

Unity In The Church

Introduction

(I Co 1:10)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. New series of lessons on “Unity In The Church.”
 - a. Paul while writing to the church in Corinth said, inspired by God, that we as Christians ought to be united in the Word of God.
 - i. **I Co 1:10** “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 (NKJV)
 - b. Jesus prayed that the church ought to be united in the Godhead.
 - i. **Jn 17:20-21** “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”
3. Over the years there have been a number of things that have keep the church from being united.
 - a. All of them have one thing in common... an unsound use of Scripture.
4. Over the next several weeks we are going to look at this series from two different view points.
 - a. First we are going to look at it from the view point of change agents and the liberal mindset of so many in the church today.
 - b. Second we are going to look at it from the view point of the non-institutional and the liberal mindset of the church from the past that still continues this day.
 - i. The term liberal originally was used to depict those that taught contrary to sound doctrine.
 1. **II Ti 4:3** “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions”
 - ii. The term conservative originally was used to depict those that taught sound doctrine.
 1. **Ti 2:1** “But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.”
 - iii. Thus there is no such thing as “very liberal” or “ultra conservative.”
 1. You either adhere to sound doctrine or you don’t.
5. Whether we are talking about the liberal change agent mindset or non-institutional mindset we must always remember that God expects unity.
 - a. Thus today we will look at what is expect and what it will take to have “Unity In The Church.”

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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I. Biblical Bases Of Unity

- A. The Word of God is the bases in which unity is made
 - 1. Remember what Paul wrote once again.
 - i. **I Co 1:10** “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.” (NKJV)
 - 2. Now look what that “mind” is we are to be united in.
 - i. **I Co 2:10-16** “these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God...16...we have the mind of Christ.”
 - 3. Now look what that “judgment” is we are to be united in.
 - i. **Jn 12:48** “The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.”
- B. Thus...
 - 1. The Word of God should be our total and complete unifying factor.
 - i. **II Ti 3:16-17** “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
 - ii. **Ep 4:1-6** “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called...3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

II. Biblical Consequences Of Unity

- A. Christians will be persecuted when they strive for unity
 - 1. Over the last twenty years or so there has been a push by the denominational world to be “unified.”
 - i. The problem with this is that it is not based on unity in speech, mind, and judgment but rather “goals.”
 - a. If you look at the basic plea it is “let us be unity by agreeing to disagree on everything but getting to heaven.”
 - 2. Biblical unity does not agree with this mentality however.
 - i. Thus if you speak out against compromising sound doctrine you are persecuted for such a “narrow minded” approach.
- B. Thus...
 - 1. Brethren let this not bother us as it is that which Jesus said would happen.
 - i. **Jn 15:20** “Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.”
 - 2. Paul told Timothy the same thing.
 - i. **II Ti 3:12** “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”

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III. Biblical Unity & Biblical Fellowship

- A. There are some things we need to consider before diving in here
1. First nowhere, that I am aware of, does the Bible teach that that congregations can disfellowship other congregations.
 - i. There are plenty of Scriptures dealing with congregations disfellowshipping their members but not other congregations.
 - a. **II Th 3:14** “If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.”
 2. Second nowhere, that I am aware of, does the Bible teach that individuals can disfellowship anyone. Only the church can disfellowship a member of that congregation.
 - i. There is no individual to individual disfellowship.
 - a. **Mt 18:15-17** “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”
 2. Third the word fellowship means to be in agreement however...
 - i. It doesn't mean perfect agreement.
 - a. **I Jn 1:6-7** “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”
 - ii. If we were in perfect agreement with God and others there would be no need for the blood of Jesus to cleanse us after becoming Christians.
- B. So where is the line between unity and fellowship
1. Some would have everyone believe that if a brother or sister believes one thing wrong we must not be in fellowship with them.
 - i. I heard of a man who one time stated “there are only two sound congregations in Oklahoma.”
 - a. This gentleman happened to be at a preachers Bible study where more than two congregations were represented and quickly backtracked that statement.
 - ii. There are others like “Contending For The Faith” or as I think it would be better called “Contentious For The Faith” that blast anyone and everyone that “disagrees” with them.
 2. Others would have everyone believe that if a brother or sister believes nothing right and agrees on no sound doctrine we can still have fellowship with them.
 - i. This is the old “agree to disagree” theology.

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3. The truth lies in the middle.
 - i. It cannot be the case that one false doctrine can keep us out of fellowship with that person if their motives are still right.
 - a. Out of all the problems in Corinth Paul only wrote to disfellowship one person.
 1. By Second Corinthians not every problem had been fixed and yet still no disfellowshipping. Even the brother that they had been told to disfellowship repented and was no longer in that state.
 - ii. It cannot be the case that blatant disregard for sound doctrine can be excused either.
 - a. Even Jesus eventually said he would remove the lampstand from a number of congregations if they did not repent.
 - iii. It comes down to two things keeping in mind the things we looked at earlier.
 - a. First how much firsthand knowledge do we have?
 1. By firsthand knowledge I mean that you have talked with the person and found to be true that that which is under consideration.
 - b. Second how hard have you tried to help your brother or sister out of this sin.
 1. Paul was clear that we are to strive to help those that are in need of restoration.
 - i. **Ga 6:1**
 2. Also this will make abundantly clear whether or not that person is willing to repent.

C. Thus...

1. Brethren if we strive for unity in fellowship with love and care for the church we will not go wrong.
 - i. Every case is different and every situation is unique.
 - ii. Let us never become so arrogant or foolish as to think there is a cookie cutter mold here.
 - a. However we do have everything we need to make proper determinations on these issues if we use the guide given us.
 1. **II Pt 1:3**

CONCLUSION

1. Let it be said of each of us that we desire and pray earnestly for “Unity In The Church.”
 - a. Let us seek such out.
2. Question: Are you seeking unity and fellowship with your brethren?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?

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3. Invitation

- a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**