

On church splits - Jesus did not promise us a perfect world!
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Jesus gave us His perfect love – He did not promise us a perfect world. He said you will have tribulation (trouble or difficulty) ... (*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John 16:33 kjv* and in the niv: "*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*") Do you believe Him, today?

The Lord has permitted two congregations to emerge. Now TWICE as many people can be reached for Christ. What difference does it make whether we are in THE BIG CHURCH or in a small *al qaeda* prison cell with a knife at the throat? What kind of witness does the observing world, including muslim friends, receive from our behavior when things do not “go our way?”

Years ago, during a church dispute, when a very experienced and seasoned missionary was asked, “Who is right? Whose side are YOU on?” Dear Cora put her hand on my wife’s arm, looked her in the eyes and asked, “Dearie, is it better to be “right” and to ‘WIN’ or is it better to be the oil of healing?” Perhaps Jesus is asking all of us the same question today.

May the oil of healing restore, once again, the oil of gladness in the heart of all of you, beloved friends, who are experiencing this time of stress and spiritual growth. This is a wonderful, real, “life-time” opportunity, directly from the Lord Jesus, to grow UP, and to mature. Until we experience pain, injustice and suffering, and learn to **forgive** as He forgave us, all our words about love, forgiveness and grace are merely hollow, clanging noises, (*1 Corinthians 13:1*) and our listeners know it!

We have no choice. The Master requires us to learn to love, and to forgive. GROW into maturity, dear friends, by learning how to forgive others who have caused you, or someone you love, pain (*Father, forgive them – they do not know what they are doing. Luke 23:34*). Do more than simply move “on,” move UP!

Look UP and move UP to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Do not just “slide past” this situation. Accept it as His test of your heart and your obedience to HIM. Face the test. Let the Lord cleanse and mend you with His love, no matter how painful or difficult it is. An infected wound is always painful to clean, but failure to clean it causes you more harm, possibly loss of an infected limb, or even of life itself. If you have the infection, you are the one who suffers. What do you want to lose during this experience?

If we do not face ourselves and let the Lord clean up our reactions (not OTHER people’s reactions) we may find ourselves smiling and saying “I have moved on, good day, and Praise the Lord!” while there is still hatred and bitterness in the heart. Would Jesus then say: "*I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!* *Matthew 7:23 niv*, (*kjv: “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*)

The MISSION is the **good** news. As long as we are bitter and angry, we have no good news to share, and our faith is merely “another” among all powerless religions. When we have learned how to love and to forgive, we have a powerful and meaningful message to share, regardless how we learned it. What message is yours today? One of God’s power, made great in our weakness, (“*...my power is made perfect in weakness. ...*” *2 Corinthians 12:9*) or one of man’s power, which denies the power of God?

Whenever judgment day comes for each of us, will Jesus listen to our fussy protests about one another, or will He say: “Well done, good and faithful servant. You learned, you grew up in the Truth, and you have produced fruit. Like Steven, you ‘got it!’ Now, take your inheritance...”

I want to hear those words on that day. *Et tu?*

Jay <°///< "*His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*” *2 Peter 1:3 niv*