

Unity In The Church

Nothing In A Name

(Ro 16:16)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on the “Unity In The Church.”
 - a. Last week we looked at a very divisive change agent “Mechanical Instruments.”
 - i. **Co 3:16-17** “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”¹
 - b. This week we will be examining the idea of “Nothing In A Name.”
 - i. **Ro 16:16** “Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.”
3. In our day today we are living in a “generic” society and time.
 - a. The idea that any group and person should “standout” and be unique is fading.
 - i. Don’t get me wrong there are plenty of people that want to “look different” then the general public but they are not seeking exclusion based on that but acceptance.
 - b. Thus we live in a time when no is seeking to stand out.
4. That is why the idea of “name” has dissipated in religion.
 - a. No one wants to be associated with any specific religious group really they want religious anonymity.
 - b. This is where denominationalism has led itself.
 - i. If everyone under the title “Christian” can get to heaven no matter what they do why be associated with any “Christian” group.
5. This very mentality has bled into the Lord’s church.
 - a. I remember when Oak Hills church of Christ, where Max Lucado preaches, dropped “of Christ” off their name.
 - i. Their reason was “of Christ” had become a hindrance.
 - ii. That is right the name “church of Christ” had become known as something they did not like and thus it was hindering them.
 1. It wasn’t generic enough to “include” everyone.
 2. The name suggested some exclusion.
 - b. One of the big reasons “Community Church” was named thusly was because it allowed for “no denomination ties.”
 - i. They thought having ties to other denominations as a hindrance.
6. Thus the reason why so many in “Christendom” have suggest there really is “Nothing In A Name.”
 - a. Today brethren we are going to look at this idea and see if this really is true as this has caused division 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. A Name Brings Association

- A. People and groups are named so others know who they are associated with
 - 1. When we are born parents do not have to pick out every name of the child.
 - i. That last name is given already, why, because it is the name that associates that child with that family.
 - ii. Imagine the chaos in today's hospitals if there were only first names given to new born babies.
- B. Jesus associated the church with Him
 - 1. It would be "His church."
 - i. **Mt 16:18** "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (NKJV)
 - 2. He did not say it would be Luther's, Calvin's or any other mans' church it would be His church.
- C. Thus...
 - 1. We can see clearly that Jesus did not think that "generic" terminology was "ok" as He specifically wanted it understood the church belonged to Him.

II. A Name Brings Expectations

- A. People and groups have names which have expectations attached with them
 - 1. When you hear the name "Kennedy" what expectation do you associate with that name...politics.
 - 2. When you hear the name Baptist, Muslim, Catholic, etc...there are expectations with those names.
- B. Each name for the church in the Bible has with it expectations
 - 1. The church
 - i. **Ac 8:1** "And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church..."
 - a. The Greek word for church is "ekklesia" which means "called out."
 - b. The expectation is that these people were called out of darkness and into the light.
 - 1. **Co 3:1** "If then you have been raised with Christ..."
 - 2. The house of God
 - i. **I Ti 3:15** "...the house of God, which is the church of the living God..." (NKJV)
 - a. The expectation is that these people live with God and as such they are expected to keep as the master of the home expects it.
 - 1. **I Ti 3:15** "but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (NKJV)

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3. The body of Christ
 - i. **Ep 4:12** “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”
 - a. The expectation is unity as the church is one.
 1. **Ep 1:22-23** “And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”
 2. **Ep 4:4** “There is one body and one Spirit...”
 4. The bride of Christ
 - i. **Rv 21:2, 9** “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband...9...Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”
 - a. The expectation is love and submissiveness.
 1. **Ep 5:25** “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”
 2. **Ep 5:22-23** “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.”
 5. The church of God, Christ, Firstborn
 - i. **I Co 1:2** “To the church of God that is in Corinth...”
 - ii. **Ro 16:16** “...All the churches of Christ greet you.”
 - iii. **He 12:23** “to the general assembly and church of the firstborn...”
(NASB95)
 - a. The expectation is association as mentioned in the first point.
- C. Thus...
1. What we can clearly see is that the biblical names given the church are the expectation by God that the church will be called to Him, obedient to Him, unified in Him, loved by Him, submitted to Him, and only associated with Him.

III. Non-Biblical Names Cannot Properly Represent The Church

- A. They fail to honor God
 1. Example of those named after men.
 - i. Lutheran, Mennonite, Mormon, St. Peter's, St Mary's, etc...
 - a. Being named after men elevates those men over God.
 2. Example of those name after doctrines.
 - i. Baptist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Holiness, Methodist, 7th Day Adventists etc...
 - a. Being named after doctrines or practices elevates those over God.
- B. They fail to unite
 1. There is a reason why these call themselves denominations.
 - i. It is because they fully know and accept that they are divided rather than being united.
 2. Any non-biblical name cannot unite as it only divides.

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CONCLUSION

1. Brethren as we continue along this study into the “Unity In The Church” let us always stay focused on where our focus should be.
 - a. Brother Mark Teske wrote, “It takes **both** the unifying spirit and the unifying facts to create unity.” (Notes on Ephesians by Teske, Mark pg. 16)
2. Question: Are you striving for unity in the association and expectations of God or in man?
 - a. If God continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If man why, make the change now before it is too late.
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**