

Title: The Unity of the Spirit

Text: Ephesians 4:1-3

For three chapters we have been looking at the <sup>(1A)</sup> Doctrinal Aspects of the Church. Paul started out by saying that we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings. And then he listed those blessings: We have been chosen by God...He predestined us to adoption through Jesus Christ. ~~And this was done by His will.~~ We have redemption through his blood and the complete forgiveness of our sins. And if we believe in the cross of Christ, we have salvation.

Then Paul goes on to talk about a new thing called the <sup>"</sup>Church. A church without barriers. A place where <sup>and all cultures</sup> people from all walks of life could come and fellowship with the living God. And this church is built upon the foundation of the apostle and prophets, with Christ, himself, being the cornerstone. And this church is growing by bringing people, <sup>from all walks of</sup> ~~like and you~~ <sup>life</sup> and me, together into a dwelling of God by means of the Holy Spirit.

So, here we are....the church....the body of Christ.....We are all together....NOW WHAT?....

Well Paul tell us what. In chapter 4-5 and 6...<sup>(2A)</sup> Paul now deals with some practical aspects of the church. He is sharing with ~~that~~ church in Ephesus how they ought to live together....how they ought to function... <sup>so that they may be</sup> as a witness to the world.....

And the first thing he deals with is the whole subject of <sup>(1B)</sup> UNITY WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST.....And dear friends, there isn't anything more basic than UNITY...UNITY WITHIN THE BODY.

Now, right away, some folks might think: "HAY! THE PASTOR IS PREACHING ON UNITY. I WANDER WHO IS CAUSEING A PROBLEM WITHIN THE CHURCH!"

Well, I want to say, right out, there is no problem within the church. <sup>No one and no group is causing any problem</sup> ~~And that is now way I am preaching on unity.~~ THIS CHURCH IS IN UNITY....AND THAT IS WHY I AM PREACHING ON THIS SUBJECT. WE ARE IN UNITY...AND WE WANT TO STAY IN UNITY. AND THIS PASSAGE TELLS US HOW TO DO THAT....

So, let's look at it....Turn to Ephesians chapter 4 verse 1....

(Read 4:1-3) .....PRAYER

PRAYER

In verses 1 - 3 there is an exhortation to unity. Paul says, "I, therefore Based upon everything that I have said in chapter 1 through 3,"I entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of your calling."

Now, there is a basic principle here that effects the next three chapters

(11) They are all built around one little word. And that is the word "walk".

Let me show you what I mean. In addition to Vs 1 look down at Vs 17... It says..."This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk"....Or, the heathen, unbelievers...."in the futility of their mind."

So, I am to walk worthy.<sup>ycl</sup> And I am to walk, literally, differently from the unbelievers.

Now, chapter 5 verses 1 and 2..."Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us." I am to walk in love.

Look at vs 8..."for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, walk...as...children..of light! Instead of having sinful patterns we are to have a righteous life style.

Look at vs 15..."Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise."

Vs 18..."Be filled with the Spirit! Then he explains what that means...

Vs 22...~~wives~~ to husbands...

Vs 25...husbands to wives...

Chapter 6 verse 1...children to parents

Chapter 6 verse 4...Fathers to children

Chapter 6 verse 5...Employees to employers

And vs 9....Employers to employees...

Then a final discussion about spiritual warfare....

WALK.....in a manner worthy of your calling - Security is reflected by godly life styles.

The Greek word translated "walk" was used in a very important way in Paul's day. ~~In all of the Greek philosophies,~~ <sup>Now</sup> you have to remember that if you lived in the times of the Bible, Greek philosophy was ~~the~~ the in thing to discuss down at the local spa. I mean there are all kinds of them. Greek philosophers everywhere giving their interpretation of ultimate reality. But the Great Greek Philosopher, Aristotle, came along and said, "Look men, if our philosophy does not affect peoples <sup>life style</sup>" then it is no good."

So, he established what he called "the walking school." And this means: that whatever we believe it had better effect our life style.

Now, the Apostle Paul knowing ~~that~~ <sup>So he</sup> takes that ~~idea~~ <sup>result of the Gospel</sup> idea and applies it to the christian <sup>Life</sup> ~~world~~. You see, the ~~point of the Bible~~ is that our life style ought to demonstrate that we really belong to christ.

And that is one of the great problems within the church today. It never ceases to amaze me how often you share christ with unbelievers and before long they bring up that issue of christians who do not live like they say they believe. Now, we always want to point people to christ. Not to get your eyes on people. But there is a truth in the Bible that the way we live is affecting the response of the world towards christ. And Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you what?.....LOVE ONE ANOTHER...."

