

CHRISTIAN UNITY

TEXT: EPHESIANS 4:1-6

Introduction:

1. Last week we started Ephesians chapter 4, which deals with Christian unity.
2. There are certain virtues which are essential to unity in the church.
 - Lowliness (4:2) – this is the opposite of selfish ambition or vainglory.
 - Meekness (4:2) – “self-suppression to serve others” (Fitzwater). Meekness is not weakness. Numbers 12:3 says, “(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)” Our great example of meekness is the Lord Jesus. He said in Matthew 11:29, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Paul says in II Corinthians 10:1, “Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...”
 - Longsuffering (4:2) – forbearing and patient. “Forbearing one another in love” (4:2) – “This means restraint under just provocation” (Fitzwater).
 - “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit...” (4:3). “Endeavoring” means we have to work at it. The devil brings discord and disunity, but the Holy Spirit brings peace.

I. ONE BODY, ONE SPIRIT, AND ONE HOPE

1. There is one body (4:4). The church is the body of Christ (cf. 1:22, 23).
2. The word “church” and the word “body” are used different ways in the Bible. Most references are to the local church.
3. Acts 8:1 says, “And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem.”

4. Acts 13:1 says, “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers...”
5. Sometimes the word “church” is used in a generic or a general way. First Corinthians 10:32 says, “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.”
6. Hebrews 12:23 says, “To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven...”
7. Here the word “church” seems to refer to all believers – the entire family of God. There is a unity amongst all born again believers.
8. “There is one body, and one Spirit...” (Eph. 4:4). There are many false spirits, but only one Holy Spirit (cf. II Cor. 11:4; I John 4:1-4).
9. The Holy Spirit regenerates every born again believer the moment he believes (John 3).
10. The Holy Spirit indwells every born again believer. First Corinthians 3:16 says, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (Cf. I Cor. 6:19).
11. The Holy Spirit seals every born again believer (Eph. 1:13; 4:30).
12. We are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).
13. Some people teach that a person can be saved and still not have the Holy Spirit, but this is contrary to Scripture (Romans 8:9).
14. “Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 4:4b). As Christians we all have the same hope. We all come from different backgrounds but we are all going in the same direction.

II. ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM (4:5)

1. There is “one Lord” (4:5), and that is the Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 8:5, 6).

2. Confessing Christ as Lord is necessary for salvation (Romans 10:9).
3. This goes against multi-culturism, and pluralism, and ecumenicalism, and all of the other isms that oppose the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).
5. There can be no spiritual unity with other religions and false cults, etc.
6. In ancient Rome they built a beautiful building called the Pantheon (“All the gods”). It is still standing today.
7. Whenever the Roman Empire conquered a kingdom, they would place one of their gods in the Pantheon. Eventually the Pantheon was filled with heathen idols – Jupiter, Venus, Zeus, Neptune, Aphrodite, et al.
8. They boasted that they were very open-minded. But when they invited the Christians to put a statue of Jesus in the Pantheon, and the Christians refused, the Romans became angry and started persecuting the Christians and killing them.
9. There is only “one faith” (Eph. 4:5), and that is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
10. The faith referred to here refers to the body of objective truth that all Christians must contend for (Jude 3).
11. The true Christian faith has the Bible, and only the Bible, as its standard.
12. There is “one baptism” (4:5). As Baptists we know this is baptism by immersion. In fact, the Greek word *baptizo* means “immerse.”
13. John 3:23 says, “John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there.”
14. Note “much water.” This would not be necessary if baptism were by sprinkling.

15. Also, Mark 1:10 speaks of our Lord “coming up out of the water.”
16. Acts 8:38 says Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch “went down both into the water,” signifying immersion.
17. All of the apostolic churches practiced immersion. The Roman Catholic Church developed baby-sprinkling hundreds of years after Christ.
18. The first time in the New Testament we hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ is when He says in Matthew 3:15, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”
19. Then our Lord was baptized by John the Baptist. Matthew 3:16 says, “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water...” – again reminding us that proper Christian baptism is always immersion.
20. Our Lord’s first recorded words in the Gospel of Matthew are about baptism, and so are His last recorded words.
21. In Matthew 28:19, our Lord said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”
22. But what about the other baptisms mentioned in the Bible? John the Baptist said, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matt. 3:11).
23. Baptism in water is a symbol. It pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-5). Baptism in water symbolizes what the Holy Spirit does when He places us in Christ at conversion.
24. It is when we are saved that we “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Baptism pictures this.

25. Some people teach that the apostle Paul is referring to baptism by water in Gal. 3:27 and I Cor. 12:13. These Scriptures teach that water baptism is the outward picture of what the Holy Spirit does in the heart of the believer (cf. Col. 2:12, 13).

III. ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL... (4:6)

1. God “is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:6). In other words, God is transcendent.
2. God is sovereign, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and eternal.
3. Many people believe that there is “one God” but they also believe that this one God can be the god of the Muslims or the god of the Mormons or the god of Scientology, etc.
4. But there is only one true God and all of these other gods are false gods (cf. I Cor. 8:5, 6).

CONCLUSION:

1. In John 15, Jesus said He indwells believers. “Abide in me, and I in you...” (15:4).
2. Romans 8:10 says, “And if Christ be in you...”
3. Furthermore, our Lord said in John 14:17 that the Holy Spirit “dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”
4. First Corinthians 3:16 says, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”
5. Here in Ephesians 4:6 it is taught that God the Father also indwells the believer. The triune God indwells all Christians.

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