

Speaking to the soul



Divisions

In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric,

uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. Colossians 3:11

Every society is full of divisions, but Paul's world was sharply and deeply divided far beyond anything we know today. The biggest divide of all was between Jew and Gentile. Jews were the chosen people and Gentiles were the outsiders. The Jews would pray a daily prayer thanking God that they were not Gentiles. There was deep suspicion, and even hatred, between Jews and Gentiles and it focused on male circumcision, which was the physical evidence of the distinction. Meanwhile, Greeks looked down on anyone who didn't speak Greek, and there was a massive difference between those who were slaves and those who were free. In ancient law, slaves were not even classified as human beings. They were simply possessions or living tools with no rights of their own. A master could thrash, maim or even kill his slaves as he chose. However, in Christ, a revolution had taken place, and all of those human divisions had come crashing to the ground.

Of course, deep human divisions still exist. Our education, wealth, age, ethnicity and many other factors make us very different from one another, and that will always be the case, but the walls of separation fall down the moment we commit ourselves to Christ. Our identity in him is far more important than any human distinction.

I always enjoy worshipping God in church and looking around me at the diverse people who have gathered together. I often reflect that there is nothing that would ever bring these people together in one place, other than Christ. Humanly speaking, we are very different from one another, but in Christ, all of that has changed. He is alive in each of

us, and that is the closest bond that you could ever have with another person.

QUESTION

In what ways have you seen human divisions crumble between Christians?

PRAYER

Loving God, I praise you for the unity that you have given us in Christ. Help me never to allow human distinctions to get in the way of Christian fellowship. Amen

Photo: Starscape over Durham Cathedral

