

Coffee Connect | What Can Separate Us?

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

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Hello, and welcome to Coffee Connect, a Project Zion Podcast series where we share inspiring stories and thought-provoking reflections of life and ministry that remind us of God's loving presence in the world. I'm your host, Blake Smith. And today I want to share a reflection called "What can separate us?," that first appeared in my blog, "From the Desk of..."

Divine counsel given to Community of Christ in 2007, and now canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants as section 163 reminds us that "there are subtle yet powerful influences in the world, some even claiming to represent Christ, that seek to divide people and nations to accomplish their destructive aims. That which seeks to harden one human heart against another by constructing walls of fear and prejudice is not of God. Be especially alert to these influences lest they divide you or divert you from the mission to which you are called."

Can you imagine being separated from your child or someone else you love for over 70 years, not knowing whether they were dead or alive. There are those in our world who have found themselves in that position by no choice of their own. Yet every day, for one reason or another, people who do have a choice between connection and separation, choose the latter, and often, for reasons that blow my mind.

Politics, geography, ethnicity, race, age, economics, lifestyles, personal choices, habits, addictions, doctrines, beliefs. I imagined that if a diverse enough group of people were to get together and brainstorm a list of the subtle, yet powerful influences that seek to divide us, there would not be enough room on a page to hold them.

Every once in a while, I hear a story in the news or from a colleague that reminds me just how precious and sometimes fragile our connections to others can be. Not too long ago, I watched with chills, and yes, some tears of joy, as brothers and sisters, parents and children, and long-lost cousins were reunited for the first time since having been separated by a geographic and political boundary, a line in the sand, if you will, as a result of the Korean War. Over 70 years of separation, and not my choice.

I couldn't help but think about stories I've heard and witnessed about families and close friends who have allowed subtle influences to divide them. For some, it's been so long since the cause of separation took place, that they don't even remember why they split. For others, the choice was clear, or so they thought, even to the point of denying the existence of the other.

There are many things in this world that I find hard to believe. But I don't have any trouble believing it when the Apostle Paul says in the eighth chapter of Romans, verses 38 and 39.

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We may not be able to be separated from the love of God. But, as the story of the families torn apart by the Korean War shows, there are obviously powers that can separate us from one another, some that may be out of our control. That said, there is no relationship ... no, not one ... that is worth sacrificing for the sake of an issue or disagreement. Life is too short. And the mission to which we are called is too important.

If you are one of those who has been cast out or disowned, my heart goes out to you. And I pray that you will find a way back. Though there is no justification or excuse for someone to treat another child of God in that way, there is always hope for restoration and reconciliation.

If you are one that it was done the casting out or does stoning of another, even if for what you believe to be the most righteous of reasons, I pray that you will seek out God's strength and wisdom to open the door for reconciliation and healing of such is the kingdom of God.

Blessings to you from the team here at Project Zion Podcast. Have a blessed day.