

When Buckets Clash

By Richard Crisco

I want to share about the importance of maintaining unity in the midst of a divisive culture. The church has to lead the way in loving and respecting others, even when we do not agree with each other's opinions.

John 17:20-23

*20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that **all of them may be one**, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us **so that the world may believe** that you have sent me.*

*22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that **they may be one** as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May **they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.***

Unity is vital to Jesus!

Required for Evangelism and Anointing!

Unity will be a major sign in these last days to a culture that is fractured and divided!

Hebrew 12:14-15

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that **no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.**

I have three buckets.

The 1st Bucket contains Universal Christian Convictions!

The Gospel.

Jesus is the Only way to Salvation.

The Bible is the Word of God.

The 2nd bucket contains beliefs and practices that unite followers of Jesus who join together in a local church.

Baby Baptism vs. Baptism of the Believer.

Sprinkling vs. Pouring.

Eternal Security vs. Backslide

Spiritual Gifts still operate today.

The 3rd bucket contains beliefs that may differ among Christians in the same local church.

Public School vs. Private vs. Home School

Eating meat vs. Being Vegetarian

Drinking Alcohol vs. Not Drinking

Democrat vs. Republican
Women in Ministry or Not
Inter-racial Marriages or Not
Death Penalty vs. Anti-Death Penalty
Closed Borders or Open Borders

Even though these Christians might hold their convictions strongly, they choose not to divide into different churches based on those issues.

Paul challenged the church to build unity around Jesus.

Romans 14

*1 Accept him whose faith is weak, **without passing judgment on disputable matters.***

*2 One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3 The man who eats everything **must not look down on** him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything **must not condemn** the man who does, for God has accepted him.*

*5 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. **Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.** 6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to*

the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

*13 Therefore **let us stop passing judgment on one another.** Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. 14 As one who is in the Lord Jesus, **I am fully convinced** that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.*

*15 If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, **you are no longer acting in love.** Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. 16 Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.*

*17 For **the kingdom of God** is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of **righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,** 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way **is pleasing to God and approved by men.***

*19 Let us therefore **make every effort** to do what **leads to peace and to mutual edification.** 20 **Do not destroy the work of God** for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything **that causes someone else to stumble.***

*21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. 22 So whatever you believe about these things **keep between yourself and God**. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves.*

*23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and **everything that does not come from faith is sin**.*

Paul acknowledges that these issues are important but they do not determine whether someone was a Christian.

Paul encourages everyone to be true to their personal convictions while loving others who hold to different convictions.

Problems for unity begin
when we confuse these 3 buckets.

III. Unity in a marriage.

Unity between parents and children.

Ephesians 6:4

*Fathers, **do not exasperate your children;***

instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

What is the Answer?

1. We need discernment to understand which bucket we are addressing.

Stop making #3 Buckets a #1 Bucket issue!

Making a Mountain out of a Mole Hill!

Matthew 23:23-24

*"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-- mint, dill and cummin. **But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. 24 You blind guides! **You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.*****

2. We need Love and Humility to bring healing and reconciliation.

1Peter 4:7-8

The end of all things is near. Therefore be

clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. 8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

What does walking in love look like?

It starts with actively listening and seeking to understand one another.

James 1:19

*My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be **quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,***

Some Christians feel we shouldn't discuss Bucket #3 issues because it only leads to further division.

But how can Bucket #3 issues divide us if it is not what unites us?

Jesus makes us family!

That means Bucket #2 and Bucket #3 issues can't divide us unless we begin making them more important than Jesus!

I'm concerned that most Christians have never developed the skills to have genuine, loving, humble conversations with someone who has different convictions on emotional topics.

What could happen if Christians spent less time posting and tweeting about one another and more time listening and seeking to understand each another?

What would happen if we had the courage to leave our ego chambers and listen to others who believe differently from us?

Such conversations require a great deal of love and humility.

It requires a commitment to live in peace with one another and protect one another despite our differences in opinions.

**We are not called to win arguments,
But to win people.**

Too often we focus on winning a battle

Instead of winning the war!

**The purpose of an argument
is not to prove who is right,
but to make things right.**

hear from heaven and will **forgive** their sin and
will **heal** their land.

Discussion Questions:

**However, this kind of unity is what Jesus
prayed for and is worth it. In a world that is
beating us down, we must learn to stand
together as family.**

**Achieving such unity will be a challenging task
that demands a wholehearted dedication to
loving one another, going against the cultural
norms prevalent today.**

Romans 12:18

***If it is possible, as far as it depends on you,
live at peace with everyone.***

**III. To join two pieces of iron they must be
heated and beaten together!**

2Chronicles 7:14

***If my people, who are called by my name, will
humble themselves and pray and seek my face
and turn from their wicked ways, then will I***