

9.08.19 ~ Ephesians 4:3-6, Walking in Christian Unity!

Last week (**Ephesians 4:2**) we studied four characteristics that are necessary in order to live in a manner that is worthy of our calling as believers and followers of Jesus Christ, according to the new name that we have received [Christians].

Those characteristics are *humility* (seeing oneself in relationship to God), *gentleness* (willfully submitting our heart, soul, mind and strength to the Lord), *patience* (maturing during times of trials and suffering, trusting in God's plan and provision), and *showing tolerance for* [bearing with] *one another in love* (relating to one another out of Christian love [*agapao*, verb - unselfish, willful, sacrificial doing the right thing at the right time for the right reason]).

Read Ephesians 4:3... Unity is not something added to our fellowship, it is the standard by which God's presence and power is displayed in our individual lives, and in our corporate fellowship in God's Church.

In **Ephesians 4:1** Paul "implores us," i.e., he is earnestly begging, urgently pleading with us to express humility, gentleness, patience and forbearance in our love for one another, making (**verse 3**) diligent effort to keep unity among God's children, for it will not maintain itself.

True Christian unity cannot be created by an individual, or mandated by the church, but by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:13, 20, 27. Those who belong to Christ are part of *one* body of believers; we are members of the same spiritual body, the church. We are not independent of the other parts of this body, and as members we should promote and preserve unity, by not allowing our own feelings and wants to be preeminent. We must allow the Word of God, by the Holy Spirit's presence, to rule our hearts and minds, our words and deeds, through the bond of peace (**Colossians 3:15-16**), "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you."

We must choose to allow God's peace to have authority in our lives; we must allow the truth of God to sink its roots into our heart and mind, so that we might bear fruit that pleases and exemplifies God.

Everything that relates to salvation, the church, and the kingdom of God, is based on the concept of unity.

Read Ephesians 4:4... There is only *one body* of believers; composed of every person who has or will trust in Christ as Savior and Lord.

There is no disqualifying attribute among brothers and sisters in Christ, i.e., ethnicity, gender, education, occupation, geography, etc. (Galatians 3:26-28).

There is no Gentile, Jew, male, female, slave or freeman body of believers. There is only Christ's body and the unity of that body is the heart of this passage.

There is only *one Spirit*--the Holy Spirit lives in every believer, He is the unifying force in the body of Christ, given as a pledge [a divine engagement ring] to the bride of Christ [the Church], and God's Son is the Bridegroom. God's Spirit (see **Ephesians 1:13-14**) guarantees that every believer will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven (cf. **Revelation 19:9**).

When believers walk in obedience to God's Word, in the power of the Holy Spirit, our beliefs and behaviors will be purified as we are unified in the *one hope* of our calling, to be like Christ.

We have different gifts, ministries, and types of service, but everything is given for the mutual edification of the church (see **1Corinthians 12:4-7**).

1John 3:2, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is."

Ephesians 4:5... There is only *one Lord* and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Romans 10:12, "For the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him."

There is only *one faith* in true Christianity, and this faith is based upon the body of doctrine revealed in the New Testament, expressing the very character of God and the principles and precepts by which we are to live out our lives in order to bring glory to Him.

Everything that leads us to God, nurtures us in His Word, and guarantees to keep us for all of eternity with Jesus Christ the Lord, is the one faith we have.

There is only *one baptism* among believers, spiritual baptism, placing us into the Body of Christ by God's Spirit (see **Mark 1:7-8; John 3:1-6**).

1Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

It is true that Christians identify with Christ through water baptism, for this is the means by which a believer publicly confesses Jesus as Savior and Lord; but water baptism doesn't save us, it is a testimony of identification with and unity in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:6... There is *One God and Father* of all, who is over all and through all and in all. God's oneness is foundational to Christianity.

Deuteronomy 6:4, "The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

1Corinthians 8:6, "for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him."

We are one body of people, unified by one Spirit, in one hope, under one Lord, with one faith, one baptism and One God who is over all, and through all, and in all.

Do you know for sure that you are a child of God? Have you repented of your sins, and called upon Jesus Christ to save you? The Bible is very clear..

Romans 3:10-12, "as it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.'"

Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:1, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

If you have never asked God to save you, repenting of your sins and believing in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, why haven't you?.

What reason could you possibly have to continue rejecting God's forgiveness for your sins (past, present, and future)?

Why would you not want to receive the gift of eternal life that is given to all who believe in God's Son?

Romans 10:9-10, "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." **13** for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

And all God's people said? Amen!

Pastor Mike
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