

The Cry Of Our Lord's Heart...

Unity Of The Spirit

Introduction

We live in a fractured world where brokenness and torn things are the norm. War-torn countries, torn and corrupted political parties, torn families—the list is long; we are all too familiar. The news is depressing if you watch it. Friends of ours (not the head buried in the sand sort) have stopped watching altogether for peace-sake.

As Christians, to know we are forgiven is a wonderful thing but, more than forgiven, we are immersed by the Spirit into a life of unity with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are given a high calling which we are to walk in a manner worthy of. We are going to look at one aspect of that worthy walk which Paul pleads for us—as Christ's Body—to walk in. That is ***“being diligent to preserve (or maintain) the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”***

Two passages are our main texts of study: Paul's letter, Ephesians 4:1-6, and John's recording of Jesus's High Priestly Prayer in John 17:20-26.

Other texts to consider: 1 Corinthians 6:17; 12:12-13; Matthew 3:11; 28:16-20; Ephesians 1:3-13, specifically 1:7 & 10.

Key Points

Consider now “the unity of the Spirit” as stated in Ephesians 4:1-6.

- I. ***It's a Unity Pleaded for by Paul as Part of a BIGGER PLEA***, “to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.” Ephesians 4:1
 - a. **What is this Calling?** Consider the truths of the first 3 chapters, **“Chosen, Adopted** as Sons and Daughters, **Redeemed** by Christ's blood, **Forgiven** of all our sins. Not just called out of darkness but called into Light, ransomed by a great price, bringing each child of God an eternal sense of worth. (Ephesians 1:3-7)
 - b. Given an understanding of God's will, His overall plan, the big picture, that God is “summing all things up in Christ” in “the fulness of times,” what is fractured will be restored. All evil will be put down. (Ephesians 1:10)
 - c. We have an inheritance as fellow heirs of Christ with The Holy Spirit given as a down payment for all our future inheritance to come. In the meantime, we are sealed by the Spirit as God's possession. (Ephesians 1:13-14)
- II. ***It's a Unity Maintained or Preserved, Not Created.***
 - a. This is a Spirit-bestowed oneness onto all true believers.
 - b. Consider 1 Corinthians 6:17: “joined to the Lord, one spirit with Him.”
 - c. Consider 1 Corinthians 12:12-13: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.”
 - d. Consider Matthew 3:11: Christ is the **BAPTIZER WITH THE SPIRIT**, not just with water of repentance. Christ immerses every true believer placing their trust in Him for their salvation, immersing them into the name and life and resources of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is immersing them into

one true body of Christ, the Church. (One baptism of the Spirit for all at conversion; many fillings of the Spirit daily as we learn to yield our will and walk in the Spirit's power and fruitfulness.)

III. ***The Unity of the Spirit is a Trinitarian Unity.*** Ephesians 4:4-6

- a. Notice all three persons of the Trinity.
 - i. v.4 one Spirit
 - ii. v.5 one Lord
 - iii. v.6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all
- b. Notice the *one Body* (one Church, not several, or many, but one). Where? Right in the middle of the Trinity, called up into Their presence, immersed into Their family, all made available by the *one Lord* who paved the way as Redeemer and our faith in Him. The *one faith* is the faith once and for all delivered to the saints—that great body of truth of God's redemptive plan in His Son.
- c. Which leads us to Jesus's High Priestly prayer before entering His darkest time in the Garden of Gethsemane. (John 17:6-24)

IV. ***The Unity of the Spirit is a Unity of Shared Truth.***

- a. Notice in John 17: 20: "these" and "those."
 - i. "These" refers to the Apostles who He has asked to be "sanctified in truth; Thy word is truth." (see *previous section: John 17:6-19*)
 - ii. "Those" are the ones who have believed in Jesus through the Apostles message. *THAT WOULD INCLUDE US* and any/all believers down through the ages believing the official representatives of our Lord, the Apostles of our Lord.
- b. So, there is a **SHARED UNITY OF TRUTH** as Jesus prays for the these and the those to be united with each other, then He is in us, and the Father is in Him, making us all one.

V. ***The Unity of the Spirit is a Unity of Shared Life.***

- a. *"I in them, You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity."*
- b. The Apostle Peter wrote this incredible, profound truth: as believers, we become "partakers of the Divine Nature" (2 Peter 1:4) as it was always meant to be. God in us, us in God.

VI. ***The Purpose of the Unity of the Spirit***

- a. As stated in John 17:21 & 23 *"so that the world may believe and know that You sent Me."* Our unity in a fractured, broken world draws others to the recognition that Jesus in us is real, attracting others to want the same.

Discussion

- Paul's circumstances as a prisoner of Nero did not discourage him from his ministry or message. Instead, he saw himself as a prisoner of _____? How does this apply to you?
- Consider the Spirit's action in Genesis 1:2, Luke 1:35, Mark 1:11, and Acts 1:5; 2:4—the empowering work of the Spirit in each occasion.

- Now consider the Spirit's "impelling or driving Jesus into the wilderness" to face Satan, revealing the fierce determination of the Spirit of God for Jesus to confront the evil one and take the first step in overthrowing his evil kingdom holding captive all humanity in his domain of darkness.
- Consider that the Spirit's will is the same with us, empowering us to enter with Jesus into "soon crushing Satan under our feet." Christ has baptized us (*HIS BODY*) with the Spirit to mop up the remaining skirmishes as the main battle has already been won.
- Our board of elders understands that there is one baptism, that is the baptism of the Spirit which occurs at conversion for every true believer. There is no second experience, as some others believe and teach, called the baptism of the Spirit that some have attained and others haven't. There is just one body united in the one baptism, all members one of another. There are not two classes of Christians: the haves and the have-nots. However, there are many fillings of the Spirit and anointings for various ministries. One can come under more influence of the Spirit as one yields, bearing more power in their walk, and more fruitfulness. We are commanded to be continually "filled with the Spirit" in Ephesians 5:18.
- Look at Ephesians 4:1-2 and see the character qualities, or the manner we are to relate to one another, as we seek to maintain unity. What are those?
- Does it help you to know that in the "fulness of times, all things will be summed up in Christ" (Ephesians 1:10), all evil will be put down, and only peace will exist for all of eternity?