50) Ephesians 4 talks about unity. But we had better learn the basic principle <sup>that</sup> unity is reflected by a godly life style. <sup>Walk in a manner worthy of your calling.</sup>

we are maintaining something we already have in christ. We ~~are~~ are not going out to achieve unity. That is a worldly view. We are not trying to get organized and therefore have an organizational unity. That is not the unity of the Bible. The unity of the Bible is spiritual in nature. And ~~it~~ it is something we already have. It comes the moment we accept Christ.

I like to put it this way. You are already one with every believer whether you like it or not.

Now, you have to think about becoming a christian. Because the moment you become a christian you are one with all these folks who are christians. And some of them are pretty varied. Have you noticed?....

~~But we are already one in the Lord. There is already a basic essential~~

But we are already one in the Lord. There is already a basic essential unity because we have come to know christ.

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SO unity  
that is what this passage is all about.

secondly, How should we  
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in your attitudes. If you are really going to enjoy your unity, you had better made sure that your attitudes are alright. That is why in Vs 2 we read this: "With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love."

Notcice that the word "with" appears twice. That means that there are two ideas.

The first idea really deals with yourself. Your attitudes toward yourself And it is to be with all humility and gentleness.

Is there any task that you would not do? Because you are to pourd to do it? Is there any ministry that you don't want to get involved in, because it would lower your estimation of yourself?

With all humility and gentleness. ~~With~~ you see We will never sense our unity antill we get the right attitude im regards to ourself.

But what is humility? Preachers get together and talk about humility. It remainds me of what one guy said, "Yay, humility is what I read in a book recently on the subjectt. As a matter of fact there were 50 colored illustrations of himself in that book.

That is not humility. What is humility? It is a difficult word. There are some people who believe that they have a wholed on it, you know? The way they look at you. There words. They try to manifest a humility. Have you ever run into anyone like that? Sure you have.. But, that is false folks. You don't put this on. WHAT IS HUMILITY?

The word comes from two Greek words put together: a rug and a carpet... You may not like this. Do you want to let people walk all over you? That is what the word ~~mean~~ means. It takes a real understanding of christ and his ~~gna~~ grace and his love and his forgiveness for you to have that idea of humility to let people walk all over you.....To turn the other cheek...

Romans 12:3 says "not to think of ourselves more hightly than we ought to think.

But still, what is humility? Lowliness is a part of that word in every context where it is used. It is referring to the bottom of the bottom. In Greek times this referred to the absolute bottom level of slavery.... And Paul takes that word, that not one single Greek would ever want to apply to himself, and says, "The only way that we are going to enjoy our unity is to be humble. The lowest of the law."

*Friends* It is my conviction, whether or not it is true remains to be seen, but I feel strongly about this. That humility is the awareness in my life of my complete ~~depravity and moral lowliness~~ <sup>separation from God because sin</sup>. I believe that when anyone loses sight of the ~~moral depravity~~ <sup>sin nature</sup>, that is characteristic of every human heart, when you get thinking that your sin is not so bad, you are no longer humble. Humility is a person who knows that he doesn't deserve a thing from God. It is God's grace that gives us our talents, our abilities, our influences, everything. It comes from God. I Cor 4:7 says that there is nothing that we have ever received that we haven't received from the Lord.

When you lose sight of your ~~moral unworthiness~~ <sup>sin nature</sup>, when you lose sight of the only one who is worthy, namely Jesus, you are no longer ~~humble~~ <sup>humble</sup>. Humility ~~senses~~ <sup>are sinners; saved by the grace of God</sup> that we ~~are at the bottom~~ and if it were not for the grace of ~~Christ~~ <sup>God</sup> we would be nothing...

*Q.* What ~~is~~ <sup>about</sup> gentleness? Translated also meekness. I don't know about you but every time I hear the word "meek", I somehow hear a world view of that. It comes out meaning "weak". Some one who has a retiring personality. And that is not the meaning of "~~meekness~~" <sup>gentleness</sup>.

*Gentleness* Meekness ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> a fruit of the Holy Spirit. ~~But~~ <sup>So</sup> it ~~is~~ <sup>can</sup> not weakness. If you use that word today, you would be talking about a word that is in direct conflict with the spirit of complaining or resisting. One who is ~~meek~~ <sup>Gentle</sup> no longer complains. One who is ~~meek~~ <sup>Gentle</sup> is willing to accept things from God without ~~complaining~~, without resisting.

