US-VS-THEM

PASTOR TIMOTHY GREEN

Luke 9:49-50 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us .

Oh, how this message needs to be preached! I've seen it played out my whole life. Men against men, pastor against pastor, church against church, denomination against denomination. Anybody that is not a part of "us" becomes a part of "them" and they are the enemy.

According to Jesus, it shouldn't be like this. It shouldn't be denomination against denomination, church against church, pastor against pastor, men against men. Jesus said, "If they are not against us, they are for us."

I don't know any two people who agree on everything. Does that make them enemies? It shouldn't. We should learn to respect the differences in others and still be able to get along. There is such a thing as disagreeing without being disagreeable. There is such a thing as agreeing to disagree.

Everybody doesn't have to be my enemy just because we don't see eye to eye on everything.

One reason people struggle with differing views on any subject is because they believe that acceptance equals agreement. Meaning, to accept a person or their argument is to agree with them. As a result, we conclude that we cannot accept the person for fear of being seen as agreeing with them.

Whenever we withhold acceptance in order to show disagreement, we create an "Us" versus "Them" situation. Our position is defined by what side we are on. As a result, our arguments will tend to be shaped more by the things we're against, than the things we are for.

"Us" versus "Them" is many times rooted in fear. When we don't understand someone or something, we tend to be fearful and then fear-based rhetoric comes into play and that produces more fear and brings greater separation.

Fear does that. Fear separates people. Fear builds walls instead of bridges. Fear leads to isolation. Fear keeps others at a distance. Love, on the other hand, does just the opposite. Perfect love cast out fear. Love unites. Love brings people together.

Can we love someone that we disagree with? Jesus did. Whenever we become more like Him, we can as well. Whenever we can see people as someone created in the image of God, it's not so hard to love them.

Love helps us see past our differences and see the person who holds them.

Polarizations disappear when love and not fear is allowed to take center stage in our lives.