



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

July 30, 2023

"A House Divided ..."

"I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought."

(1 Corinthians 1:10, NIV)

"For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice."

(James 3:16, NIV)

"If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand." (Mark 3:25, NIV)

Scripture warns against a divided community, emphasizing that it will ultimately fail. This raises questions about the difference between divisiveness and differences, and how healthy communities resolve differences.

From the news: *"I fear that we're trapped in a vicious cycle. As communities grow less tolerant of dissent, they drive out dissenters. The dissenters flee to places that welcome their points of view – and then often become just as intolerant as the ideologues in their former homes."*

In a recent NYT editorial, David French recounts his experience growing up in a small town where his family shifted from "insiders" to "outsiders" due to race and politics. He concludes that a community's health is determined by how it treats "outsiders," not "insiders." However, he fears a destructive cycle: as communities become less tolerant of dissent, they drive dissenters away, who then become intolerant in their new homes.

How Do Healthy Communities Respond to Differences? Contrary to this cycle, healthy faith communities don't simply eliminate divisiveness. They engage in constructive discussions, listening to each other and focusing on ideas, not attacking individuals. Jesus exemplified treating outsiders as equals, teaching us to love beyond familiar circles.

A High Bar for Christians: For Christians, this sets a high standard for behavior, especially in handling and resolving differences. Self-reflection is crucial - recognizing our biases before addressing others'.

It is easy to love those who love you—even a tax collector can love those who love him. And it is easy to greet your friends—even outsiders do that! But you are called to something higher: "Be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:46-48, The Voice)

Scripture advocates for inclusive communities that engage in open dialogue with outsiders. Divisiveness isn't eradicated by exclusion, but through understanding and embracing differences. Let us follow Jesus' teachings, fostering harmony and empathy in our communities.

A Closing Prayer: Lord, In the face of disagreement, may we always remember to seek reconciliation, guided by the example of Jesus Christ. May our communities be beacons of Your peace, understanding, and compassion in a world that yearns for unity. In Your loving and gracious name we pray. Amen.

--God's Peace to you! Vance

Prayer box: let us pray for Ed's soul and his grieving family and friends; healing for Barb, Robin, Joyce, Lynn, and Bill; for those struggling in their relationships; for those suffering from extreme weather; let us give thanks for all first responders; let us be grateful for the Raquette Lake Community! Lord, hear our prayer!