

CAUSERS, MAKERS, & DOERS: TAKING INVENTORY FOR THE LORD!

INTRODUCTION: B+R+C+B=RofS.

- A. In ANY group of human beings there are those of different backgrounds and maturity levels, some even with aims or goals different from the rest of the group, & sometimes those who are there only to serve their own selfish interests!
- B. **SO**, to state that a local church is made of members with different levels of spiritual maturity, varying talents, assorted abilities and dissimilar personalities is just to state the obvious. BUT, as with every other group of people, when all is said and done there really are only three types of people which can make up a congregation.
1. First, there are those who HINDER a work; who are NEGATIVE about it and sometimes are even AGAINST certain facets of it – based on their human criteria of judgment; who are troubling the waters of success in the work of the Lord – and we’ll refer to these as the Causers of troubles, because what’s usually CAUSED by them is TROUBLE!
 2. Next, there are those who, rather than accomplishing the will of God always seem to be excusing themselves, or others, for their ineffectiveness. “Excuse makers,” or, maybe more poignantly, Makers of excuses!
 3. Then there are the Doers – mainstays of any group who don’t seem to be deterred by extraneous activities or verbal abuse, but just keep on with their duty of DOING THE WILL OF THE LORD!
- C. This is NOT about “placing blame,” nor even suggesting that either of these maladies are HERE, but simply to WARN US that they’re still alive and well – and that we must constantly be on guard!

I. CAUSERS OF TROUBLE

- A. As some books and movies, et al, are classified as VULGAR because they have “NO REDEEMING MORAL VALUES!” Unfortunately, we’re all acquainted with some people who seem to have no redeeming spiritual values! Even in some religious circles there are those who do very little else other than cause trouble. BUT OF COURSE, troublemakers are not unique to this century, are they?
1. Diotrophes - 3 John 9-10- *“I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. 10) For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church.”*
 2. Judaizing teachers - Gal.1:6-9; 5:12- *“I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.”* [Rather than devote themselves to hurting your spirituality!]
 3. False teachers - Matt.7:15-20- *“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16) “You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17) “So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18) “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19) “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20) “So then, you will know them by their fruits.”* 2 Cor.11:13-15- *“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14) And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15) Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.”* 2 Tim.2:16-18- *“But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, 17) and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18) men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.”*

- B. Trouble-makers hate unity but REVEL IN malice, guile, strife, factions, dissension & sin.
- C. Not all trouble-makers set out with this as their goal, but because of ungodly attitudes and actions, trouble results and thus they can rightly be called trouble-makers. Some examples of such:
1. Sin between brethren - Matt.18:15-17
 - a) When one refuses to go to a brother who has sinned against him nothing but trouble will come. Possible scenarios?
 - 1) Too often what happens is the one who is wronged broadcasts this to everyone but the one who injured him!
 - 2) This brings about his OWN condemnation, as well as not helping someone correct a wrong!
 - b) Sometimes **it's not sin** that another has committed against me, but over-sensitivity on my part! [Lenski says: "It is necessary, however, to note that only a real sin is referred to, one that is apparent as such when one or two other brethren are called in on the case and when the whole congregation considers the matter. This excludes what a sensitive brother may deem a sin without due warrant that it is such."]
 2. Lack of forgiveness - Matt.18:21-35
 - a) Sometimes the above is performed but forgiveness withheld: *"I was hurt too bad."*
 - b) Sometimes forgiveness is given little by little over time as the one who sins proves himself. A probation period: *"I'll forgive, but you'll have to continue to try to earn my trust."*
 - c) Sometimes forgiveness is given until a convenient time arises to bring it up again: *"I'll forgive, but I won't forget it!"*
 3. Ephesians 4:31- *"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."*
 - a) "Bitterness"-- T.D.N.T. - "bitterness, resentment, an incensed and angry attitude of mind to one's neighbour."
 - b) "Slander" ... Thayer - "slander, detraction, speech injurious to another's good name"
 - 1) Proverbs 26:20 - "Whisperer" [*"For lack of wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down."*]
 - (a) Baker's Dict. of the Bible - "whisper (maliciously), backbite, slander"
 - (b) Gesenius - "a whisperer, calumniator [*nag, or shrew, or seducer.*]." "to accuse or charge (a person) falsely and knowingly with some crime or offense; to slander."
 - 2) Proverbs 20:19 - "gossip," - acc. to Baker's Dict. of the Bible - "to be spacious, be open, be wide" [*"He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip."*]
 - c) "Malice" - cf. Col.3:8; Tit.3:3; 1 Pet.2:1. Thayer = "malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure"
 4. Worldly mindedness Jude 19- *"These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit."* 1 Cor.3:3- *"You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?"*
- D. What should be done with trouble-makers? Rom.16:17; 2 Thes.3:6 [IDENTIFY & AVOID]
- E. Remember God's attitude toward such - Prov.6:16-19- *"There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: 17) Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, 18) A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, 19) A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers."*

II. MAKERS OF EXCUSES

- A. There are some in congregations who don't cause trouble they just never get anything done, but they always have a reason, well, excuse that is. They do very little to help the local congregation.
1. They can't attend regularly, and don't get involved in activities separate from services (e.g. home bible classes, work days, men's or women's bible class, etc.),
 2. Contributions are erratic and often even non-existent!

