

Unity of the Spirit – Unity Eph. 4:1-6

Introduction:

Story of the stranded man and his two churches.

Tonight begins a series of lessons on the “Unity of the Spirit.” It is our goal to discover how to be united in all things, just as Paul commands us to be united. Paul gives us seven “one’s” to know. These will be the topics for the next few lessons on Sunday night.

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

I. Notice how God feels about the unity of His people.

- A. The early church was a united church.
 - 1. **Acts 1:14** – Before the apostles chose Matthias, they were “with one accord.”
 - 2. **Acts 2:46** – after the Day of Pentecost, the disciples continued “daily with one accord.”
 - 3. **Acts 4:24** – When Peter and John were arrested and then released, they went back to their companions, and “with one accord” raised their voices to God.
 - 4. **Acts 5:12** – After Ananias and Sapphira were killed by God, the disciples were “with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.”
 - 5. Unity was important with the early church.
- B. Paul talked about the importance of unity.
 - 1. **I Cor. 1:10-13** - Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. {11} For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. {12} Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." {13} Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?
 - 2. **I Cor. 12:25** - that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.
- C. Jesus also wants us to have unity.
 - 1. Just before His death, Christ prayed for unity.
 - 2. **Jn. 17:20-23** - I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; {21} that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. {22} And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: {23} I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in

one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

II. Notice the results of a lack of unity.

- A. When unity does not exist, division occurs.
 - 1. Notice the example of Abraham and Lot.
 - 2. **Gen. 13:8-9** - So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. {9} Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."
- B. When unity does not exist, we are easily defeated.
 - 1. **Num. 14:11-16** - Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? {12} I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." {13} And Moses said to the LORD: "Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, {14} and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, LORD, are among these people; that You, LORD, are seen face to face and that Your cloud stands above them; and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. {15} Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying, {16} 'Because the LORD was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.'"
 - 2. This is just after the people refuse to go into the land of Canaan.
- C. When unity does not exist, our worship is not acceptable.
 - 1. Jesus teaches us to "first be reconciled to your brother" before offering a gift at the altar.
 - 2. **Mt. 5:21-26** - You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. {22} But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. {23} Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, {24} leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. {25} Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you are thrown into prison. {26} Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

III. Notice the results of great unity.

- A. When we are united, there is nothing that we cannot accomplish.
 - 1. Strength comes in numbers.
 - 2. **Ecc. 4:9-12** - Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. {10} For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. {11} Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone. {12} Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
- B. When we are united, we can win souls to Christ.
 - 1. People want to be a part of something that is united.
 - 2. **I Cor. 3:1-7** - And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. {2} I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; {3} for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? {4} For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal? {5} Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? {6} I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. {7} So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.
- C. When we are united, we can be the church of the first century.
 - 1. Unity is not all that is involved, but without unity, we cannot be the first century church.
 - 2. **Rom. 12:16a** - Be of the same mind toward one another.
 - 3. **Phil. 2:1-2** - Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, {2} fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Conclusion: