

ENDEAVOURING TO MAINTAIN UNITY
FAIRVIEW MEMORIAL WINTER BIBLE STUDY
TUESDAY EVENING , FEBRUARY 24TH 2015
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LESSON TEXT: PSALM 133: 1-3

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

This Psalm tells us unity is good, and unity is pleasant, which certainly makes it clear that unity is something that's good to have, and something that is worth keeping.

What is unity? This word is actually recorded only three times in the Bible. Other than what I have already read from Psalm 133, it is used in Ephesians 4:3: *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* Also Ephesians 4: 13: *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

So the Bible speaks of brethren dwelling together in unity, the unity of the Spirit, and the unity of the faith. However, these are far from being the only scriptures that speak of unity, because it is often mentioned by the use of other terms.

Unity is defined as the state of being one; oneness. Agreement; uniformity; as unity of doctrine; unity of worship in a church. In Christian theology, oneness of sentiment, affection or behavior. - **Websters 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language.**

So with these definitions we can consider other scriptures that speak of unity without actually using the word unity.

In consideration of unity as the state of being one, then God purposed that there would be unity in marriage. Genesis 2: 24: *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.* We can be certain that this unity, this oneness, is something that God intended for a husband and wife to strive to maintain. In Matthew 19: 3-9: we have an account of the Pharisees tempting Jesus with a question about divorce. Their question was this, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause. In response to their question, Jesus said, *Have you not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man out asunder.* Then they said, *Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?* Jesus said to the Pharisees, *Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.*

This is not only true in marriage however, because God wants everyone He joins together, regardless of the type of relationship, to have and to maintain unity. Was not the great friendship that existed between Jonathan and David the work of God?

1st Samuel 18:1 says, *And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.* (Knit: Joined together.) Is this not a great example of unity? I don't know anyone but God who could have formed such a bond!

The greatest example we have of unity is the Godhead. 1st John 5: 7 says: *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

John 10:30: In this verse Jesus said: *I and my Father are one.*

In John 17: 9-11, Jesus made this request for His disciples while praying to His Heavenly Father: *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*

And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

The three persons of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, do not have to strive to stay unified. They are always in perfect harmony. They always agree. However, that is not true for those who make up the membership of any of our churches. We will have disagreements, we will not always see eye to eye on everything. That is why it was necessary for Paul to write what we find in Ephesians 4: 1-3: *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

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.

In Acts 1, The Apostle Peter stood up and spoke to the church about what Judas had done in betraying Jesus, and how those things the scriptures said concerning him were fulfilled. Furthermore, he instructed them that now, among the men that had been with them all the time that Jesus was among them, even from the baptism of John until the day of His ascension, they needed to ordain one of them to be a witness with them of the Lord's resurrection. That they needed one to take part of the ministry and apostleship from which Judas by his transgression had fallen. However, they didn't appoint just one, they appointed two. So, they had two men and only one position to fill. What did they do? They prayed to God that He would show them which of these was **His choice**. Now isn't that a wonderful, simple formula! When we have a variance of ideas as to what needs to be done, why not just ask God to show us? If we seek His will, He will show us His will. If we will Obey Him, we will always know that we got it right, and we will have unity!

Perhaps our view of unity is often too superficial. We may need to broaden our views to understand what it means for a church to have true unity. There is a foundation for unity that extends far beyond the members of the body being friendly to one another.

Hebrews 10: 23-25 says: *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;)*

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Consider these two statements that were made about the church at Jerusalem.

Acts 1: 13&14: *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.*

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.

Acts 2:1- *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

When members of any church choose the **Part Time Attendance Plan**, it makes unity very difficult. We need to be together as much as possible so we can be on the same page. If the students at a school are in class 20 days out of the month, what would happen to a student who chose to only attend 1 day a month? Would that student be able to keep up with what the rest of the class has been working on?

The unity of the faith. We cannot have unity, if we do not have common beliefs.

Amos 3: 4- *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?* I believe this question primarily is this, can people walk with God unless they agree. However, in principle, I believe it can also be true of people walking together. Do we have to see eye to eye on every verse of scripture? Of course not. But there must be, as we find in Luke 1:1- A declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us.

Jude 1:3- *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation; it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints.*

Ephesians 4: 4-6: *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.

Ephesians 4: 11-16: *And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the

body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

From whom the whole body fitly framed together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Matthew 16: 5-12: Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

1st Corinthians 12: 25- (The Apostle Paul said) *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*

Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12: (Solomon said) *Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour:*

For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

Again, if two lie together, then they can have heat, but how can one be warm alone?

And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Matthew 18: 19&20: (Jesus said) *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

WE ARE SO MUCH BETTER UNITED, THEN WE ARE DIVIDED!!