

PEACE JEREMIAH BURROUGHS AND HEALING

RESTORE HARMONY



PEACE AND HEALING

Peace and Healing: Restore Harmony

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Preface

We all need peace and healing because we all experience conflict and division. We want harmony but endure discord. We desire unity but suffer strife. We fight with friends, feud with family, and struggle with spouses—hurting and harming the very ones who should be our chief comforts and delights.

Jeremiah Burroughs provides Biblical, practical guidance to restore harmony to our relationships and unity to our churches and communities. He diagnoses the sources of our strife, identifies the causes of our conflicts, warns us of the evils of our disputes, and suggests cautions and cures for our disunity. Burroughs' original work is one of the most helpful and insightful writings on Christian unity in church history. His goal is to form our thinking with God's Word to transform our hearts by God's truth so that our lives will be conformed to God's will.

Peace and Healing updates and synthesizes Burroughs' original book to make it more accessible for modern readers. Because the content was originally preached as a sermon series, each section can be read as a self-contained unit. Because it was a Puritan sermon series, it is thorough, precise, and filled with outlines and lists. These features make the book more digestible if read one section per sitting, though reading in larger portions better reveals the flow of the whole.

We pray that God will use this book to help bring peace and healing to your relationships so that your churches, communities, friendships, and families can all Be United in Christ.

Introduction

Author

Jeremiah Burroughs (1599–1646) was the third of five sons born into a godly family in East Anglia, England. After earning his bachelor's and master's degrees from Cambridge University, he ministered at several churches in eastern England until 1636, when he was suspended for refusing to comply with religious laws he believed to be unbiblical. Two years later he fled secretly to Holland to escape false charges of treason. He ministered at the English Congregational Church in Rotterdam until 1640, when Parliament permitted exiled ministers to return to England.

Back in London, Burroughs' preaching gifts and godly character led to his appointment as Bible lecturer at England's two largest churches, and he soon began teaching at a third large church as well. In an age of such famed ministers as Richard Baxter, John Owen, and John Bunyan, "no other Puritan preacher in his day preached to as many people each week as Burroughs did."¹

Burroughs' ministry extended beyond these prominent pulpits. He preached to Parliament on several occasions and advised them on religious matters. He was an influential participant at the Westminster Assembly that produced the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. His published sermons include such important works as *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, *The Saints' Happiness*, *Gospel Reconciliation*, and *An Exposition of the Prophecy of Hosea*. Burroughs was popular with the people and respected by his peers.

Peace and Healing

Burroughs also modeled what it means to be a peace-loving, peacemaking man. Early biographers note that he was “of a most amiable and peaceable spirit”² and that his influence “was like the gentle falling of the snowflake or the spring shower.”³ Burroughs said of himself, “Peace is dearer to me than my life; I could joyfully lay down my life to produce peace between brothers.”⁴ His personal motto posted on the door of his study was “variety of opinions and unity of those who hold them may stand together.”

Burroughs’ dedication to reconciling Christians was based on his own reconciliation to God by Christ. As he explained,

Christ has reconciled my soul when I was an enemy to God. He has come down from the bosom of His Father and laid down His life for me. And Christ is dishonored when there are such breaches between friend and friend. Therefore, out of love to Jesus Christ, who has reconciled my soul to the Father, I am willing out of that very principle to be at peace with others.⁵

Burroughs’ peaceful, peacemaking ministry impressed his contemporaries and inspired future generations. For example, Francis Asbury, the Father of American Methodism, published an abridgement of Burroughs’ work on church unity to promote love and unity between believers in all denominations.⁶

Burroughs died on November 13, 1646, two weeks after being thrown from his horse. He died childless but was survived by his wife, whose name is now unknown. When his end came, he looked up and repeated, “I come, I come, I come.”⁷ The great man of peace had found peace at last.