*Now* And let me give you an interesting illustration of both words.. Turn to Matthew chapter 11. Matthew 11. If we are going to ~~have~~ <sup>walk in a manner worthy of our</sup> practical expression of our unity in christ, we all need humility and gentleness ~~on meekness~~....

And here is an illustration that is applied to Jesus Christ that I believe will help us. Matthew 11 verses 28 to 30....(Read) .....

This is <sup>a beautiful</sup> ~~an interesting~~ illustration. It comes out of ancient times. ~~And~~ I have been told that it is still being used today. It deals with the training of an ox. In ancient times they took the wooden yoke and they tied it down on the old experienced ox. And he ~~actually~~ bore the whole load. He did all the plowing.

Now, to train a new ox you would bring him along side of the old one. You put the yoke on him, ~~but~~ <sup>loosely</sup> tied the straps. The in-experienced ox never pulled the load at all. He was just learning to walk beside the old ox. What a beautiful illustration.

Jesus took that right out of common life and he said, <sup>to be</sup> "Take my yoke upon you." In other words, I am bearing the entire load. You just walk along side of me and learn. And you are going to find that I am <sup>gentle</sup> ~~meek~~ and <sup>humble</sup> ~~lowly~~ in heart. ~~I am gentle and humble in heart.~~ And when you discover that, Jesus said, you will <sup>find</sup> peace and rest for your soul. <sup>Realize - No peace</sup>

Do you know why a lot of us are troubled? Because we are not humble. Because we don't admit what the Bible says about us. ~~We are self-confident,~~ ~~We~~ are proud, we think that we can handle ~~all~~ things, we think that we can run the show. And that is why we don't have peace in our hearts.....

And we don't have <sup>gentleness</sup> ~~meekness~~ because we are always complaining about things that ~~happen~~ happen. Circumstances that change that are not to our liking. And instead of giving thanks for all things; and thanking God for what ~~he~~ is doing, we become bitter, resentful, complaining. ~~the~~

No wonder ~~that~~ Peter wrote to wives who are married to men who do not obey God's Word, no wonder he said to them that the key ~~is~~ that you need in winning your husband is a <sup>humble</sup> ~~meek~~ and gentle spirit in the sight of God. A confidence in the Lord that even though you are in a trial in your marriage that God can do great things beyond which you could imagine. And right now I am to trust him. And I will have peace only when I am depending on him. And not trying to change my circumstance.

You see, <sup>gentleness</sup> ~~meekness~~ is the quality of someone who accepts <sup>things</sup> ~~everything~~ as being from God. And he does so without complaining, without resentment.

(2E) And not only in regards to ourselves, our attitudes must also affect our relationship to others. <sup>To have Unit</sup> And that is why Ephesians 4, if you would turn back there, please, that is why it says "with patience, showing forbearance to one another." <sup>vs 2</sup> *Our attitude toward others*

(1F) Are you patient?.....There are two words in the Bible for patience. One is referring to things and circumstance. The other refers to people. The one that is used here is referring to people. We ~~are~~ know about patience toward things...Right?.....Flat tires....traffice on the freeway....Long lines in the stores.....Patience.....We <sup>are</sup> need that.

But, that is not the word here. <sup>God</sup> This is talking about patience toward people. KJ says "longsuffering"....Or, literally, it means : "taking a long time to boil".....I like that.....

Now, I know that some people can really make you mad....But a short fuse is not going to help your enjoyment of unity...<sup>or, to demonstrate that you are walking in a manner worthy of your calling</sup> Getting mad at everybody, even though it is a wrong done to you, is not going to help you to enjoy the unity that you have in christ.

You need a long fuse. You need a long time to boil.....

(2F) <sup>Patience</sup> Longsuffering....Listen, you can only do that if you show "forbearance". So, what is that? Showing forebearance is the Greek meaning "to wholed up"... Some translate this word as "putting up with one another.".....

You see, once you know what other brothers and sisters are like, and you take a good long look in the mirror, you will discovery why we must all put up with one another.....RIGHT?.....

People are going to do things and say things to you that you don't like. But, the unity that we have, which we already have in the Lord, we will enjoy and it will be manifested in the body when we are able to put up with each other in the <sup>vs 2</sup> sphere of love. And <sup>love</sup> that has to be rooted in forgaiwness....

