

Unity in the Body of Christ

Monday, May 14, 2018

Pray

Lord, I am your servant, You are my teacher, I am Your student. Teach me this day about Your love for Your church, Your bride.

Read

John 17:11, John 17:20-23

Reflect

This passage in John 17 is what actually should be called The Lord's Prayer. The prayer we pray is the "disciples' prayer," but let's not try to change 2,000 years of history.

What we have here is an extended prayer of Jesus, in which He shares the desire of His heart with our heavenly Father. Using only a few words, write down what that desire is.

In these two passages Jesus uses the word "one." In your opinion, what is He talking about? What would it look like if the worldwide church was "one?"

I find it quite intriguing that in almost all cases, we look to Jesus to answer our prayer. Here, there's a reversal. Jesus speaks to the Father in a way that we can answer His prayer. How well do you feel the church (we) is doing in answering His prayer? Why do you think that is? What is one thing you could do to move our church closer to being an answer to Jesus' prayer?

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Tuesday, May 15, 2018

Pray

Lord, I profess that I have been part of the problem instead of the solution, regarding the unity in the church. Open my heart and eyes to see how I can change that.

Read

Ephesians 4:1-3

Reflect

In today's and tomorrow's passage we have the most all-inclusive statement in scripture. Summarize in a short sentence what Paul is getting at here.

The admonition here is not to create unity but to maintain, or keep, or guard the unity the Spirit gives. In other words, unity is not something human beings can create. It is something, however, that we can either destroy or support. In order to do this, what character attributes does Paul tell us are necessary for us to possess?

Choose one of the four attributes that Paul lists in verse one that you feel particularly drawn to, either because you see its great importance or because you see the need of it in your own life. What steps can you take today to more fully possess that attribute?

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Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Pray

Father, give me Your heart for Your church. I have my own ideas as to what Your church should look like, what Your church should believe, how Your people should act . . . Take those ideas and throw them away and replace them with Your ideas about Your church.

Read

Ephesians 4:4-6

Reflect

In case we missed the idea in the first three verses, Paul gives us a rapid-fire list of different facets of unity in our faith. List what they are.

As I reflect on this list, I'm overwhelmed with the simplicity and elegant design of God's plan for all things. We, as human beings, like to take the simple and make it complicated and then argue about it. Where have you seen dissension or division in the church in the past? What do you feel was the source of that division? Do you feel the conflict was something that was pleasing to God? In your opinion, why do we persist in our divisive ways when we know it displeases God?

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Thursday, May 17, 2018

Pray

Lord, help me to see the church through Your eyes. Break my heart for that which breaks Your heart.

Read

Romans 15:5-7

Reflect

This passage is one of Paul's most beautiful blessings upon the people of God. What gifts does God give to us?

In this blessing we are to have a particular attitude toward each other, matching the attitude of Jesus Christ. We are not told here what that attitude is. Describe what, in your opinion, that attitude would look like.

Paul uses the term "one voice" here. All of us are to sing or speak with one voice. What does he mean by this? What would that look like? Are we anywhere near glorifying God with one voice?

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Friday, May 18, 2018

Pray

Lord, help us to bear your attributes in our soul so that when others see us they see Christ.

Read

Colossians 3:12-15

Reflect

In this passage, Paul gives us a list of the fruits of the Spirit. Most of us are familiar with the list he gives us in Galatians, but here is a list of equal weight. Paul has written this list as specific attributes that are critical if believers are to relate together in a loving manner. List the attributes that Paul writes down here.

What do you think is the most important attribute that Paul lists? Paul tells us that attribute has the power to do what?

Assuming Paul is correct, why is it then that we are not bound together in perfect unity?

As a result of this week's study, it should be obvious to all of us that the church today is definitely out of step with God's desire for us. What can we, as members of Washington Church, do to be a catalyst for unity in the city?