Context

In 1644, Burroughs and four other Congregational members of the Westminster Assembly printed a thirty-page explanation of their view that each church had full authority over its own affairs. In response, a Presbyterian named Thomas Edwards (1599–1647) published a passionate 300-page rebuttal. Two years later Edwards urged Parliament to purge England of 180 dangerous religious errors, including congregationalism.⁸

Burroughs was reluctant to respond, but others replied heatedly, which sparked the “Pamphlet Wars.” Grieved by these conflicts, Burroughs preached a sermon series urging reconciliation and unity, which was published in May of 1646 as *Irenicum, to the Lovers of Truth and Peace. Heart-Divisions Opened in the Causes and Evils of Them: with Cautions That We May Not Be Hurt by Them, and Endeavors to Heal Them.*⁹

Irenicum comes from the Greek word for “peace” and was used in several works urging Christian unity.¹⁰ Burroughs’ strategy is to strike at the heart divisions within us that create divisions between us. He addresses these divisions in four main sections:

1. Causes of divisions
2. Evils of divisions
3. Cautions that we may not be hurt by divisions
4. Endeavors to heal divisions

Burroughs states his objective clearly in his opening note to readers: “My aims are peace, which I will never cease endeavoring and praying for, I, who am your friend, glad of any opportunity for your good, Jeremiah Burroughs.”

Preview

We don't love others as we should because we don't love God as we should. Therefore to deal with the conflict in our lives we must focus on our own individual relationships with God and our attitudes toward others. Our hearts are the source of our divisions.

Realizing that we are the problem, we must root out the causes of divisions: the mistaken thinking, selfish inclinations, and divisive behaviors that ruin our relationships. Then we should reflect on the evils of our divisions to motivate us to address them. By counting the cost of our conflicts, acknowledging their sinfulness, and dreading the pain they bring, we will by God's grace be sobered to finally deal with them.

We must be cautious, however, about how we view and respond to our divisions so that we do not react wrongly and cause more damage. We must beware of the bad responses to conflict and learn how to see them from the right perspective if we are to let God do His good work through them.

Having located the sources, identified the causes, considered the evils, and taken the appropriate cautions concerning our divisions, we will be in a good place to cure them. If we think about unity rightly, consider the reasons for unity Biblically, develop the virtues of peaceful people faithfully, and implement unifying practices diligently, then we can expect God to bring peace and healing.

I R E N I C U M,
TO THE
L O V E R S
O F
T r u t h a n d P e a c e.

H E A R T - D I V I S I O N S

O P E N E D

In the Causes and Evils of them:

W I T H

Cautions that we may not be hurt by
them, And Endeavours to heal them.

By J E R E M I A H B U R R O U G H E S.

Opinionum varietas & Opinantium unitas non sunt 'Ard'cula.

L O N D O N,
Printed for R O B E R T D A V V L M A N.
M D C L I I I.

CHAPTER 1: SOURCES OF DIVISIONS

Heart Divisions

Our heart is our true self. It is our essential identity and character that reveals itself in how we think, feel, and act. As Jesus said, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil” (Luke 6:45). Which is why Solomon warns, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, / For from it flow the springs of life” (Proverbs 4:23 NASB).

The heart’s main purpose is to love God and love others, and only in that order. As Jesus taught,

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 22:37–40).

Moses gave the same two commands to Israel (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18). God’s intent for the heart has never changed.

When we love God wholeheartedly, we have healthy hearts. When we love God halfheartedly, we have divided hearts. Divided hearts that turn away from God also turn against others, for if we do not love God as He deserves, we will not love others as He demands. God takes great offense when people disobey the two great commandments to love Him and love others, and He judges those who do so. What Hosea 10:2 says of Israel is true for all God’s people: “Their heart is divided; / Now they are held guilty.”

The reason our relationships are divided is that our hearts are divided from God and from one another. This basic truth about interpersonal conflicts has three key implications:

1. The main source of our strife is internal, not external.
2. Hearts divided from God always divide from others.
3. Our divisions with God and others will only be healed when our heart divisions between God and others are healed. Peace starts in the heart.

Divided hearts that turn away from God also turn against others, for if we do not love God as He deserves, we will not love others as He demands.

Heart Divisions in Hosea's Day

Seven centuries before Jesus was born, God sent the prophet Hosea to tell Israel to repent and return to Him so that He might heal and restore them. At Mount Sinai, Israel had vowed to forsake all other gods and to keep themselves only for the Lord (Exodus 19:5–8; 24:7). But like Hosea's unfaithful wife, Israel had been unfaithful to God, disobeying His laws and worshiping false gods. God's people had promised to be spiritually faithful, but they were not.

