



A PLEA FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

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Unity among the followers of Christ is a wonderful, blessed thing that can only be achieved by following the apostles' doctrine. The religious division in our society has been caused by religious people "setting aside" Christ's doctrine and promoting the doctrines and teachings of men.

While many cry out today that we must lay aside doctrine and just worship Jesus, Paul told the young preacher Timothy to "take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16).

To achieve the unity our Lord prayed for we must begin with the platform for unity revealed by the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 4:1-6. But we must remember that unity is both relational and doctrinal. Paul said, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3).

A lot of times we put more emphasis on the doctrinal aspect of unity highlighting the section that reads, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" while glossing over the section of this passage that mentions lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and forbearance. The Scriptures make both of these equally important. Our attitude and the way we treat our brothers and sisters in Christ is a crucial element of maintaining Christian unity.

Now consider the doctrinal aspect of unity. Paul begins by saying there is "one body." Ephesians 1:22-34 teaches us that the "one body" is the church "...the church, which is his body..." As was prophesied by Isaiah, Daniel and Joel, this body began on the day of Pentecost following Jesus resurrection (Isaiah 2, Daniel 2, Joel 2 and Acts 2). This church belongs to Christ, it follows Him and it is identified by His name (Ephesians 1:22-23 & Romans 16:16). Something to

consider: Does the church I am part of resemble this "one body?"

Believers were added by God to this one body and hence united with other believers (Acts 2:47). They found unity by following the teachings being revealed by the "one spirit" which is the Holy Spirit who guided the apostles' doctrine (John 16:13).

These Christians shared "one hope," the hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2), followed "one faith," the gospel system of faith which is God's "power unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

These believers were each united with Christ in the "one baptism," the baptism of the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20, for the purposes of this baptism please see Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38 and Acts 2:47).

In this platform for unity revealed by the Holy Spirit we find that there is one Faith revealed by the Spirit which produces one Hope, the hope of salvation for those who have entered the one Body of Jesus Christ our Lord by the one Baptism commanded by our Father God.

Unity is what Jesus prayed for; unity is what brings honor and glory to God (Psalms 133:1). Unity in Christ knits our souls together and proves to the world that our Father God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to redeem and save us. If we will pair the doctrine the Holy Spirit revealed to the Apostles and preserved for us in writing with the attitudes that promote unity, we can experience the doctrinal and relational unity Jesus prayed for. Unity among the followers of Christ not impossible!

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