

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, November 14, 2021

They Went Out From Us, but They Were Not of Us

Philippians 1:27-30 *“27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.”*

- Look at the extreme importance that Paul puts on striving mightily to put aside our fleshly tendencies and opinions, in order to walk in the unity of the Spirit of God. This is the exact opposite of the world around us, who will strive, contend, and wage war over every foolish human ideology that they grab a hold of for a fleeting moment. My friends, our flesh wants to do that same thing; we tend to want to exalt our own thinking and strive over our fleshly opinions. Following Christ requires that we do bloody war to put off our own thoughts and desires, and instead strive to seek the Lord together, so that we would have the unity of the Spirit of God; no other unity is based in real truth, no other unity can last, and no other unity is worth having! This is pride crushing work, and it is central to behaving in a way that becomes the gospel of Christ!
- We can have adversaries for lots of reasons in our lives, and most of them are garbage reasons that have nothing to do with godliness; they have nothing to do with the unity of the Spirit or striving for the faith of the Gospel. Being contentious and having enemies is warp and woof to the human condition. This verse only applies to us, if we have these adversaries *specifically* because we discard worldly ideologies and cleave simply to Christ. When we have ferocious, violent adversaries for *that reason*, then we can take great comfort that it is an evident token of our salvation, and of their perdition!
- We have each been doubly blessed: to believe on Christ, and to suffer for the sake of Christ. These two things are both gifts from God, which are common to all of God’s elect. If we truly believe on Him – which includes being fruitful in that belief – then we will also suffer for His sake.

Suffering for the sake of Christ can take on many forms. One of those forms is the loss of earthly relations. Each of us has experienced the loss of many relationships in this world, simply because we proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Beloved, we are flesh and blood, and these events are impactful to us. More specifically, each of us has experienced the loss of close relationships, whether that be a close family member, or a person who has

presented as a friend in the faith. This particular form of suffering for Christ is our topic for today. This suffering is unique to the servants of God, and is an affliction that every member of this church has experienced; it is painful to our flesh, and yet it is appointed by God for His glory, and our best good, and He is to be praised and thanked in the midst of such distress. (Romans 8:28) It is enraging to the people of this world when we forsake human relationships in favor of following Christ. Phony “Christians” lead the charge to accuse us when we won’t keep company with those who have departed from following Christ, thereby testifying to the fact that they do NOT serve Christ. They accuse us of being wicked, heartless people who have no natural affection. My friends, to be adversaries with us over this issue is indeed an evident token of their perdition, and of our salvation! What Bible do I have for the notion that we are to forsake worldly, nay family, relations when they come in conflict with Christ? We all know that we could have an entire series of sermons bringing together the scriptures about this issue, but it is very straight forward, and we don’t have to go further than the words of Christ himself. Jesus spoke **many** words on this topic, thereby instructing our behavior, and giving great assurance of faith, as we wrestle with what is a painful process in our flesh. Not only did He teach us how we are to think and behave about such matters, but he also told us that it is absolutely going to happen! While the people of the world around us violently, hatefully, and ironically scream about love and human unity, the scriptures teach the exact opposite. Christ is the great divider; the process of separating the wheat from the chaff – the sheep from the goats – is at the heart of His purpose in the work of salvation. (**Matthew 25:32**)

Matthew 10:34-38 *“34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”*

Again, dealing with family and friends who are unbelievers, and who are therefore our foes, is a circumstance that is common to all of the servants of the Most High; how we handle these circumstances is a litmus test – a discerner of the sheep and the goats. Will we cling to those earthly relations, or will we joyfully shed that weight, and violently press into the Kingdom of God? (**Matthew 11:12, Luke 16:16**)

- Matthew 11:12 “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”
- Luke 16:16 “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”

If we put our familial relations above our reasonable service to our Heavenly Father, then we have failed this test! In this next passage, Jesus puts this in even stronger language for effect:

Luke 14:25-33 *“25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, 26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”*

John Gill: *“These are to be neglected and forsaken, and turned from with indignation and resentment, when they stand in the way of the honour and interest of Christ, and dissuade from his service: such who would be accounted the disciples of Christ, should be ready to part with their dearest relations and friends, with the greatest enjoyment of life, and with life itself, when Christ calls for it; or otherwise they are not worthy to be called his disciples. ‘What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, for whom I suffered the loss of all things’ (Phillipians 3:7,8).”*