Instead, Israel divided their allegiance between the Lord and false gods. They loved unfaithfully, thought wrongly, and acted wickedly. Israel pledged themselves to God but then gave themselves to idols, and the nation was ruined as a result. Physical infidelity is a great sin to commit against one's spouse; spiritual infidelity is an even greater offense to commit against the Lord. When Israel's heart turned from God and against one another, it was then that the Lord decided to punish them.

We spend our strength in arguing, bickering, contending, quarrelling, troubling, and opposing one another rather than magnifying, blessing, and praising the name of God for the mercy we enjoy.

The timing of God's judgment pronounced in Hosea 10:2 is surprising. Israel was enjoying a time of relative security and prosperity. So why had God not judged them earlier when their rulers and ways were more wicked? Because God was testing His people to see how they would use their freedom and wealth, and they failed. "When they came to have more freedom, they began quarreling among themselves." Israel's refusal to address their own heart divisions resulted in God removing them from the Promised Land. It is as though God said,

There is more freedom in the land for My true worship now, and yet do they still contend, treat each other with contempt, divide, and quarrel with one another? Let them go into captivity. Let the enemy come upon them. I find no delight in such a crooked, perverse generation.



Note: some pages are omitted from this book preview.

CHAPTER 2: CAUSES OF DIVISIONS

Dividing Principles	Dividing Inclinations	Dividing Practices
1. Everyone Must Be Like Me	1. Pride	1. Wicked Speech
2. People Can Believe Anything	2. Self-Love	2. Needless Arguments
3. Everyone Must Believe Like Me	3. Envy	3. Overstepping Boundaries
4. Conflicts Can Be Profitable	4. Rage	4. Divisive Departures
5. Always Share What You Believe	5. Rigidity	5. Slandering Leaders
6. Change When You Want	6. Rashness	6. Divisive Labels
7. Defer to Spiritual Leaders	7. Stubbornness	7. Guilt by Association
8. Misjudge Motives	8. Inconsistency	8. Pride by Association
9. Lead the Church by Reason Alone	9. Jealousy	9. Rejecting God's Ministers
10. Overreact to Differences	10. Contentiousness	10. Exaggerated Accusations
	11. Covetousness	11. Divisive Allies
	12. Falseness	12. Revenge

Causes of Divisions

The best way to treat divisions is to avoid them. So to restore and maintain peace we must first understand and address the causes of conflict.

The chief external threat to unity is God’s chief enemy, Satan.

He seeks to keep his own kingdom free from divisions but seeks nothing more than to cause divisions in the kingdom of Christ. God put animosity between Satan and the saints, but it is the devil that puts animosity between the saints.

Satan “is that envious one who sows the seeds of division in the kingdom of Christ.” As James explains, “If you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic” (James 3:14–15).

Each one of us must deal with our own divided heart if we are ever to head off and heal the divisions that afflict us.

However, it is the sin within us, not the devil outside us, that is our chief concern. “All the devils in Hell could not do us any great harm in dividing us from God or from one another were it not for the corruption of our own hearts.” Each one of us must deal with our own divided heart if we are ever to head off and heal the divisions that afflict us. To be specific, we must confront our dividing principles, inclinations, and practices.

Dividing Principles

Dividing principles are misconceptions and mistaken convictions that create disunity. Since our thoughts inform our emotions and direct our actions, “the chief cause of many of our divisions lies here.” Ten such principles are especially divisive within and between churches:

- 1. Everyone must be like me**
- 2. People can believe anything**
- 3. Everyone must believe like me**
- 4. Conflicts can be profitable**
- 5. Always share what you believe**
- 6. Change when you want**
- 7. Defer to spiritual leaders**
- 8. Misjudge motives**
- 9. Lead the church by reason**
- 10. Overreact to differences**



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CHAPTER 4:
CAUTIONS ABOUT DIVISIONS

