

Podcast: Confessing The Faith

Episode 16: Pursuing Unity Within Christ's Church

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Q1: Joe, a few weeks ago you preached a sermon on John 17:20-26. Let's talk about that. What was the point of the message?

Q2: How then can we pursue the kind of unity that Christ prayed for?

Pray for it, and get ready to work on it.

Q3: What are some practical things that we can do to help promote unity?

A word about expectations...

Learn to ask questions and to listen. (James 1:19)

Don't always trust your emotions (don't read into things; don't assume).

Allow people to have a bad moment or a bad day. (Proverbs 10:12; 1 Peter 4:8)

If someone offends you, go to them. (Matthew 18)

Learn to repent well. (Psalm 51)

Learn to forgive well. Say, "I forgive you" and really forgive, not holding it against your brother or sister. (Psalm 103:12)

Never harbor bitterness. (forgive in the heart even before forgiveness can be extended) (Lord's prayer; Ephesians 4:29)

Remove the log in your own eye. (Matthew 7)

Remember how much Christ has forgiven you! (Matthew 18:21ff.)

Remember Christ's instructions for handling sin within the church. (Matthew 18:15ff.)

Q4: Is there ever a time when division is appropriate?

Yes, some division is right and good (not that it is to be desired or celebrated, but necessary).

Q5: How are we to think about the doctrinal divisions that exist within the church?

We must think in terms of levels or layers or degrees of unity corresponding to our levels of agreement, I think.

Some doctrines must bring division.

Q6: The title of the sermon on John 17:20-26 was "Jesus divides, doctrine unites". Explain.

Jesus divides in that he sets his sheep off from the world.

It is doctrine which makes deep unity in the church possible.

Q7: How would you encourage Emmaus as it pertains to unity?

Maintain it! (Ephesians 4:3)

Don't ignore issues.

Don't assume that other people know that they offended you. (Matthew 18:15)

Give thanks for the unity we are enjoying.

Q8: What would you say concerning maintaining or reestablishing unity with other Christians and churches around the valley?

We need unity, not only in the local church, but also the universal church.