

Dealing with Disagreement

Acts 15:36-41

Main Point:

Preserve the unity of Christ's church by dealing with your disagreements biblically.

1. Disagreements exist within the church.

2. These disagreements can lead to division and disunity.

3. This is not good, but Jesus can use it for good.

4. Nevertheless, you need to preserve the unity of Christ's church.

Acts 13:13 ¹³ Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. (NKJV)

R. Kent Hughes "This was not a mild gentlemen's disagreement but an intense and passionate conflict!"

R. Kent Hughes "In leaving Paul, Barnabas was separating himself from the greatest servant of Christ of all time. And Paul was losing the man to whom he owed more than any other human being."

Dennis Johnson "Wherever the responsibility for the breakdown lay, this breach between brothers was inexcusable."

Proverbs 6:16-19 ¹⁶ These six *things* the LORD hates, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him: ¹⁷ A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, ¹⁹ A false witness *who* speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren. (NKJV)

John 17:20-21 ²⁰ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ "that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. (NKJV)

Derek Thomas "He brings about good from the worst of circumstances. He beautifies his church, despite what we do, in order that Christ might be glorified. Indeed, out of this division arose greater opportunities for the gospel to expand. Instead of one mission team, there were now two!"

Derek Thomas "Despite human disagreements, God's work still goes forward. Even in church divisions and strife, God overrules our folly and sin to promote his work. This is not to excuse our culpability; rather, it is to evoke gratitude for the mercy and kindness of God."

Genesis 50:20 ²⁰ "But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive. (NKJV)

Romans 6:1-2 ¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? (NKJV)

Colossians 3:12-15 ¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (NKJV)

James Calvin Davis "Forbearance is the active commitment to maintain Christian community through disagreement, as an extension of virtue and as a reflection of the unity in Christ that binds the church together."

Romans 14:17 ¹⁷ for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (NKJV)

Proverbs 16:28 ²⁸ A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends. (NKJV)

Philippians 4:3 ³ And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel ... (NKJV)

John Piper "The point here is simply this: most of our life and ministry is made up of those kinds of decisions —the application of biblical principles to situations not explicitly dealt with in the Bible. And therefore complete agreement in these areas will not happen in the body of Christ until we no longer see through a glass darkly. And I suggest that we not too quickly assume that our different strategies for Christ are a bad thing."