Wrong Responses to Divisions	Proper Perspectives on Divisions	Right Responses to Divisions
1. Longing for the Past	1. Why Godly Christians Disagree	1. Examining Our Hearts
2. Silencing God's Spokesmen	2. Why Godly Christians Disagree So Strongly	2. Humbling Our Hearts
3. Staying Neutral	3. Why God Allows Godly Christians to Disagree	3. Correcting Our Priorities
4. Blaming God's Reformers		4. Exalting God
5. Forcing Peace		5. Renewing Our Hope
6. Abusing Liberty		6. Pursuing Peace with God
7. Seeking Personal Gain		7. Praising God for Peace
8. Restoring Peace at Any Cost		8. Deepening Our Walk with God
9. Falling into Despair		9. Pursuing Unity
		10. Motivating Prayer
		11. Inspiring Gratefulness

Cautions about Divisions

Divisions are inevitable, but God can use conflicts for our good as long as we view them rightly and respond to them appropriately. Before we examine the cures for our divisions we need to offer some important cautions about divisions.

Wrong Responses to Divisions

There are nine common mistakes Christians make in reacting to conflict, especially conflicts that occur in seasons of revival and reformation.

1. Longing for the Past

When the present is hard and the future looks bleak, it is tempting to long for the past. But we can't go back. We must face today's challenges, however difficult they may be, or tomorrow will be worse. We also forget what the past was really like. Israel often grumbled about the good old days when they were in Egypt. They recalled the meat, bread, and leeks but forgot the labor, whips, and murders. At the end of the day we only have today to make tomorrow better.

2. Silencing God's Spokesmen

Times of reformation and revival are also times of controversy and conflict. When this occurs, some want to restore peace by silencing God's spokesmen. But pursuing peace through compromise is too costly, for though strife may cease, much good will be lost. Israel would have avoided much controversy if Christ

had never come—but all would have been lost. God’s gospel is worth the conflicts it creates.

3. Staying Neutral

While we must not meddle in minor affairs, matters involving truth, justice, or the gospel require us to take a side and make a stand. In such cases neutrality is cowardice, or betrayal. There are some conflicts in which Christians must become involved, even if the cause costs us dearly.

4. Blaming God’s Reformers

Prophets and preachers stir things up, which upsets those who just want peace and quiet. Israel was angry with Moses for angering Pharaoh, for their labor became heavier for a little while before their liberation occurred. Paul’s preaching “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6), and this made life harder for Christians for a while. Yet God’s messengers should not be blamed when godless men rise against them. The Lord sends His servants on His people’s behalf, and therefore they should be supported.

5. Forcing Peace

Some try to use force to restore order, even in religious controversies in the church. “Others, seeing evil come from the divisions among us, think there is no way to help them but by forcing men to yield to what they think is right.” But forced submission and physical intimidation are not how the Lord extends His kingdom. Christ

does not establish peace violently, though Christians should expect violent opposition to both Him and them.

6. Abusing Liberty

When those in authority are distracted by conflict in the community, those under their authority have less supervision and therefore take more liberties. When divisions disrupt a community, some people use the chaotic occasion to indulge their sinful desires.

7. Seeking Personal Gain

Some people exploit strife for personal gain. “Their focus is not to help heal divisions but to contrive ways they may gain by them.” Only the truly wretched try to exploit conflict for their own benefit.

8. Restoring Peace at Any Cost

Many are willing to buy peace at any price, even if it means submitting to unrighteous authorities or accepting falsehood.

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CHAPTER 6:
A PLEA FOR UNITY

Jeremiah Burroughs' final chapter is a concluding plea for unity. So far we have served as Burroughs' translators, synthesizing and summarizing his ideas. Now, however, we want to let him speak directly. We have updated his language, but we allow this godly, peace-loving pastor to close his sermon series in his own words.

So imagine you are in a church in 17th-century London. The pews are firm, the spring air crisp, and the crowd around you well dressed and attentive. For weeks you have listened to your pastor instruct you on the causes, evils, cautions, and cures of the heart divisions among you. It has been a timely topic. England is in conflict, as are its churches. You have struggles at work and at home. These messages have informed your mind and convicted your heart, but applying them has come more slowly. Peacemaking is painful. Change is hard. Forgiving and asking forgiveness are humbling. Pastor Burroughs steps into the pulpit.

