

Peace With Others

Scripture Reading — Colossians 3:5-15

“Be at peace with each other.”

—Mark 9:50—

A church’s long-time pastor announced his retirement. The congregation chose a young, gifted, visionary man to be his successor. It didn’t take a year before the church was in deep conflict. Most of the elders opposed the new pastor’s innovations and reorganization of the church’s ministries. But many of those in the pews enjoyed his dynamic preaching and the challenges he brought to renew the church’s mission.

People took sides, gossip spread, and charges multiplied. In another year, a split occurred. The new pastor left with half of the members, leaving behind a decimated and discouraged group. Believers who once praised God shoulder to shoulder could barely speak kindly to one another.

If we were perfect people, perfect peace would prevail. But we are not. We can be tempted by distorted ideas and suspicions. The fellowship of the Lord Jesus, which is supposed to be an example of unity, becomes a battleground. Faith, hope, and love suffer.

Churches as well as marriages, families, businesses, ministries, and governments can become deeply divided. In such conflict we need to find the God of peace and call on him fervently to give us humble self-examination, persevering love, and overwhelming wisdom so that we can “keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

Prayer

Lord of the church, pour out your grace and peace on churches that are in conflict today. Show us how to accept and love one another. Amen.

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