

Hebrews 4:12-13

The Divisive Word

There is a general lack of clarity about the purpose of God's Word in our lives and in the world at large among many who call themselves Christian. Many believe that the word exists to be a part of what we use to decide what to do, how to do and why to do... this grossly understates the case. The Word of God ALONE defines those things, it is the final authority and destroys all other authorities. It is the very voice of God to us. It is alive in our hands and in our hearts, and it is powerful. The Word is that which shows us truth and that which shows us the lies we tell ourselves. The Word of God is the ONLY revelation of God to His people (remembering that Jesus is the Word incarnate) and no other declaration will be given, nor can be heeded. With this kind of authority over us we need to understand that the first thing the Word will do in us, is divide us.

I. Divides us From ourselves

a. Sharper than a sword

The physical things that can be done to us are really of no import. They can last a few decades at most then they end forever... the Spiritual, however, last for eternity. This is ALWAYS true. We need to remember what Jesus said about the comparison.

Luke 12.4-5.

What matters, what ALWAYS matters is what God says, thinks and does. Nothing else is of any real consequence.

b. Piercing to the core –

when the Word begins its work in us we will find that nothing can stop it. It drives into us as if we were nothing, for when we stand in the light of God's word for judgement we ARE nothing. The Word pierces us,

- i. Soul and Spirit - the difference between the flesh and the life of the Spirit in us, showing us what is of the flesh, and what is of God who has shown us truth.
 - ii. Joint and Marrow - where we live and act, and where the secret inner parts of us lie. The marrow is the heart of the bone, it is hidden away, but it gives its life to the bone, and the life of the bone is in the marrow. The word reveals to us why we do what we do, what our motives are, what our real desires are that drive us in our actions...
 - iii. Thought and intent - then at the very core of us the word lays bare our very thoughts, and if that weren't deep enough it shows us the truth of our intentions. It lays us open, layer by layer until there is nothing left, nowhere to run, nowhere to hide.
- c. We are accountable for its truth. We will give and account for how we responded to His revealed Word. I say all that to say this. If we

want to please God then we need to do something with this ministry of the Word in us. We must respond to it in a fashion that is consistent with what the Word does and is. Our relationship to the Word must be clearly and accurately defined if we are to live the Christian life in a way that honors God. We do NOT get the prerogative to opt in and out of parts of God's instructions as it pleases our flesh. Our response to the Word of God can be summed up in a single, powerful, loaded, divisive word...

SLAVE

d. We must position ourselves to obey. If we belong to Jesus Christ, we have no proper position to His Word but that of slave. He speaks, we MUST obey.

- Our opinion matters not at all
- Our preferences matter less than nothing
- Our excuses matter even less.

We must intentionally position ourselves to the Word in such a way that we do not argue, reason, explain away or otherwise disregard and disobey.

We have only one set of choices –

Obedience or consequence

II. Divides us from Culture

- a. There is no part of our cultural conversation that is not defined for us by the Word of God, by the TRUTH. Thus our problem with this is twofold...

We don't know it.

We don't like it

Proverbs 9.6,10

"Leave your simple ways and live,
And walk in the way of insight.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
And knowledge of the Holy One IS insight..."

Simple ways, simple company, simple man... all lead to death. There are endless ways to live so as to die, but there is ONLY ONE path that leads to wisdom. There is only one path that leads to life. It is the way of the Lord, the knowledge of the Holy One, the fear of the Lord. Life, Wisdom, Insight all are the same stuff - all are the manifest fruit of knowing God, and committing to walk in the WAY (singular) that He has decreed... This is the calling that is upon all mankind, but it is the requirement that is upon all who would belong to God. Any man who says on one hand "I am a Christian" while on the other says that "I do not have to obey the Bible" is lying. He is NOT a Christian, he does not follow God. If obedience to God is not at least the objective, then a relationship with God is not possible. Jesus said it this way –

Matthew 7.21-27

To declare yourself to be a follower of Jesus - to call Him Lord - and then to not obey is to actively seek the ruin of your life and all you build.

b. Abortion. This means that when the culture says "a woman has the right to murder her child, it is her body and no one can tell her what to do with it" our response does not have to please them, it has to please God by being in agreement with what He says.

i. He says:

Psalm 10.8-18 –

the wicked sits in the "lurking places", in the "secret places he murders the innocent"; that his "eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless". Is it possible to argue that there is anyone more helpless or innocent than an unborn child?

ii. The straw man of "victims of rape and incest" is always the first smoke bomb thrown, followed, almost as an afterthought by "the life of the mother" - but consider this simple question, if those were the only abortions allowed, would a billion dollar industry not implode under its own weight? Make no mistake about it,

abortion is an industry that produces death. It produces it on the front end by vilifying any attempt to teach sexual purity, the intentional, systematic deconstruction of all moral instruction about human sexuality is designed to produce pregnant women who are sure they "need" abortions. The governmental rewarding of this amoral belief about sexuality with monetary compensation adds pressure to the argument while ensuring that there remains a steady stream of women who can all be culturally pressured to abort their children.