And now, my brothers, as the eunuch said to Philip concerning his baptism: “Here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:36). In the same way I say concerning our uniting in peace and love one with another, “Here are uniting principles, uniting considerations, uniting virtues, and uniting practices. What hinders us from joining in love and peace with one another?” Surely nothing hinders us but our own extremely corrupt and perverse hearts.

Peace and Healing

The apostle Paul is quite earnest in his desires and appeals for this unity:

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
(1 Corinthians 1:10)

The word translated “perfectly joined” is used for when a bone that is out of joint is perfectly set right again.

So also Philippians 2:1–3:

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

The apostle pours forth his soul in this appeal. It is a heart-breaking exhortation.

Martin Luther was a man of a stirring, hot spirit. Yet writing to the pastors of the church of Strasburg he has these words: “I pray you are persuaded that I will always be as desirous to embrace unity as I am desirous to have the Lord Jesus to be gracious to me.” I find also in a letter that Martin Bucer writes to a godly minister a very high expression of that high esteem and earnest desire he had for the curing of divisions: “Who would not,” says he, “purchase with his life the removal of that infinite scandal that comes by dissension?”

Oh, that there were such hearts in us! Christ expects it from us all, but especially from His ministers, for they are His ambassadors for peace appointed to plead with men on His behalf to be reconciled to God. Reconciliation with God will reconcile us to one another: “If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).

**Reconciliation with God
will reconcile us to one another:
“If God so loved us, we also
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(1 John 4:11).**

The faces of the cherubim in the temple looked toward one another (Exodus 25:20), which some think signified the agreement that should exist among ministers of the gospel. So also the six branches in the lampstand all joined together in one (Exodus 25:31–32). For those who hold the light of truth before others should be united in peace as one among themselves.

The first thing Christ’s ministers were to do when they came to any place was to say, “Peace to this house.” If any sons of peace were there, they were to remain, otherwise not (Luke 10:5–6). Surely, then, it is expected that they themselves should be sons of peace.

The contentions of church members are offensive, but the contentions of ministers are a scandal with witnesses. In all ages of the church, corrupt ministers have been the greatest causes of divisions. They have been some of the cruelest



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APPENDIX
AND NOTES

Appendix

How to Disagree without Being Divisive

One of the greatest challenges to true Christian unity is that different Christians interpret God's truth differently. How we approach these differences largely determines whether or not they will divide us. This tool can help determine whether an alternate interpretation is worth contesting or is a permissible part of the diversity that God allows and intends for His church.

We affirm absolutely and unapologetically that all Scripture is inspired by God and is therefore authoritative and inerrant. However, we also acknowledge that not all inspired Scripture is equally clear or essential, for this is the authoritative, inerrant testimony of Scripture itself.

Jesus affirmed that some commandments are less important and that there are lighter and weightier parts of God's law (Matthew 5:19; 23:23). Paul stressed Christ's death and resurrection as the most important elements of the apostles' teaching (1 Corinthians 15:3–8). Peter conceded that in Paul's writings "are some things hard to understand" (2 Peter 3:16), and there will always be speculation in matters that God has intentionally left secret (Deuteronomy 29:29).

The Bible's teachings provide Christians four categories in which to locate our differences in Biblical interpretation:



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Our greatest joys and pains come from relationships. Healthy relationships bring happiness; broken ones bring sorrow. Sadly, every one of us struggles with dysfunctional relationships. We need practical, Biblical guidance to restore them. We need peace and healing, which is just what our summary of this classic work helps provide.

Jeremiah Burroughs was a respected English preacher whose final sermon series was devoted to reconciling God's people with one another. This Puritan pastor draws from a lifetime of Bible study and ministry experience to reveal the sources and dangers of division and to recommend God's solutions. This insightful, practical resource will help restore love and harmony to the most important relationships in your life.

The Be United in Christ Outreach Ministry's mission is to teach and promote Christian unity in accordance with God's Word. Visit **BeUnitedinChrist.com** to learn more!

