# FBC: United we Stand; Divided we Fall

**Selected Scriptures**

9/26/04

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- Satan seeks to disturb the unity of the church by creating discord and division (James 3:14-16)

*Gal. 5:15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another*

## I. The Lord's Prayer for Unity (John 17:11, 20-23)

## II. The Lord's Plea for Unity (Phil. 2:2-4; 4:1-4)

## III. The Lord's Pattern for Unity (Psalm 133)

Four descriptions of unity:

A. Unity is GOOD (v. 1a)

B. Unity is PLEASANT (v. 1b)

C. Unity is PRECIOUS (v. 2)

D. Unity is REFRESHING (v. 3)

## IV. The Lord's Prescription for Unity (Eph. 4:13)

CONCLUSION: If we work as a team, God can do a great work through us.

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**Division @ Corinth due to Carnality & Cliques**

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## I. The Lord's Prayer for Unity (John 17:11, 20-23)

**v. 20**
Christ's prayer for sanctified saints extends beyond the first-century disciples, to all believers who would come to faith via the disciples' testimony in Scripture.

**v. 21**
Our oneness happens when we are a united team or "flock" set apart from the world. You cannot have Godly oneness with worldly saints. Sanctification must precede unity.

**"One in Us" –** Oneness is only possible because of the common relationship we have in God!

The believer's unity results in bringing the unbelieving world to faith. The world comes to realize that only God can produce a unity among diverse and numerous people.

Note: the unity of the early Church –

Acts 1:14
These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Acts 2:1
And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts 2:44
And all that believed were together, and had all things common;
Acts 2:46
And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

**v. 22**
This shared "glory" is not the shared glory of Christ's deity (which He had before creation – Jn. 17:5), but it is the glory of Christ's grace and truth which He deposits in the life of all of His children.

John 1:14
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Such grace and truth is the secret to our unity.

**v. 23**
Christ's concern for our unity with each other is due to His concern for our unity with Him.

True unity is not <u>legalistic</u> in nature (not forced by sharing common rules); rather, it is <u>theistic</u> in nature (a result of our common relationship with God).

Not a mechanical unity (forced externals), but a spiritual unity (internal).

## II. The Lord's Plea for Unity (Phil. 2:2-4; 4:1-4)

### A. Philippians 2:2-4

When Epaphroditus brought a generous gift from Philippi, and good news of the church's concern for Paul, this no doubt brought joy to Paul. However, he also brought bad news of a possible division in the church family (cp. 4:1-2).

"Fulfill ye my joy" = fill up my joy. We too often are satisfied with less than giving God everything! We do things halfway. We need to go the extra mile.

"Like minded" - to think the same thing; to be compelled by the same aims and objectives.

Romans 12:16 - "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."

Positionally we all are one in Christ.

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another" (Rom. 12:5).

So practically we should live like it!

These words were found on a grave stone of a man and his wife: "We spoke the same things, we thought the same things, and we go the inseparable way in Hades" (Lohmeyer; BS, 256).

#### 1. BY HAVING ONE LOVE (FOR GOD).

"Same love" = the love of God in all

I Jn. 2:15 - ". . . if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.:

#### 2. BY HAVING ONE BOND (GLUED TOGETHER).

"Unity": See - Acts 4:32; Rom. 12:12; I Cor. I:10 10:17; II Cor. 13:11; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 4:3, 13.

Unity is not uniformity:

--Unity comes by God's changing a man internally, in the heart.

--Uniformity comes by man's forcing others to externally conform to a legalistic standard.

**3. BY HAVING <u>ONE PURPOSE</u> (ONE GOAL).**

"One mind" - one purpose; rallying around a common goal.``When everyone becomes preoccupied with a <u>single</u> goal -- you have unity!

Ex. of how people can all rally together during a catastrophe (ex. flood, storm, hurricane, etc.) and pull together toward a common goal.

Ex. of a sports team with <u>one</u> objective.

**B. Philippians 4:1-4**

The most important thing in the world is <u>relationships</u>.

We live in a society that is tearing apart meaningful relationships. --

1) people living together 2) rebellious children 3) uncaring parents
4) adultery 5) abortion 6) putting parents in convalescent homes, etc.

**We must constantly mend (repair) our relationships!

**1. RESOLVE (Settle) PERSONAL DIFFERENCES (Restoration) (v. 2)**

Euodias and Syntyche had been used by God in a tremendous way in the church. They both at one time labored together (v. 3). Both women were extremely capable, had a high degree of ability and gifts.

