

3 Major Cracks That Could Tear Today's Church Apart

We've all had it happen before—and sometimes it just smacks us right in the face. Out of nowhere, we suddenly discover that God is leading us to take a spiritual inventory of our life, family and church.

“Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, and look well to your herd (Prov. 27:23).

Lately, I've been told one scenario after the next where godly people are getting thrown off guard with some of the most bizarre situations. It's obvious that there is a major shift happening across denominational and fellowship boundaries; rifts and spiritual battles are taking place in congregations at an alarming rate. As leaders, we must look to see if there are any “spiritual cracks” within our congregations. Let's take a look at the three biggest potential cracks:

Division

(def.): A disagreement between two or more groups, typically producing tension or hostility.

There's been so much talk lately concerning the disunity in our country. Indeed it is there! But how did it get there? Did we just wake up one day and it appeared? No! Division is like a slow, slithering snake; something that has been right near you for a long time, resting, nesting and feeding on its innocent victims one tiny meal at a time. But before long, it isn't a small snake anymore; rather, it is a monster living right in your basement, shed, garage or, even worse, it's now made its way within the personal confinements of your home. It's not there to play games—it's there to kill you, because that is a snake's nature. This is the nature of division.

Division doesn't start overnight—it starts with one small offense after the next, one slight slip-up or comment after the other, and all the while, those attached to this evil continue to feed off of it. If we are not careful as church leaders, we can one day discover that we have a church full of people on Sunday without true unity of the Spirit. They come into the service and enjoy it, maybe even put a smile on their face, but deep inside they are lonely, perturbed and frustrated with what is going on. That wedge can grow dangerously deeper and deeper by the week.

I talked with a pastor who told me that several years ago, his congregation had been cut in half from one Sunday to the next without any warning. Those who left never came back. As he looked into what was going on, he discovered that deep-seated factions had developed; like a congregational family feud! The culprit: unresolved division. If not dealt with, division will eventually try raising its ugly head and strike, and when this happens, it must be dealt with out of love, grace and divine wisdom.

Unbelief

(Def.) – An absence of faith.

One measure of our maturity as Christians is our ability to believe what God speaks to us. It is the deep understanding that God said it, and although we can't see it right now, we know that it will happen. There are many areas of our lives where God is working all the time; however, I believe that God is taking us on a deeper understanding through learning to trust Him in all circumstances.

I remember years ago when my family sold practically everything we owned and went on the road full time. We had young children, no services scheduled yet, and off we went by faith. God told us to go, and we did. It was amazing—until we started driving. By the time we got barely across the New York

state line, our fuel tank was almost empty. At 54 feet long, our vehicle was a gas-guzzler to say the least (remember we were just starting out, which means we had little money in our pockets). Within another hour or so, fear gripped me in such a way that I had to pull over. *What did I do? What on earth have I just done to my family?* I thought. We pulled into a safe area off the highway, and I shared with my wife about why we should turn back. There I was—the fearless leader—panicking!

And then my wife looked right at me and said something that I will never forget. She said, “We heard God! Many are watching right now; our friends, family, and even our enemies. If we just try, and fail at this, we still win. If we have to go back home after a few months, I can live with that because we tried. But if we turn back now out of fear, Satan wins and we lose. Why? Because we didn’t even try. We’ve got to try; that is all God is asking.” So we carried on—and 28 states and several countries later, God proved to be faithful.

We must gut doubt and cultivate faith within our congregations. When God tells us to move forward and we don’t try, we lose. Sometimes we just have to lean forward a bit, knowing God will catch us if we fall. Believe!

Contempt

(def.) – The feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration, worthless or deserving scorn.

There are many directions to go on this topic: we can treat the presence of the Lord with contempt. We can do the same with prophecy, as the Bible tells us (1 Thess. 5:20). We can also treat our brother or sister in the Lord with contempt, seeing them as a lesser value than how God sees them. There are many ways that Satan “cracks” a church. I believe any crack within our congregations is serious, so I want to hone in on one specific area that I think is happening in churches all across our country.

When we look at the news and see all of the discord going on in our country, how a few politicians are acting right now can almost seem as though some of them have lost their minds, literally. It makes you wonder: *How did they get into some of the highest positions in our country? What did they have to do to get there and how are they still there?* But maybe the government isn't our biggest problem right now; maybe our government is acting like our churches.

"When Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money" (Acts 8:18).

While in Bible college, we went to "Holy Ghost camp meetings." This was when pastors and leaders would get on their faces before God and not get up until they heard a word from Him. As church ministry evolved, we eventually stopped having Holy Ghost camp meetings and began having church growth seminars, where business and marketing strategists would teach us how to grow our churches fast. They would go as far as training us to fill key church positions with wealthy, influential leaders from the Christian community so that they could promote "marketability and church growth" among other influential church people. Through this method, for the last decade or so, we have had key positions in the church filled with people who are using great wealth and influence to carry out God's divine mission rather than the anointing of God. But it isn't wealth or influence that brings someone to the kingdom; it is the anointing of God working through someone's life.

For some ministers, the solution to your problems have been sitting right there in your congregation for a long time. I think it is time for a roster change within some of our churches. We need to get back to Holy Ghost meetings, because it is the Holy Ghost who will fill all cracks within our churches. We have to be on the lookout for these three cracks of division, unbelief and contempt, and do everything we can to reverse the enemy's plan. {eoa}

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