

SEMINAR: MINISTRY UNITY

WHAT BRINGS US TOGETHER

1. Unity is Popular

- a. Most every ministry understands the essential importance of unity to ministry.
- b. Ministry is not supposed to destroy, confuse, knock down, denigrate, but to unite.
- c. *How do we bring people together, how do we get along, how do we become one?*
- d. Reason for many denominations, churches, is that we cannot all agree on what we should be doing - particularly around the subject of unity.

2. The Ministry of Unity

- a. The church has a unique ministry of unity: church, communion, fellowship, one body
 - i. People unite around different things: country, politics, interests, values, etc.
- b. Our Lord unites: the truth of Jesus Christ, his beneficial grace to all - Eph 1:10
- c. Our gospel message unites:
 - i. Christ died for all - Saviour of all men - no exclusion - 1 Tim 2:6, 1 Cor 15:3
 - ii. Gospel of grace extended to all sinners alike - Rom 11:32, Eph 2:8-9
 - iii. No male or female in Christ - Gal 3:28, Col 3:11
 - iv. We are one with Christ, each other, Holy Ghost, communion - Eph 2:13-14
 - v. Given the ministry of reconciliation - Eph 2:15, 2 Cor 5:18-19
- d. Our ministry to one another unites:
 - i. Told to come together meeting to minister to and with one another.
 - ii. Told to love/minister/forgive/comfort/strengthen/restore one another.
 - iii. Told to live peaceably with all men, quiet and peaceable lives - 1 Tim 2:2
 - iv. Told to endeavor to keep the unity - Eph 4:2-3
 - v. We should have no divisions among the brethren - 1 Cor 1:10
- e. Sadly, little unity exists among churches even about the gospel that saves, today.

3. The Ecumenical Problem

- a. That we should unite is agreed. How to keep the unity is not.
- b. 2 ways to unite around doctrine: easy way or the hard way.
 - i. Easy - Reduce number of doctrines that require agreement. (compromise)
 - 1. More people come together regardless of belief. <-- more people
 - ii. Hard - Increase agreement by communicating truth. (evangelize)
 - 1. More people come together in one mind concerning truth.
- c. Ecumenical/evangelical approach is the easy way/agree to disagree/doctrine divides
- d. *"be perfectly joined together in the same mind and ... judgment"* - 1 Cor 1:10
- e. *"be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind"* - Phi 2:2
- f. *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge ..."* - Eph 4:13
- g. The ecumenical problem is that it avoids the Biblical ministry of unity of the faith
- h. Evangelism is the ministry of unity God has given us - 2 Tim 4:5
- i. Churches are abandoning evangelism.

4. Agree to Disagree Error

- a. How to fail at unity? Answer: Bring people together around the wrong thing.
- b. Is church where people feel they belong, or where people find their belief?
 - i. Belonging is more of an issue than belief for many people.
 - ii. Belonging comes from having something in common with:
 - iii. Danger if the common is not Christ in you, but the same degree of apathy.
 - iv. Church becomes a group with no personal conflict = no ministry needed
 - v. You belong where the truth is taught, and others believe it.
- c. Agree to disagree = we care about personal conflict more than doctrinal conflict.
 - i. Personal conflict is the worst sin in modern evangelical method of unity.
 - ii. Speaking up about doctrine causes personal conflict - "avoid the dividers!"
 - iii. This why they have problems with behavior problems: sin = personal conflict
- d. Agree to disagree is useful if a relationship must be kept w/o agreement.
 - i. (Ministry in your marriage requires relationship before agreement.)
 - ii. Ministry in a church requires agreement on what/how you minister.

5. Successful Unity is Hard Work

- a. Paul says to *endeavor* to keep the unity of the Spirit... Eph 4:2
- b. Unity is not as easy as gathering people that are like you. (All ministry is hard)
- c. Our ministry is to work for unity to forgive, reconcile, restore in the face of sin.
- d. Our ministry is to conform/grow people to the image of Christ, not each other.
- e. Our ministry is to keep the unity of the faith when personal conflict occurs.
- f. When people abandon ministry work when they see sin/personal conflict/doctrinal disagreement then they are failing to minister unity.
- g. When we do the hard work of becoming likeminded, then there is a joy of fellowship
- h. *"one spirit, one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"* - Phi 1:27
- i. *"One body, one Spirit, one hope, one lord, one faith, one God"* ... Eph 4:4-5
- j. *"I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me"*
- k. There is one head. There is one Bible. There is one Body. There is one ministry.