Turn over to Colossians 3 and I will show you what I mean. Colossians 3 verse 12 says .....(Read Vs 12-13)

*and page 1*

Are you willing to forgive? Are you willing to have patience? Has someone done you wrong? Now, you have to stop and think about this for a moment. Showing forbearance in love. ~~Who~~ Who ever has a complaint against anyone...forgive them.

I like what some Baptist folks have said: Whenever you get two Baptist together you have three opinions.....

I kind of like that. Do you know what I mean?....

Some of us are so determined to set everyone stright. We are so determine that everyone agree with us, and we will not followship with them if they ~~don't~~ don't. And thus we miss the whole principle of love and forgiveness..

Now, I don't know if you have caught this or not, but most christians disagree with one another. Have you noticed.

*The History of American christians*

In my class at Taft College, A class on N.T. literature, one of the students ask: "If this Jesus things is so important, and Jesus spoke of love so much, how come there are so many denominations?"

I said, "that is a real good question."...

He said, if this is God's Word, how come we all don't agree?"....

And I then used my favorite lines...Eike: "we will all be brothers and sisters in heaven...And I gave him some other lines.

But the turth of the matter is that we do have a real problem..Right?... Listen, demoniations are the results of people who finally got the Bible into their own hands. Because until 1450 Gou-tin-berg hadn't printed it. And ~~they~~ *the Comm Folks* didn't have their own copy. They lived in the dark ages. And the church told them what to do. And most of the time it wasn't based upon scriputee. Finally, the Bible is in their own hands. And people, literally, went wild.

Suppose you read it for the first time. Luther, thought he had it. Calvin thought there was something wrong with Luthar. And ~~Swingly~~ *Swingly* wasn't sure either one was right. And on and on it goes.

Suppose we, here at ~~First Baptist~~ *First Baptist*, decied to build a ~~church~~ *denomination* based upon every verse in the Bible. Can you imigine the statement of faith? Every verse in the Bible as a statement of faith and you must agree to it,



Hay, folks, it just willn't happen. God used deminations to get people into the word and to spread his gospel around the world.

But, when it comes down to it, it isn't the brand name on the door, it is whether that church has comformad to the unity that is in the Bible... There is a unity of the spriti in this passage. We either agree with it or we don't. If you don't agree with it, and you don't follow ~~this~~, guess what? You are not just in a different denomination, you are not even in the Lord. This unity is true of every believer, whether he likes it or not. It is an essential unity. It is objective. Not subjective. These are facts. Not feeling. They are already true. You are ~~either~~ either in the body or you are not. And if you are in the body there is a unity.

*So* Now, how can I enjoy <sup>unity?</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>By being</sup> I don't have patience and forebearance with other Brothers and sisters. Because there is going to be a lot of ~~disagreements~~ <sup>difference</sup>. We need to <sup>forgive one another</sup>

*is the Purpose behind Unity*  
(3D) ~~WHAT PURPOSE SHOULD WE HAVE IN ALL OF THIS?~~

Vs 3 of Ephesians 4 tells us. Our purpose should be with these attitudes to strive to be "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

*STRIVING Together*

(1E) Are you striving for that? The importance of that is found in the phrase "to be diligent". It indicates effort, work. It takes reall effort to maintain or to guard ~~to~~ to preserve the unity of the Spirit. It takes effort. DO YOU KNOW WHY? Because the Devil, according to James 3, is causing disunity. He is trying to get the believers upset with one another and thus cause division. Always doing that. That is why it takes work, effort, deligence in order to preserve the unity of the spirit. *Umm does the*

(2E) And the sphere in which that exist is the bond of peace. Isn't that a wonderful word? It is the binding factor. The bond of peace.

When a husband and wife are not getting along, they are not bond together, there is no peace. Binding together.

The opposite <sup>of Binding</sup> is taking revenge. Trying to get even as Romans 12:18-21 says. PEACE BINDS US TOGETHER.

10 (a) Use of your stop study vs 3

Jesus said, "My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives, do I give to you." The peace of God can keep or guard our hearts and minds in Christ. Peace...Romans says, "as much as possible, as much as depends upon you, live in peace with all."

Bless be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. We are one in the bond of love.....Amen?.....

CAN WE HAVE UNITY?.....SUE WE CAN.....But friends, it takes effort to maintain it. To <sup>remain</sup>~~remain~~ ourselves that we need to practice humility and gentleness, <sup>in our lives - and</sup> patience and forebearance. <sup>Towards all</sup> And when we do that we will enjoy the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.....

Let's close in prayer