



2 Peter-Unity of the Church

Unity within the body of Christ is a vital component to our Christian lives and is constantly under attack. A foundational component of maintaining unity is clinging onto the truth of the Gospel of Christ. Peter takes time to remind the Early Church of this sound and sure doctrine that underpins and established them.

“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.”

While reflecting on this sermon, I was reminded of a book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer called *Life Together* written at the height of WWII to highlight the importance of love and living in harmony with one another. It's a small book and nestled within it is the following quote.

‘Because God already has laid the only foundation of our community, because God has united us in one body with other Christians in Jesus Christ long before we entered into common life with them, we enter into that life together with other Christians, not as those who make demands, but as those who thankfully receive.... We do not complain about what God does not give us; rather we are thankful for what God does give us daily.’

‘Therefore, will not the very moment of great disillusionment with my brother or sister be incomparably wholesome for me because it so thoroughly teaches us that both of us can never live by our own words and deeds, but only by that one Word and deed that really binds us together, the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ?’

We can get so distracted with all kinds of teachings and variant shades of the Christian life in all of its denominations. Peter knows that as Christians we are established in the truth. The truth that is the Gospel of Christ. His life, death, resurrection for the saving of souls! Growth and maturity stems from being rooted in this truth. Though we were once far off His blood had brought us near. Though we were sinners, Christ died for us.

James reminds us to truly know who we are, to not forget who we are in Christ the moment we turn away from the mirror. If we lose sight of that and do not remain rooted in Him, we will be like a ship driven through the seas of life with no rudder.

The enemy wants to chip away at the seeds planted in our life and move us to a place of discourse within the body. If he can get us to bicker at each other and stir up contention within the Church, we will be rendered useless in advancing His kingdom. Our unity in the body is a testament of the work of Christ in our lives individually and shared and protected collectively.

“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him” Ephesians 3:8-13

A house divided can not stand and an army that is not unified can not be affective. We have a personal and corporate responsibility to read and understand the Scripture. Many false teachers and prophets exist and will succeed if the Church is not grounded- knowing and growing in truth.

Thanks be to our Lord who sent His Spirit to dwell within us and open up this truth found in Scripture. We all have the ability to read and understand His heart and to test any teaching that veers from the heart of the Gospel of Christ.

Peter was dealing with false teachers and they are still among us. There are so many topics of discussion that can divide the Church. But a false teacher are those that affect the true knowledge of Christ. The true heart of the gospel, the good news, will always be under attack and we as the Church have a responsibility to protect that truth by living it!

DISCUSSION

A fresh look at the forgiveness and grace in our lives helps maintain and protect the unity of the body.

- How can we apply His grace in a difficult relationship in the body?
- Is there someone in the body of Christ that I don't like or am bitter against? How can you pray for them and seek the Lord on their behalf.
- When we open the Scriptures, His Spirit testifies to us what is true and sure. Have you elevated someone else above the Spirit within you to teach and minister truth?
- How can we grow in unity of believers and forge ahead to be a true light in a lost world?

POSTURING

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." James 5:16

Confession: (admit, acknowledge, reveal, make known)

- In light of our conversation, is there anything that the Lord is asking you to confess and be made known?

"Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!"

Ps 106:1

Thanksgiving: (a prayer expressing gratitude)

- Thank Him for all that He has promised and for His faithfulness upon your life.

EMPOWER

"God will strengthen you with His own great power so that you will not give up when troubles come, but you will be patient. And you will joyfully give thanks to the Father who has made you able to have a share in all that He has prepared for His people in the kingdom of light."

Colossians 1:11,12

- Pray for each other for strength, strategy, wisdom etc.
- Listen in prayer for words of encouragement and edification. • Spur each other on!

