

Divided We Stand

“Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.” - Luke 12:51

“Our country is so divided” many say.

I agree, but when most people are fighting over who gets to have the power to make others obey their orders, division is one of our greatest defenses against dogmatism.

I don't want to be unified at all costs. I want to be free at all costs. And freedom has always been divisive.

Most of the people who spend their time talking about the plight of division are the “political losers.” That is, the ones who feel as if the division leaves them at the mercy of an unfriendly upper hand. When they complain about division, what they're really upset about is being on the losing side of a division that already existed long before they were angry about it.

There are always political losers. Lots of them. And the political losers are always divided against the winners. The topic of division, however, only seems urgent when you're one of the political losers. If you're on the winning side in politics, you typically don't care about the losers. You mostly see them as whiny cry babies who should either leave the country or accept the results of our democratic process. In other words, the winners see “unity” as “stop complaining, get with the program, accept the fact that we're winning, try to understand the logic of our approach, and support our superior strategy for taking this country in the right direction.”

The goal for the political losers who bemoan division is a form of unity that is based on *their* terms and *their* ideological assumptions. What they want is the political power to dethrone the winners and make others conform to *their* definition of unity. And what better serves as a balancing force to the desire for political power than division? If you feel like you're losing politically, then division is your saving grace. If it weren't for division, the very people you see as evil would simply force the world to conform with their ideals.

You might find yourself thinking “Well, sure that's partially true but our division is a sign that things are really bad this time around.” And to that I say “Not for the winners. The winners don't see it that way at all. While you're stressing out about division, they're busy feeling hopeful about the new direction they're taking things in. And that's probably how you felt the last time you identified with the winning side.”

Things are always really bad and things are always really good. It's just a matter of when you decide to start caring and what you decide to care about. But don't fool yourself about

the following: our nation and our world has always been divided about what really matters and what needs to be done about it. We just happen to live in a technological age where the political losers have more ways to make themselves heard. The good ole days when everyone was mostly on the same page is a complete fantasy. Division has always been among us and division is here to stay.

What we need is less complaining about division and more strategic thinking about how to use division as a tool for creating a decentralized world.

I don't want to sit on the throne. I don't want you sitting on throne. I don't want all of us to sit on the throne together. I don't want to attack anyone who's on the throne. I don't want to destroy the throne. I don't want to declare myself an enemy of the throne. I don't want to wage war against the throne. I don't even want to talk about the throne. I want to build things that undermine the very relevance and perceived necessity of the throne.

I don't want a world where division is seen as something that needs to be overcome by the "right" central institution. I want a world where division is the very foundation for an entirely new landscape of human interaction and exchange.

If you disagree with me, then I think we have a very strong foundation to build upon. We're going to need every bit of your disagreement and distrust for the world we're creating.