Now we come to our primary text for today:

1John 2:18,19 *“18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”*

- **Who is “us”?**

- It is critical that we see ourselves through a scriptural lens. When a person departs from the faith, they are not leaving a particular family of flesh and blood. Family ties – literal blood relations – do not define any church of God. Each of us here today is a part of a spiritual body – a spiritual house - that the Lord assembled together at this moment in history, in this particular place. Westboro Baptist Church is just a convenient name that we use; the name

that matters is Christ, and it the banner of His love that flies over this house. (Song of Solomon 2:4) We are not a physical family; we are not this building; we are not our processes or activities; we are not our particular way of life at this moment – all of those things are to be greatly valued, and diligently tended to, but they can all change in the twinkling of an eye! What will never change for the people of God is the bond that binds us together – Christ. We are those that have been called into the family of God, and who desire to spend our days seeking after God, and dwelling together with those of that same precious, saving faith – striving together for the faith of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have been adopted into that family, by the blood of Jesus Christ. That blood is the blood that binds us – that makes us a family - and trumps all other human relationships. Anytime we are dealing with these matters that are so difficult for our flesh, we have to keep a scriptural view. We don't have to work too hard at this: There is only Jacob and Esau; there are only sheep and goats; there are only the sons of God and the sons of perdition that lie in the lap of the wicked one.

- We have been adopted into this family of faith, by no power or worth of our own. Remember friends, we were excluded from the family of God when our first father Adam fell in sin; at that moment, we lost all rights to the household of God, and were barred from returning to its privileges by a flaming sword. (Genesis 3:24) Having been fully removed from that family, the only path back to it – the only path back to peace with God – was through the adoption purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. Having been adopted back into that family of God, we must not behave as though we have some partial allegiance to the family of Satan. If we tried to maintain relationships with departed unbelievers, we would be doing just that.
 - **John Owen (Communion with God):** *“The person to be adopted must be freed from all the obligations that held him to his own family, otherwise he cannot in any way be useful or serviceable to the family which adopts him. He cannot serve two masters, much less two fathers.”*
 - **Owen:** *“Consider the nature of God’s house. It is made up of ‘living stones’ (1Peter 2:5). All those in this house are a ‘chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people’ (1Peter 2:9). They are ‘saints and faithful brethren’ (Colossians 1:2). Every one of them is righteous (Isaiah 60:21). The whole fabric of the house is glorious (Isaiah 54:11-14). The way of the house is ‘a way of holiness’, in which the unclean shall not walk (Isaiah 35:8). In this house are the ‘sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty’ (2Corinthians 6:17, 18). All others are excluded (Revelation 21:27). It is true that often other persons creep into the great house of God. So in this house there are not only ‘vessels of gold*

and silver, but also of wood and earth' (2Timothy 2:20). But they only creep in, they have no right nor title to it (Jude 4). It is clear, therefore, that none but God's adopted children have a right to any place in this house. Consider the privileges of that house. These privileges will not suit any others but the children of God. Is food given to a dead man? Will he grow strong by it? Will he thrive on it? The things of the family and house of God are food for living souls, and only God's children are alive. All others are dead in trespasses and sins. Look at any of the things which saints enjoy in the family of God and you will find that not one of them are suited to unbelievers. To give to unbelievers the things enjoyed by saints would be to 'cast pearls before swine'. Only the children of God have the right and title to the things of God. They have fellowship with one another and with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ."

- **Romans 8:10-18** *"10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*
- **Ephesians 2:14-22** *"14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an*

holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

- Once again, Jesus Christ put special emphasis on these matters, leaving us a clear example.
 - **Matthew 12:46-50** *“46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. 47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. 48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”*
 - This was not a matter of disrespect for his mother and brothers, but rather it was an object lesson for everyone watching – and for us! Our duties and affection toward the family of faith are not a secondary matter.
 - **John 19:25-27** *“25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”*
 - In this event, Jesus is certainly tending to the practical needs of his mother after His departure. Well beyond that, He is reinforcing the very concept we have been discussing. This is how we ought to view one another, and care for one another. Even when burdened down with affliction, we are to watch for and provide for the needs of our co-elect, as though they are our dearest family relations.
- **Who are “they” that go out from us, and are not of us? How should we view that person?**
 - We have well established that the “us” in this passage is the family of Christ. We are all-in with our Lord. So who are these that depart from that family? They are antichrist, which simply means that they are against Christ. This lends wonderful clarity, as we wrestle with our flesh, and with Satan’s deceit and accusations. Satan would have us to be confused - spinning our wheels as we analyze every nuance to death. He wants to accuse us, and cause us to try to figure out how we are to blame for something, rather than laying the axe to the root of the tree, and maintaining holiness. Don’t get me wrong friends, if we have erred in a matter, then we must repent, and immediately

reverse course. Barring that, we cannot complicate these matters. We cannot twist in the wind because of our affection or sympathy for a person. Ultimately if a person is going to walk with us, then they have to demonstrate that they are all-in with Christ; anything else is antichrist. Consider the crisp reality of our Lord's words on that matter:

- **Luke 11:23** *"He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."*
- We cannot convince someone to want that; we cannot work hard enough to cause someone to commit their way to Christ. If they had been of us, then they would have continued with us – striving to put off their flesh, and to dwell in the unity of the Spirit. I cannot frame to pronounce "shibboleth" for someone else; I can only thank God with great humility that He has caused me to pronounce it for myself on this day.
- **Owen:** *"Unbelievers may have a civil right to many things of earth. But they do not have a spiritual, sanctified right to a place in the house of God or to any of the privileges of that house. Unbelievers do not use anything they have for the glory of God and have kept them from the children of God for whose sakes they (that is, unbelievers) are kept from destruction. What judgment awaits them! God will say, 'I have allowed you to enjoy many things in this world. What have you laid out for the spread of the gospel? What have you given to the poor, especially the poor saints? Have you been willing to lay down all for my sake?' And they will answer, 'Lord, we did indeed possess many things in this world. But we treated these things as our own to do with as we pleased. We have done nothing for the gospel, nor for the poor, nor for your saints. We have spent it on ourselves. Then the Lord will say, 'And what right and title have you to these things? I have restored these things, lost by sin, to give to my saints and to them alone. Why have you stolen that which is not yours? Give me back what is mine.'"*
- **Thomas Brooks (Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices):** *"[The company of wicked men is] very infectious and dangerous. Ah, how many have lost their names, and lost their estates, and strength, and God, and Heaven, and souls – by society with wicked men! As you shun a stinking carcass, as the mariner shuns sands and rocks, and shoals; as you shun those who have the plague-sores running upon them, so should you shun the society of wicked men. As weeds endanger the corn, as bad infections endanger the body ... so does wicked company the soul (Proverbs 13:20). [Do not look upon wicked men as they describe themselves, but always look upon them] under those names and notions by which the Scriptures describe them. The Scriptures call them lions for their fierceness, and bears for their cruelty, and dragons for their hideousness, and dogs for their filthiness, and wolves for their subtleness. The*

Scriptures style them scorpions, vipers, thorns, briars, thistles, brambles, stubble, dirt, chaff, dust, dross, smoke, scum. Considering such monsters in proper light, should render their company a burden and not a delight.”

- Those are very stark words, and yet they come straight from the scriptures. I don't want to lessen the clarity of those words, but I do want to make one distinction, so as not to leave any confusion. The way that we view departed unbelievers is clear, and we *must* behave in that way toward them; anything else would be creating our own standard and puts us in great peril. However, that does not conflict with having desire in our heart for their best good, and privately seeking the Lord in prayer to turn their heart if He is willing. Our view of them, and our actions toward them must be based on their current fruit – period. Our private prayers are a matter of conscience that is informed by these words of John:

- **1John 5:16** *“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.”*

I will leave you with this: **Mark 10:28-31** *“28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. 31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.”*

Each of us has forsaken human relations for the kingdom of God's sake – we have counted the cost and found it altogether acceptable. Look around you, my beloved brothers and sisters, and consider how our merciful Father has given us manifold more blessings in this present time and consider our inheritance that we will shortly possess. Let us therefore be exceeding thankful and joyful and have fervent Charity among us!

I love you all. Amen.