FRIENDLY FIRE

Intro: In wars comrades sometimes unknowingly and accidentally shoot at one another sometimes with the result of killing friends. This mishap is known by the term “Friendly Fire.” During the Gulf War it is reported that 95 people were killed by friendly fire. This is a tragic situation and our hearts go out to those families who suffer the loss of a loved one by such means. Yet, the number “shot down” within the church by our own brethren is uncountable and we often do not seem to be concerned with it. Let us notice some friendly fire within the Lord’s church with kills souls. Let us also realize that the loss of a soul is of greater magnitude than the loss of physical life; Mat. 16:26 “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

I. BY HARSH JUDGMENTS.

A. There are judgment we are commanded to make.

1. John 7:24 “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”
2. 1 Cor. 5:3 “For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,”
3. Mat. 7:6 “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”
4. Mat. 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

B. There are some judgments which are wrong.

1. John 7:24 “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”
2. Mat. 7:1-4 “Judge not, that ye be not judged: and with what judgment ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?”
3. Types of judgments condemned by God.
   a. By outward appearance (don’t wear good clothes, drive a nice car, they are dirty, etc.).
   b. Not believing what someone says about an event (a problem, question, etc.).
   c. Refusing to believe a person has repented of a sin.

C. As we judge others, we will be judged.

1. Jam. 2:13 “For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”
2. Luke 6:36-38 “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

II. BY FAULT FINDING.

A. Some are never going to be happy unless they are complaining.

1. Luke 7:33-35 “For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say,
Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children. 

2. Luke 7:37-50 “And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

3. These type of people will nit-pick everything.
   a. They will seldom if ever give any compliments.
   b. This is true whether it is in the business world or church members.

B. Showing ill-will toward brethren.
1. 3 John 10 “Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”

2. 1 John 3:15 “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

C. Then spreading things about others.
1. Often there is backbiting and gossip prevalent among brethren.
   a. Pro. 17:9 “He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.”
   b. 2 Cor. 12:20 “For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:”
   c. Tit. 3:2-3 “To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

2. Gal. 5:14-15 “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”
III. **By Indifference.**

A. **Toward The Poor**

1. Our attitude toward the poor.
   a. Pro. 21:13 “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.”
   b. Psa. 41:1 “Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.”

2. Results of improper attitude.
   a. A dead faith; Jam. 2:15-17 “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”
   b. No love of God; 1 John 3:17 “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

B. **Toward The Afflicted**

1. Afflicted describes those who are in pain or suffering whether it be physically or mentally.

2. Jam. 1:27 “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

3. Mat. 25:31-46

C. **Toward the Erring**

1. We have a duty toward those who have fallen away from the truth.
   a. Gal. 6:1 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”
   b. Mat. 18:15-20 “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

2. This duty involves withdrawing fellowship to convert them.
   a. 1 Cor. 5:4-5 “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”
   b. 2 The. 3:14-15 “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”
3. When we fail them, we leave them destined for hell.
   a. Jam. 5:19-20 “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 19 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”
   b. Acts 8:20-23 “But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”

IV. **By Lack Of Support.**

A. **God expects us to give aid one to another.**
   1. Acts 20:35 “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
   2. Rom. 15:1 “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”
   3. Gal. 6:1-2 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”
   4. 1 The. 5:14 “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.”
   5. Even in trying to win others to Christ; 1 Cor. 9:22 “To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”

B. **How we treat fellow Christians, is how we are treating Christ.**
   1. Acts 9:4 “And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”
   2. Mat. 25:40 “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Conclusion: Are Christians safe in our midst?