

Sunday, January 23, 2005

Unity in the Church

Part 1

Ps 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

By Nick Bibile

Ephesians 4:3

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We saw last time that humility is the mother of all Christian character, out of humility comes meekness, we saw the true meaning of meekness last time, it is strength under control. Then out of meekness comes long suffering and forbearing with one another in love, these are all linked together and related to one another. So Ephesians 4:2 the end of the verse says forbearing one another in love. Forbearing one another in love tends to promote unity in the church.

Meaning

Our English word unity comes from the Latin word unitas which comes from unus meaning one. It means a oneness.

The opposite of unity is quarrels, dissensions, anger, bitterness and all these comes from the flesh because of pride. But spiritual unity comes from God. When we are born again there is a change of our nature and our attitude will change and our behavior will change, instead of pride there will be humility, meekness, longsuffering, love unity in the body. We can be one accord with one another with one in mind as we esteem others more than ourselves.

Php 2:2 Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

There is a union between Christ and his members the body of the church and between Christians and Christians. There is a bonding between Christ and us and between Christians this bond is love, this is the bond of peace. There is love and unity in peace, there is anger and divisions in fighting.

What about peace on earth?

The world is looking for peace and unity, religions are looking for peace and unity, governments are looking for peace and unity, will they find? The answer is a BIG NO. Why? Jesus said so.

Lu 12:51-53 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Only Christianity has the answer as we are living in a fallen world, sinful and a wicked world. But Someone may ask doesn't it say in the Bible at the birth of Jesus multitude of angels praised God saying, " Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Lu 2:14)

Good question. The angels rejoiced at the birth of Jesus and proclaimed this to the shepherds in the field. They did not go to the religious leaders and did not appear before everyone but only to a selected group of people. Only the born again Christians, God's elect, the true church will experience this peace on earth in Christ Jesus.

Let us take ourselves here in this body. We have people from different ethnic backgrounds, different culture, we were all born in sin, wicked passionately loved the pleasures of this world, about ten, fifteen years ago we did not know each other. But see what God has done through Christ Jesus, he bought us with his own blood, cleansed us, forgave us, justified us, adopted us and we have one head the Lord Jesus and one body united to him. Yes, we can have peace on earth through

in our Lord Jesus.

Does it mean that we need to be united with every denomination?

Pr 17:15 He that justifies the wicked, and he that condemned the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

We are not to make peace with people who believe in erroneous doctrines. What was the reason for the protestant reformation? Because Rome was practicing idolatry, teaching the commandments of men and the exalting the traditions of men above the word of God. Then we are to depart from evil.

There are many church denominations here on earth. Even the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons and many other cults calls themselves Christians. They deny the deity of Christ and fundamental Christian doctrine, salvation issues, they are enemies of God as they are wolves in sheep clothing, the false prophets we need to expose their false teachings and we have no unity with them and they are not part of the body of Christ.

Then there are others many false prophets and false teachers that comes within the body of Christ and they sound like Christians but when you examine their beliefs they too are wolves in sheep clothing. They too do not belong to the body of Christ.

The true church

Then there are others who believe the core of salvation issues, we are justified by faith alone, saved by grace alone, the deity of Christ, the trinity, atonement of Christ, his work on the cross, his bodily resurrection and his second coming. These are essential issues for our salvation but we may not agree in non essential issues yet we are one in Christ, this is the true body of Christ, the universal church the elect of God and his sheep.

Ga 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Praise God to computers and internet as it can be used for God's glory! in spreading the gospel to other nations. This very sermon will be in the internet and can you imagine how many people would be listening to this sermon? Presently in

our website we have over 1900 average hits per day and over 500 people visiting our website. It's like 500 people visiting our church here. Do we know these brothers and sisters across the world, no we have never seen them. Little over 70% visit our website directly that means they have bookmarked us. They are being blessed by our ministry. They come from east to west and from north to south, even from unheard islands, yes we have not seen them yet as Christians we are all related in the blood of our Lord, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

Then why is there disunity in the church?

Because of unbelievers and hypocrites.

There is no perfect church on this earth as there will be unbelievers and hypocrites attending the church too. See Matthew 13:24-30, yes there will be a good seed of the crop and along with it comes tares. Jesus said let both grow until the harvest, the tares will be burned and the good crop will be gathered to his barn.

Mt 25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divided his sheep from the goats:

Mt 25:33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Because of Christians who still get into the flesh

We need to correct them.

There were a lot of problems in the church of Corinth, they were not a strong mature church. As a result there were envy, strife and divisions within the body. Apostle rebuked them as they look to men instead of Christ. They glorified the minister and Christ was lost.

1Co 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

hey even sued each other in court

1Co 6:7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

Envy, strife and divisions that comes from the flesh hurts the church, as people follow men instead of God, they look to a man and this is why apostle Paul rebuked the Corinthian Church, sadly it is happening in the church today. Instead of striving for unity bearing one another in love, these people have no longsuffering and no patience, they are quick tempered and come to quick judgment. They have no longsuffering, no patience so they go to court and sue them. They say I want justice now and I will teach them a lesson. They forget what Jesus said in Mat 5:40

Mt 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

If there is disagreement it is always better to speak to that person privately instead of public as others who are listening may come into their own fleshly opinions and some may even get stumble. We need to privately one to one confront the other in love and in humility not in pride and anger.

Have patience with the new Christians

The new born Christians the infants not the older Christians. We need to be very careful when there is a new person in the church and if they are Christians not to judge them from our standard. They may have different ways but don't be a stumbling block to them.

1Co 8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Abraham was a mature Christian than Lot.

Ge 13:8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren.

9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

Application.

Where do you stand when it comes to unity in the body of Christ. Do you like some in the church and does not like others? When new people come, how do you treat them? If someone hurts you from this body how do you react? In the flesh like the Corinthian church or in obedience to Christ's word?

The Power of Christian Unity

Joh 17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.

It is a very dangerous thing for unbelievers to be united. A perfect example is the tower of Babel in Genesis chapter 11 when men were united with one language as were in one mind to do their will. On the other hand when Christians are united it can bring a great blessing. In Christian unity there is power as they are united do the will of God. It took only a few disciples of Christ to take the gospel to a dying world, they did it without hi tech, automobiles, computers or any kind. They did it by the power of the Holy Spirit, obedience to Christ and loving one another with a determination to make disciples.

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