do a work in our hearts.

Lord, would you do a work in our hearts? Would you once again light a fire in our midst that burns brightly? We need the fire of God so desperately in our lives.

And what is hindering this? Is it God's fault? Is God no longer being faithful? Has he forgotten us? Or are we happy with just a little spark now and then?

But no real passion and desire, no lasting joy that's so powerful and unspeakable and full of glory? Many in the church have no real purpose.

[29 : 32] Just getting by for another Sunday. The devil came to kill, steal, and destroy. He doesn't care so much on whether you quote or quote a Christian.

As long as you are not an effective spirit-filled Christian. He knows that we are, that if we are just a nominal Christian, he can destroy us and eventually deceive us.

He is going about as an angel of light in churches trying to bring shame to the name of Christ through well-meaning people. He knows that if he can bring a mixture love of God, but also love of the world, that he will put us to sleep spiritually.

He wants us to fall asleep and be ineffective in God's kingdom. Those are some things that I had shared three years ago. Another thought is the effort that men and women put into climbing.

Mount Everest, it's been a while since I looked at that, but it's a very grueling and very complicated adventure, if you want to call it that.

[31 : 01] The amount of effort and training that people go through, and many simply don't make it, and some die trying, but yet others try it anyway.

people do really stupid things for a name or an adventure, and if animals can think this way, you'd wonder what they think of humans trying to do something just to get a selfie, be on top of Mount Everest or something very dangerous.

things. But you know as a church, we're climbing also, and the climb can be difficult at times, but we have a captain with us to guide us and to keep us.

It's safe with him. But we need to have a purpose and a vision to fear God, and to it's easy to follow other people and get off track.

It's okay to follow others if they're truly following Christ and his word, but we must be careful. One wrong turn can get us started in the wrong direction.

[32 : 38] So what is our cause? As I was thinking about this this morning, what's our cause? What's our purpose? It just hit me.

It must be Jesus. It must be Jesus. Paul said in Galatians 2.20, he said, I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

In Corinthians, he said, and I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech. If you want to turn to that, you can. It's 1 Corinthians 2.

There's several verses there. 1 Corinthians 2, verse 1. I know some of you like to turn to these scriptures, and that's a blessing. I'm going to start over.

[33 : 47] And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you.

This is the verse I wanted. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Paul had a cause.

He had a vision. He had a purpose. And that was to know Christ. Verse 3. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words, of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of spirit and power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Is that our cause? Is that our vision? that we would know Christ.

[35 : 03] Another place says to know him and to make him known. But is it all about Jesus? Is it about Christ? Is it about his word? About being faithful like David was?

Obedient? He understood who his authority was. He became one of the probably the best king ever.

Other than Jesus, of course. But on earth, he was a great man. Yes, with failures, but his heart was set.

It was toward God. He had a purpose. What's your purpose this morning? What's your cause? What makes you tick?

What excites you? Is it the things of God? God? Or is it to do something big in life?

[36 : 00] To make a name or to become famous? I want to go to John chapter 10 yet.

I don't have a long message today. John 10, very familiar scripture there.

Verse 7, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy.

I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. Jesus came to give us life, to give it more abundantly, more than ever, more than ever before, more than we can imagine.

[37 : 28] He came to give us that life, that we might have life. He said, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Hasn't he done that for you and me? This morning as we were here just worshiping and going through those songs, it just ministered to me how unworthy of a person that I am.

And thinking about the good shepherd and giving his life for the sheep, we know his voice. We could keep reading here, but I think I'll just leave it there.

except for verse 14. It says, I am the good shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine. We know him. If you're a Christian, you know him.

If you don't know the Son, then you're not a Christian. You might act like one, but Jesus said that he knows us and that we know him.

[38 : 35] But we're so unworthy to have a Savior like this, to have our sins blotted out, to be forgiven. And I just want to say this morning that may Jesus Christ be our cause.

May he be everything. And we can confidently go through life like David did. And if something comes up, just say, well, isn't there a cause? Isn't there a reason for how we live?

And the answer is yes. it's Jesus. It's Christ. He's all we need. That song we sang, all I need. He's our wisdom, our righteousness, and our power.

May Jesus be your cause. As we stand together in unity and do battle against the enemy, it's not okay to be divided because it won't work.

In the spirit of meekness and humility, there is strength. And we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

[39 : 46] May it be Jesus. May that term, is there not a cause, and the term, may it be Jesus, stick with us this week.

Hallelujah. May it be Jesus. I'm so unworthy this morning, too, as I was thinking of children, and I know that many of us are blessed with children.

And children, if you want to know, when I say children, I'm talking about you older ones, young men, young ladies. If you want to know how to honor your parents, follow Jesus.

Give your all to Him. there's nothing you can do that more honors a father and mother that I can think of. Sometimes, young people, we can think of some, have parents that maybe aren't following Christ, or maybe they think they are, but they're in a religion.

And so, for us to follow Christ doesn't seem right to them. Maybe they're very worldly, and you want to just obey Christ, follow the Word of God, and they think you're in a religious, there's people that think just by being part of a church, you're in a religious cult or something.

[41 : 22] There's that side. But you can't honor them more than obey Christ. Same way when they're in a religious background. I remember the freedom that I found when I realized that, that to honor my dad the best, I need to follow Christ, even if he doesn't agree with how I follow Christ.

You see what I'm saying? That honors God, and it honors our parents. They may say it doesn't, but it does. in the end it does.

And I'm so blessed to have children that walk with God this morning. I was just humbled and blessed by that, just to think of my older children deciding to follow Jesus.

And I honor and respect them for that. God. I'm so blessed to have you. I'm so blessed to have you. I'm so blessed to have you. I'm so blessed to have you.

And I was, as I was thinking of that this morning, and just meditating on that, and it just makes you feel so unworthy to know that your children want to follow God, too.

[42 : 41] That's our God. That's God. It's not something because I'm a great person. I know that. But God is good.

May Christ be our all. May He be our vision. There's many other scriptures that we could have looked at today, but I think I'll just end with that. So let's pray.