- B. Definition of the word: **Excuse** - *"to try to free (a person) of blame, seek to exonerate, to release from an obligation, duty, promise, etc. ... to serve as an explanation or justification for"* -- Dict.
- C. Jesus told a parable about excuse making - **Lk.14:16-24**
1. Two invitations - one giving the day, and the second on the day of the feast saying it was ready.
 2. Not to provide hospitality was discourteous, **but refusing hospitality that's extended was an insult.**
 3. The excuses?
 - a) Check out a piece of newly bought land.
 - b) Try out newly bought oxen.
 - c) Married a wife.
 4. While much could be said of these excuses at least one thing needs to be remembered, they let other things get in their way of coming to the feast.
 - a) They had accepted the first invitation but when the time came decided other things were more important.
 - b) It is not that any of these excuses were wrong in and of themselves, but they did not compare in value to the honor of having received this invitation.
 5. Interesting to note what Luke chooses to record after this parable.
 - a) **Luke 14:26-27, 33** - What it would cost to follow Jesus.
 - b) **Luke 14:28-32** - One must count the costs.
 - c) Look at the costs!!! After you've committed that you will serve the Lord, when the going gets rough don't start making excuses as those in the parable did! **I wouldn't do that, would you?**
- D. What excuses are you trying to use to keep from fulfilling personal obligations to the Lord?
1. A Job? Bad Habits? Your Family? Need for Money? Desire for Material Possessions?
 2. Would the same excuses keep us from our other obligations?
- E. **Luke 9:59-62**- *"And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." 60) But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." 61) Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." 62) But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*
1. Not *"I'll follow, BUT"* – just comply with, **"I'LL FOLLOW!"** –PERIOD!
 2. Do you remember the old saying, "Where there's a will, there's a way"? This is especially true if YOU WANT TO OBEY GOD!

III. DOERS OF GOD'S WILL

- A. Then there are those members who can always be depended on, somehow amidst all of life's distractions they get things done for the Lord.
- B. Notice a few examples
1. **2 Cor.8:1-5** - Macedonians had every reason imaginable not to give, but their poverty was not used as an excuse.
 2. **Exodus 3-4** - Moses tried a few excuses but to no avail. He yielded to what God wanted him to do!
 3. Jesus knew what awaited Him, but the sufferings awaiting him were not used as an excuse, He knew the Father's Will and was set to accomplish it! **Matt.26:39, 42** - *"And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." 42) He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done."*
- C. Notice these next few scriptures:
1. Lip service won't cut it - **Matt.7:21; Lk.6:46; Tit.1:16**- *"They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed."*

2. Neither will just hearing the will of God - **Jas.1:22; Rom.2:13**- *“for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.”*
3. Neither will just believing - **Jas.2:20-26**- *“But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? 21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22) You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23) and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and he was called the friend of God. 24) You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25) In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? 26) For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”*
4. Only doers are blessed - **Lk.11:27-28**- *“While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.” 28) But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”*
5. Only doers have fellowship with God - **Matt.12:50**- *“For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”* **1 Jno.3:24**- *“The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.”*
6. Only doers have prayers answered - **1 Jno.3:22**- *“and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.”*
7. Only doers are considered wise - **Matt.7:24-27**- *“..for he that heareth these words of Mine...”*
8. Must be done from the heart - **Eph.6:6**- *“not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”*

CONCLUSION

Into which category would we place ourselves? The apostle urged those members in Corinth to look at themselves and consider just where they were in the sight of God. Hear him in **2 Cor.13:5**- *“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?”*

Do you suppose we might even have the nerve to survey **OTHERS’ OPINIONS** as to which category **THEY** would place us in? That really isn’t necessary, is it?

I really THANK GOD and PRAISE HIM that, at least in MY awareness, I don’t know of any TROUBLEMAKERS in this congregation! But I have to stay constantly aware to make sure that I’M NOT, don’t you? And even harder than that is to keep from EXCUSING MYSELF from being all I ought to be for the cause of the Lord in this place. Is that hard for you?

This is 1997. A NEW YEAR! What are we going to do with ourselves in it?