

Dwelling Together in Unity

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Invisible to our human eyes are a variety of armies that are warring for our attention. These armies of demons are organized with supernatural unity, according to Job 41:14-16. No air comes between them, and they cannot be separated through human effort. Their aim is to divide, to distract, and to confuse believers.

Given this reality, Christians should be determined more than ever to possess the unity that comes through the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit. Sadly, many believers feed on ashes (Isaiah 44:20). That is, they relate to each other on the basis of things that have been forgiven and forgotten. Instead of recognizing that the price for every sin has been paid through one sacrifice, they slither through the dust of gossip and deceit. The result is divided churches and broken lives.

I want to show you through these pages how the unity of God is unwavering in its char-

acter. And, if we will purpose to labor together in love, we can develop into Christians who can stand up to any onslaught from the devil through the unction that flows from the Holy One (1 John 2:20).

Chapter One

KNITTED TOGETHER
THROUGH TRUTH

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:19-23).

“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said

any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:32-33).

It is very important for believers to understand unity from the viewpoint of the Cross and from the standpoint of grace. We are hid with Christ in God in the Body (Colossians 3:3). What’s more, He has promised that we will prosper even as our souls prosper (3 John 1:2).

When Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, He did not leave us with anything less than unity—the unity of forgiveness, cleansing, purging, and fellowship. There is precious unity of faith that flows from the pastor-teacher to the congregation. The power of unity is the result of resurrected life in the unity of grace.

As part of His Body, we need to guard this unity. When we grasp the significance of oneness in Jesus Christ (God is in us, we are in God, and His Word abides in us), we experience a union that cannot be severed and we all speak the same judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Demons are organized so that no air comes between them. Should not we, as Christians, as

the organic organism of Christ on earth, also be indivisible, serving with the same mind, the same speech, and the same love of God?

God wants us to understand that we are knit together in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Greek text of Colossians 2:2 really brings out the principle that we are to be knit together by God Himself in love. It is only then that the Body has a unity that cannot be severed.

Filled for Unity

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we submit to one another in love. I will listen to someone who is showing me an area where I am ignorant or where I have a blind spot. "I see it, I see it," would be my response. My ignorance or blind spot is caused by not having proper information; it isn't something caused by reaction or rebellion. Therefore, as soon as I receive precise truth on the subject, I will immediately submit and get right (see Ephesians 5:21).

It is such a wonderful thing to dwell in the unity of love, the unity of faith, the unity of power, the unity of grace, and the unity of heart with God. His doctrine through the Holy Spirit produces precise knowledge that ties us together through the acknowledgment of Christ.

With this kind of response to truth that is ministered in love, we preserve the precious unity that God ordained for us to walk in.

Abundant Grace and Glory

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God” (2 Corinthians 4:15).

All things *are* for my sake, and all things *do* work together for good to the glory of God. Christ cannot be divided, even though some people try to split Him up in their own situations.

Paul addressed this in 1 Corinthians. Some claimed to be of Apollos, others claimed to be of Peter, others claimed to be of Paul, and others just claimed to be the community of Jesus Christ. All of them thought that they were special and exclusive of the others. But all of them were wrong. And this time, the divisions had nothing to do with anything the leaders had done.

Each group thought they were right. Yet Christ cannot be divided. They were putting certain gifts ahead of the Giver of those gifts. These people were not humble; they were not broken before God. They did not realize or practice the truth of Matthew 20:28 where Jesus said, “I came

not to be ministered unto; I came to minister.”

Chapter Two

PURPOSE TO LABOR IN LOVE

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5-8).

By this emptying of Himself, Jesus Christ was in effect saying, “All I have ever done is for you. All I wanted on this earth was to serve you. When we walk together and talk together, being a servant will no longer seem like a duty to you. Instead, you will have My Spirit and you will possess a faith that serves by love. Then, we will have a three-fold unity (see 1 Thessalonians 1:3),

and you will love and serve others as I have loved and served you.”

Oh, the labor of love the people of God can demonstrate! I have been so privileged to work with many who have labored in love in God’s work of faith. What is the work of faith? It is laboring in love when the crowds are small and only a few come out to your services, yet you continue to serve, obedient to your calling. You simply enjoy Jesus and honor God, going on just as if you had a great multitude serving with you.

A Purpose that Triumphs

This kind of labor brings purpose to worship and purpose to our listening. There is purpose in what we say and purpose in our fellowship. The eternal purpose of Ephesians 3:11 is evident in all that we do. We have purpose when we think. We have a purpose to receive something from the throne of God when we listen to the Word.

In Revelation 17:13, Satan’s purpose is made evident. The antichrist, the false prophet, and the dragon are all of one evil mind. They live in a counterfeit unity to promote their own purposes against us. But God has prepared us to stand against them, as we stand in perfect one-

ness, knit together in His love.

