

JESUS IS LORD WORSHIP CENTER

BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAY 28 JUNE 2017

LOVE AND UNITY
SUSTAIN
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

John 17:20-24 (ESV) The prayer of Jesus:

20 “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.²² The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are One,²³ I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me.²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”

God hates **discord** because discord is a cancer in the body of Christ. Discord kills congregational members and families that would otherwise be alive and productive in the body of Christ.

Proverbs 6:16-19 Lists the things that God hates.

Matthew 18:15-20 “...if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.”

Romans 16:17 “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

PAUL'S CRY FOR UNITY AS ONE BODY OF BELIEVERS

The Apostle Paul writes in **Colossians 3:12**, his letter to the Church in Colossæ^{*}: “*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*” In today’s English, we would say: Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

PUT ON THE NEW SELF

1 “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

DEATH TO THE OLD MAN

5 “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices.”

THE NEW REGENERATED MAN

10 “And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.”

FORBEARANCE --

BE PATIENT, BE TOLERANT, AND BE EMPATHETIC IN LOVE

12 “Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

LOVE IS THE GLUE

14 “And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ 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.

CONCLUSION

Nothing will derail the vision of a Christian Ministry faster than disunity in the ranks. It is equally true of any business, sports franchise, or a family, as it is for a Church. How many times in the movies have we seen a less talented but determined team pull together and topple the more talented, better financed, more popular, but ego-centered team? It is such a popular ‘truism’ that it has become a cliché.

As your Pastor, in my many years of ministry I have observed Churches that made you scratch your head and wonder why they were not working for the Kingdom of God. They had the necessary talent, resources, and opportunity, but there was no real growth. I really believe that one of the critical factors that **must** be present in order that there can be Church growth and a fulfilled vision is this elusive little element that we call **unity**. Certainly, it is not the only factor, but one cannot honestly conceive of a Church growing without it.

So why is unity so vitally important in any Church?

(1) Because Jesus Himself prayed for unity in the Church:

John 17:23 *“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”*

So, if Jesus prayed for unity in the Church then it *must* be important. He prayed that the Church would follow the shared example of both God the Father and God the Son;

(2). Because unity flows from **love** and love unites the Church in its sacred Mission:

Colossians 3:14 *“And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”*

So, it is love that binds all other virtues together in perfect unity.” Without love there can be no unity whatsoever. But this is the spirit love, the holy love that is received from and focused upon Jesus Christ. There is no other way to maintain harmony and stay the mission on course;

(3). Because unity keeps Christ at the center instead of us:

Ephesians 1:10 *“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:”*

Thus will the Lord bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under his command. It is not about you; it is about Jesus Christ. Your plans, your desires, your preferences, your agenda, and your feelings are as nothing compared to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When we become unified around **that** mission, it changes everything and enables our Churches to be more effective in fulfilling God’s Mission for our lives.

The Psalmist certainly said it best when he wrote these timeless words, *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”*

Apostle Verbert C. Anderson

* **Colossæ**: located about 100 miles east of Ephesus, Colossæ was a Graeco-Phrygian city in the Roman proconsular called Asia Minor, about 10 miles from Laodicea. At one time Colossæ had been a large and populous city, but when Paul wrote to the Colossian church, it had become just a small town. Though small, Colossæ of Paul’s day was still a cosmopolitan city with different cultural and religious elements that were mingled together. Since God’s concern for His own is never based on human distinctions like size, the Colossian church was still close to the heart of God. He obviously thought it important enough to lay it on the heart of the apostle Paul. Significantly, the letter to

this small group of believers became one of the letters of the canon of the New Testament and one of the most important because of what it teaches us regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ.