

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION?

Part Three: March 24, 2021

The Threats to Unity

- **The peaceful unity of the early church was disturbed by:**

- Internal strife
 - False _____
 - Honest disagreements
 - Divisive leaders
 - A.k.a. “wolves”
 - Not _____!
 - See Acts 4:23-33: _____
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The Need for Separation

- **Where are we today?**

- Threats to Spirit-filled unity have _____ over the centuries.
- Today, Christianity has reached the full _____ predicted by our Lord in the parable of the mustard seed.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

- **Matt. 13:31-32:**

- **Two main characteristics of Christianity in the last days:**

- _____ growth
 - Many branches of the tree
- Devilish _____
 - Birds in the branches

Divided Growth

- **“...when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, ...”**

- Two specific growth predictions:
 - _____ tree of the garden.
 - Christianity by far the largest world religion with 2.1 billion adherents.
 - Next largest is Islam with 1.5 billion adherents.
 - Many splits, schisms, and divisions.
 - Idea of a tree implies spreading, _____ growth.
 - Mark 4:32: _____
 - Both have been fulfilled.
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Devilish Doctrines

- **“...so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”**
 - Prediction of doctrinal _____:
 - Birds of the air
 - In the parables, a symbol for the _____ and his demons
 - See Matt. 13:4, 19: _____

 - “Fowls” = “birds” = “the wicked one”
 - Luke 8:5, 12: _____

 - Mark 4:13: _____

 - The parable of the sower serves as a “_____” for understanding other parables.
 - 1 Tim. 4:1-3: _____

 - This has also been fulfilled.
 - Some branches a _____ of false teaching, others a response to false teaching.

The Need for Separation

- **In such an environment, the practice of ecclesiastical separation is both good and necessary.**
- **A paradox:**
 - _____ is good and God’s will for His people,
 - But _____ is also good and God’s will for His people.
- **Why? Because real unity is based upon our _____ in the Spirit.**
 - “I in them, and Thou in Me...”
 - “Christ is all, and in all.” (Col 3:11)
- **Ecclesiastical separation is a prerequisite to:**
 - Genuine spiritual _____ in the local church.
 - _____ with God and our brethren.
 - Personal, practical sanctification as believers.
 - See 2 Cor. 6:14-18: _____

Concluding Thoughts

- **What we believe really does matter.**
 - In an age when many are “departing from the faith,” we must be diligent to “_____ for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”;
 - And to _____ our unity solidly on the foundation of the received Word of God.
 - John 17:17: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
- **Are you personally practicing the principle of separation as it is described in 2 Cor. 6:14-18?**
 - Avoiding unequal _____?
 - Staying away from the unfruitful works of darkness?
 - Touching not the _____ thing?