Brought Together at the Cross

Picture how unity in the Body of Christ is developed. While we were God's enemies and were far, far away from Him, Jesus died for us on the Cross (Romans 5:8). We didn't love Him, and we were determined to go our own way. Yet, Christ died, saying, "I am dying to show you a love that goes beyond what you have ever witnessed or experienced in your existence."

Then, we were saved, and the Holy Spirit regenerated us. We didn't understand much at first, but the Word of God came in and we started to fellowship around it. And now, as we grow, we learn to become disciples—not of a man, but of Christ.

Slowly, through the local assembly and the pastor-teacher we develop a unity of faith. We respond to precise doctrine, and so do those around us. When any one of us fails, we rebound. Those who were wrong get right in the unity of humility. When I am wrong and someone else is right, I am ministered to, and I get right. God quickens us together by His Word.

Chapter Three

GOD COMMANDS A BLESSING

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

“It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

“As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore” (Psalm 133).

This is a very important psalm. “Behold” indicates that the Spirit is asking us to really focus, concentrate, respond, and reciprocate the principles about to be declared. “Good” speaks of something divinely wonderful. “Pleasant” refers to the impeccable, incomprehensible grace, love, and mercy of God that is so pleasant to live in the midst of.

We cannot afford to live outside of unity.

Ephesians 4:3 says that we must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There are demons attacking the Body with their own brand of unity, therefore we cannot afford to be indifferent toward other believers. We cannot afford to talk behind other people's backs. This is not the time for us to live in reaction or start blaming others for what is going on around us.

There is no disunity in the Godhead. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ by bringing to our remembrance the things that Jesus has taught us (John 16:14). When He walked on earth, Jesus would not speak anything except as the Holy Spirit told Him. The Son of God would not speak without hearing from the Father through the Spirit. Each member of the Trinity has such a fixed heart toward each other.

Unchanging Oneness

What unity God has displayed throughout the ages! He has revealed such love toward His people, from the cradle of salvation until they go home to be with Him, perfected with new bodies either through death or at the Rapture. Even in sin, God deals with believers in perfect love because of the Finished Work of His Son. God

said He would never, no never, no never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Even if we make our beds in hell, He is there (see Psalm 139:8).

The Lord's message has never varied. It has always been revealed in unity.

God wants His people to be as one as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are One. Every Monday morning, I start my week off by searching my heart. I get with those who are in my office, and the first thing we consider is this: Is everything okay with me and the Body? I will not move on if there is something dividing us.

Why? The Lord will not command a blessing unless there is unity (Psalm 133:3).

God commanded light to shine, and there was light. He commanded there to be vegetation, and plants appeared upon the earth. He separated the earth from the water and He produced man from the dust of the earth. Now, He commands blessing when there is Spirit-filled, doctrinal unity.

Absolute Peace

Think about this: When Joshua and Caleb finally were allowed to bring Israel into the Promised Land, absolute peace and unity among

the nations continued for forty years. After all of the internal strife and murmuring that had gone on during their journeys in the wilderness, this was something new.

Do you desire unity in your marriage? Start by having unity with God and hide doctrine in your heart. If my heart is not one with God, then I cannot be one with my wife—no matter how sincere I am. Satan cannot do anything to a marriage that has Spirit-filled unity, the kind of unity that is produced by the Holy Spirit of grace through the lovingkindness revealed through the Blood of the Lamb.

How about the unity of turning the other cheek? I have seen this in great leaders' lives again and again. There are leaders who do more than love those who love them. They turn the other cheek to those who use them. They go the extra mile and give up their coat, even to an enemy.

Those who are united with a purpose to glorify God bring Him pleasure. They cannot be divided.

CONCLUSION

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Unity is such a beautiful thing to the heart of God. Oh, the unity of silence, the unity of thinking no evil, the unity of bearing all things, believing all things, and hoping all things. When God’s people have this kind of unity, they do not look backward, and they do not look inward. No, they look upward and keep going forward.

When our souls are revived by the Word and the Spirit, we become so quickened by God Himself that we can endure all things without ever feeling worn out. Such unity brings revival, and it brings in obedience.

The unity of obedience brings about an agreement to be soul winners in our Jerusalems—our neighborhood, our towns, our cities, and our counties. It also gives us a vision to witness in our Judeas and our Samarias—our states,

our provinces, and our nations. Finally, it causes us to take the Word to the uttermost parts of the world. We agree to go out to all the world, bearing the message of the Gospel as best we can.

The unity of obedience produces a vision. This vision includes taking up our cross daily. When we take up our cross in the unity of sacrifice, God commands a blessing. Not just for today and tomorrow, but for evermore.