

Unity of the Church

➤ = next PowerPoint slide

➤ Intro:

- **series** on the church: identity, organization, work, worship
- **this lesson:** unity of the church
 - **Christ is not divided: Christians should not be divided**
 - **our responsibility: be diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit, unified in the same mind**

➤ Jesus Prayed for Unity – His desire

- **Jn. 17:20-23** Jesus prayed for unity – **result:** that world knows God sent Jesus, and that God loves us

➤ - Jn. 17:17 unity based on truth – God's word

- **Christians who live according to God's word are unified – Christians who don't. . . .**
- **illus.: Corinthians, not unified**, some said of Paul, some Apollos, some Cephas – not based on truth – all of Jesus

➤ First Corinthians: Don't Compromise Unity

- **1 Cor. 1:10-13** not wear human names – **denominational names forbidden – don't compromise unity**

➤ - 1 Cor. 1:10 brethren unified by speaking the same thing – agreeing based on God's word

➤ - 1 Cor. 3:3-4 division result of carnality (fleshly)

➤ - 1 Cor. 11:14:26 result of unity in the assembly: assembly for the better, edifying

➤ - 1 Cor. 11:17-19 must be division when brethren refuse to repent

- **illus.: Jews railed against Jesus, accused Him of casting out demons with the power of Satan**

- **Jesus logically proved that He was not casting out demons with the power of Satan**

- **house divided will fall** – power not have such power if divided

- **“How can Satan cast out Satan?** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished” (Mk. 3:23-26)!

- **a congregation that's divided cannot stand – it is finished**

- **Satan's greatest weapon is discord among brethren**

- **Tit. 3:9** divisive man must be rejected quickly – 2nd admonition

- **Ephesians: There is One (unified) Body – We Must Be a Member of the Body to be Saved!**
 - **Eph. 4:3** our responsibility: preserve unity of the Spirit
 - the body of Christ is a unified body – we must keep it that way
 - sin results in division – keep sin out of church to remain unified

- - **Eph. 4:4-6** unity of the Spirit – unity of the church
- - **vs. 4** one body – church
 - **Eph. 1:22-23** the body is the church
 - **Eph. 5:23** must be unified member of body (church) to be saved – subject to Him

- - **vs. 4** one Spirit
 - **1 Cor. 12:13** all Christians baptized into the body by one Spirit

- - **vs. 4** one hope
 - **Tit. 1:2** hope in eternal life – if not member of church, no hope

- - **vs. 5** one Lord
 - **Matt. 6:24** cannot serve two masters – if not member of church, not serving God

- - **vs. 5** one faith
 - **Rom. 10:17; Jude 1:3** one faith, that is based on God's God
 - **Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5; 16:26** must be obedient to the faith to be member of body – saved

- - **vs. 5** one baptism
 - **1 Cor. 12:13** baptized into the body
 - **Eph. 5:23** Jesus Savior of body – if not baptized into body, not saved
 - **Rom. 6:3** enter into Christ through baptism – sins forgiven (**Acts 2:38**) – saved (**1 Pet. 3:21**)

- - **vs. 6** one God and Father of all – single unified source, God the Father
 - body unified based on God's oneness (**Jn. 17:17-23; Col. 3:9-10**).

- - **illus.:** all the parts of a car must be unified for it to operate perfectly
 - **pic. new car:** steering wheel, tires, engine, door unified, do work intended
 - **pic. wrecked car:** not unified, not do work intended, car not drivable
 - **Eph. 4:16** when every member of the church do their work, body grows

- **Philippians: Principles of Unity** – things each person must do in a congregation to preserve unity
 - **Phil. 2:1 appeal for unity**
- - **encouragement (consolation, exhortation) in Christ**
 - Christ's example of humble service teaches us humble like-minded service(Phil. 2:2-8).
- - **consolation (comfort) of love**
 - The result of love (agape) is comfort, consolation.
- - **fellowship of the Spirit**
 - Fellowship is sharing, joint-participation. Christians jointly participate in the Spirit as they walk in the Spirit thus bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26; Rom. 8:1-17).
- - **affection and compassion (mercy)**
 - God and Jesus have affection and compassion for us; therefore, we should have affection and compassion on one another with like-minded love (Phil. 2:2; 2 Pet. 1:7).

- - **Phil. 2:2-4 characteristics of a unified church** – things each member must do, otherwise divisive
- - **vs. 2 being of the same mind (like-minded)** – **team:** same goals, aspirations, respect for authority (coach)
 - Literally the phrase means, "think the same thing." A group of Christians think the same thing by having the same love for one another and being of one accord (one in spirit). Once a lawful decision is made by a congregation, each member abides by the decision without murmuring and disputing (Phil. 2:14).
- - **vs. 2 maintaining the same love** – **team:** committed to one another and the team as a whole, not prejudice, know each person equally important
 - Agape. Our conviction must be goodness toward each brother while watching out for each others' interests (Phil. 2:4; cf. Rom. 12:9-16; Ja. 2:1f).
- - **vs. 2 united is spirit (of one accord)** – **team:** must function as a single body to be best can be - best team wins, not best person
 - The congregation, as a whole, acts as a single body and spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10).
- - **vs. 2 intent on one purpose (having one mind)** – **team:** work together as have one mind - coach
 - Brethren who think the same thing are of one mind. They are unified in love and spirit; therefore, they work together with singularity of mind.
- - **vs. 3 not selfish (selfish ambition, strife, faction)** – **team:** everyone has the good of the team in mind, does what is best for team as a whole
 - "Selfish" literally denotes a person employing factious methods to meet his personal desires. Therefore, this person is selfish, willing to divide the body of Christ for the sake of getting his way. Brethren cannot be selfish and be unified.
- - **vs. 3 not conceited (empty conceit)** – **team:** give glory to team, not seek for self
 - "Conceited" literal means *vainglory*. A person employing factious methods to meet his personal desires is motivated by bringing glory upon himself. Such glory is vain and sinful. Christians strive to glorify God, not themselves (Phil. 1:11; 2:11; 4:20).
- - **vs. 3-4 having humility of mind, regarding (esteeming) other Christians as more important than self** – **team:** each person thinks everyone else is more important – Michael Joran without team would fail
 - Humility is the attitude Christ possessed in coming to earth and dying on the cross (**Phil. 2:5-8**).
 - looking out not only for personal interests, but also for the interests of others
- **Summary / Inv.**
 - **summary:**
 - God created church as unified body – our job is to keep it that way
 - Jesus prayed for unity
 - unity can't be compromised
 - there is One (unified) body of which we must be a member to be saved
 - each person is responsible for maintaining unity, or he must be rejected as a divisive person
 - **inv.:** become member of Christ's body (church), saved