1. I read a rant yesterday about "predatory Christian groups" in Manhattan, KS who offer counsel to young pregnant women. They are "predatory" because they will tell you about the Bible instead of offering you counsel to abort and providing contraceptives. The entire perspective can be summed up in this manner.
“Agree with me or you are predatory and evil.”

2. This kind of argument sways people's minds, because we want people to like us and not say mean things about us... but more it works because people don't have their minds made up about what it is they will believe, about WHO they will believe. Do we obey men, or do we obey God? That is the only question.
- iii. God says that the child in the womb is knit together by His hand

Psalm 139.13-16
Isaiah 44:24
Jeremiah 1.4-5
Galatians 1.15
- iv. Jesus commanded that we allow the little children to come unto Him
- v. The heart of the matter is truly quite simple. God values the children, He commands us to defend the helpless, the weak, the innocent... but in our culture we have been taught to

instead value convenience, we are told that if it is inconvenient for a woman to bear a child, then she should be allowed to destroy that child for the sake of her convenience.

vi. God will not be mocked, the blood of a million babies a year is on our heads, on our hands. Less than half of that number have died of Covid even by the most liberal of counts, and we consider it a national emergency... but we systematically murder millions annually and have a president who demands that we protect this system of slaughter... do we think that God is not judging this land? More importantly, do we believe that He is not judging those who call themselves His and remain silent, or worse, actively agree?

c. Sex and Gender we could consider the question of gender identity and homosexuality and find equally confused beliefs among those who call themselves Christians. But the Bible is clear.

- i. God created male and female –

Genesis 1.27

- ii. Marriage is designed BY God, and created for one man and one woman.

Genesis 2:20-25

- iii. Sex is reserved for marriage, and is honorable when practiced in a way that honors God.

Hebrews 13.4

- iv. It is abomination for a man to lie with a man –

Leviticus 18.22

- v. Cross-dressing is equally prohibited –

Deuteronomy 22:5

- vi. All of this adds up to a simple statement. God says NO. But what is the pressure of the

culture? What will be the consequence of even stating what the Bible says in this sermon? The pressure to be silent is powerful, but the obligation to OBEY the word of God is even more demanding, even more important. God calls us to view His Word as the most fundamental and basic line in our lives.

- vii. As such - the Word is divisive. Doctrine does divide, for doctrine expresses our understanding of truth. And regardless of the illogic that prevails in our culture, two opposing "truths" cannot both be true. So even as it divides, doctrine unites. The Bible unites all who love truth, all who love God.
- d. These are only a few issues, I am not setting out to amass the most protestors next Sunday, but everything grows from this reality, God defines what life is supposed to look like. How we are to think, how we are to act, how we are to believe, what we are to do, what we are to distance ourselves from. Issues like the place of the family, the role of women in the home, the

church, the culture... what it is the purpose of our children's education, why and how we work, what is the government's role in the aid of the poor, what is OUR role in the aid of the poor, the defense of the helpless, the widow, the defense of your home and your own life, how are we to think about race, how we are to deal with criminals... Scripture speaks to every single one of these issues and speaks decisively to those who have ears to hear, and thus it speaks **divisively**.

III. DIVIDES WITHIN THE VISIBLE CHURCH ITSELF

- a. Denomination less important than doctrine.
- b. There is no room for argument on primary doctrines
- c. There must be grace on secondary and tertiary ones, some of these in one way are the very issues I have used as examples. So let us define how to extend grace on these issues even while asserting that the Bible speaks decisively.

1. The Bible must be the final authority in the questions - This is the first dividing ground
2. Where the Bible is acknowledged as the final word we can have discussion as to the nuance of how this is lived. But always the scripture must be the stone to which we return. It has to assert itself in the conversation, and where culture, science, preference or tradition are crossed - they must be cast out.
3. Where the Bible will not be acknowledged as the final authority we cannot have fellowship. This does not mean that we burn buildings and shoot people in riots. It means that we separate from calling those "brother" who will not bend to the will of Christ AND reach out to them as those in need of salvation.
4. We understand that the tertiary issues are less important in the larger scheme even while they may be the most practically pressing. In my mind there is no more important social issue than abortion. We must fight to defend the

unborn, but we will not usher one single soul into heaven if we outlaw abortion. In other words, no one goes to hell for any specific sin. People go to hell for SIN. And the only answer to sin is not stopping your pet sin, it is casting yourself on the mercy of Jesus Christ and repenting of ALL sin. But God will deal with the heart that needs this - our role is to speak the truth of Christ and share His grace. SO we continue to labor for the will of God in the tertiary issues even while we preach and proclaim the truth of the primary issue - the Gospel of Jesus Christ.