

The Holy Spirit  
(Part 16: Unifies the Body)

XVI. The Spirit Unifies the Body.

A. Orientation.

1. We've seen with regard to the Spirit:
  - a. He is a person.
  - b. He is a divine person.
  - c. He is a distinct person from the Father and the Son.
  - d. His particular character/nature is love.
  
2. With regard to His work:
  - a. He imparts His love to God's people in regeneration.
  - b. He continues to make that love grow in sanctification.
  - c. He guides us to our calling by drawing our hearts out to what He wants us to do.
  - d. He gives us zeal in our service to God by strengthening our desire to glorify Him in it.
  - e. He helps us study the Word by illuminating its divine beauty.
  - f. He helps us obey and restrains our sins by giving us love for righteousness.
  - g. He increases our joy and peace, and assures us of our adoption by giving us a delight in God and showing us that we're loved by God.

B. The Spirit Unifies the Body.

1. This evening, let's consider one last work:
  - a. He unifies the body of Christ.
  - b. "1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:1-6).
  
2. What is Paul referring to here by the word "body."
  - a. He means the church.
  - b. Which church is he referring to? Ephesus, Colossae, Philippi, the OPC?
    - (i) The universal church.
    - (ii) Is this the visible or invisible church?
      - (a) Invisible.
      - (b) What is the invisible church?
        - (1) The elect.
        - (2) Those who have truly trusted Jesus Christ.
  - c. How many bodies/churches does Jesus have?
    - (i) Only one.

- (ii) Note the repetition of the word “one” in our passage.
  - (a) How many Spirits are there? Only one, the Holy Spirit.
  - (b) How many Lord’s? Only one, the Lord Jesus.
  - (c) How many faiths? Only one. What is he referring to here?
    - (1) Either the grace of faith – the ability to believe –
    - (2) Or the Gospel.
  - (d) How many baptisms? Only one. What is this referring to?
    - (1) Either the baptism of the Spirit,
    - (2) Or water baptism that represents that washing and union.
  - (e) How many God and Fathers? Only one.
  - (f) How many hopes were you called to? Only one.
  - (g) So also there is *only one body*.
- d. What is Paul driving at by this repetition?
  - (i) That there *should be unity* in the body/church.
  - (ii) And what is he imploring us to do?
    - (a) To *preserve* the unity the Spirit creates
    - (b) In the bond of peace.
- e. How much of an effort does he want us to make?
  - (i) A great deal: be *diligent*.
  - (ii) *Have we* been diligent?
  - (iii) Considering *all the denominations* that exist: *No*.
- 3. Does Jesus love the members of His own body? Of course!
  - a. How many of them? All of them.
    - (i) “Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end” (John 13:1).
    - (ii) He laid down His life for each one.
    - (iii) He now intercedes for each one
    - (iv) To keep them in His grace.
  - b. If He loves them, should you love them too? Of course.
    - (i) “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).
    - (ii) “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in

My name He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another”  
(John 15:12-17).

- c. What does the Spirit give us to help us do this?
  - (i) Love.
  - (ii) This is His particular characteristic/nature.
  
- d. What are some of the fruits mentioned in our text that this love produces that will help us preserve this unity?
  - (i) Humility. How does this help?
    - (a) Consider the destructive nature of its opposite: Pride.
      - (1) When we can't admit our weaknesses, faults, sins,
      - (2) When we can't humble ourselves to serve,
      - (3) But insist on being served,
      - (4) It destroys unity.
  
    - (b) Humility
      - (1) Helps us confess and repent
      - (2) Of the things we're responsible for,
      - (3) Helping to bring peace.
      - (3) It also helps us to serve one another.
  
  - (ii) Gentleness. How does this help?
    - (a) Again, consider its opposite: Harshness.
      - (1) Harshness/pushiness
      - (2) Offends and divides.
  
    - (b) But gentleness
      - (1) Ministers/heals.
      - (2) Makes what we say more palatable.
  
  - (iii) Patience. How does this help?
    - (a) Its opposite is impatience.
      - (1) If we're impatient
      - (2) We'll tend to get angry
      - (3) And become harsh.
  
    - (b) Patience helps us remain calm.
  
  - (iv) And tolerance. How does this help?
    - (a) Its opposite is intolerance.
      - (1) Patience refers to a calm emotional state.
      - (2) Tolerance is its fruit: the way we relate to others.
      - (3) To be intolerant means
      - (4) Not to be patient with another.

- (b) Tolerance means to be gentle towards others.
  
- e. If someone professes to be a Christian
  - (i) And in the name of truth
  - (ii) Exhibits these negative characteristics,
  - (iii) Is he or she doing so under the influence of the Spirit? No.
  - (iv) These are the things that destroy the unity of the body,
  - (v) Which is one of the things the Lord hates.
  - (vi) “There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness *who* utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers” (Prov. 6:16-19).
  
- f. Is the Lord here telling us to overlook sin or error? No.
  - (i) But to deal with our brothers and sisters
  - (ii) In humility, gently, patiently, tolerantly, in love,
  - (iii) Always seeking to restore.
  - (iv) If you do these things, you will be walking
  - (v) In a way that is worthy of your calling
  - (vi) To be like Jesus, who did the same. Amen.

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