Now, personal conflict had disrupted their relationship. Possibly it was jealousy and pride that caused a division. "Strife and vain glory" (cp. 2:3) probably entered their lives.

God desires that we have unity! Jesus said: "Keep . . . those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (Jn. 17:11b).

"Euodias" means prosperous journey; "Syntyche" means pleasant acquaintance (Blair, p. 102).

Now, with division in their relationship--Euodias had become "odious" and Syntyche was "soon touchy" (just a joke).

There is no hint in this epistle that the dispute was doctrinal in character. The disunity no doubt was a bickering over some differences of opinion or method as to how to best present the gospel or deal with problems (for example).

The disagreement was evidently existing for a long time, and was publicly known or else Paul would not have addressed it publicly through a letter to the whole church.

A rule to live by:

personal sin = personal confession
private sin = private confession
public sin = public confession

By repeating the verb "beseech" before each name, Paul is treating both ladies on equal footing. He does not take sides, or blame one over another.

Differences must be worked out not held on to.

Being like minded (have the same attitudes and goals) is what a church needs for unity.

"In the Lord" - in spiritual matters we must all agree. In personal preferences we can give in to each other.

2. RECONCILE (Solve) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OTHERS (Reconciliation) (v. 3)

"True yokefellow" = Gk. Synzygus (all other persons in this context are listed by name, so this man most likely is also).

A third party is often needed when reconciliation is not arrived at.

Gal. 6:1-2 - "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Nothing will give you more peace and joy (and help you forget about your own problems) than for you to help someone else with theirs!

APPLI: You help restore; don't be quick to call someone else to do it.

Have a ministry of reconciliation! Just as we are responsible to reconcile men to God (II Cor. 5:18-20), we are to reconcile believers to each other!

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9).

EX: of how every member is vital to a healthy Body (I Cor. 12).

## III. The Lord's Pattern for Unity (Psalm 133)

"A song of degrees of David" - This psalm, like Psalms 120-134, formed a Jewish hymnbook that was used by pilgrims who travelled to Jerusalem for the yearly feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.

What a sight David sees as throngs of Israelites walk up the mountain ranges into Jerusalem. This gathering of young and old, rich and poor is remarkably special because it is not marked by jealousy, fighting, and alienations in the family of Israel. The scene is one of joy, love, and oneness!

It is to such a sight that David exclaims, "Behold" -- look, see, visualize, the blessedness of unity!

***Experience the blessings of unity!**

Four descriptions of unity:

### A. Unity is GOOD (v. 1a)

Biblical unity is good -

1. Because its cause (source) is good

   The source of Biblical unity is God.

God is called the author of peace, not confusion (I Cor. 14:33; II Cor. 13:11)

SEE: Eph. 4:1-6; John 17:21

2. Because its effect (result) is good

The consequences of unity are truly good.

a. A work is accomplished for God's glory

We are laborers together with God (SEE: I Cor. 3:1-9)

b. A message is conveyed to the watching world (John 17:21 –
"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in
thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may
believe that thou hast sent me."

**B. Unity is PLEASANT (v. 1b)**

The Hebrew word for "pleasant" is used of:

1. The harmony of good music (EX: of an orchestra) (as opposed to the annoying sound of wrong notes at wrong times - Ex: warm-up time)

2. The sweetness of honey (as opposed to bitter things)

A. Unity is pleasant to God

B. Unity is pleasant to ourselves

C. Unity is pleasant to others

"Behold how. . . pleasant it is. . ."

"Brethren" - It is understandable that the unsaved cannot get along, but for those in the same family to not get along is truly a travesty.

The opposite: Behold, how bad and how irritable (unsettling, troublesome)it is for brethren to dwell apart in disunity.

EX:Cain & Abel
Abram & Lot (Gen. 13:8 - "And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife,
I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.")

Jacob & Esau

God hates discord sown among the brethren.

It is Satan who sows tares of division (Mt. 13:39). He first divided man from God and then men from each other (Spurgeon, p. 171)

**C. Unity is PRECIOUS (v. 2)**

"Precious ointment" - the oil poured upon the high priest was precious because it was a one of a kind, rare, uncommon oil (Exod. 30:32 - "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make nay other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.")

Unity like the anointing oil is a precious commodity. It is priceless! Cannot be bought, can't be imitated!

"Ran down . . . went down" - The profuse pouring of the costly oil drives home a point. Unity produces not a small smidgen of peace, joy, comfort, and blessing, but a bountiful supply.

EX: the woman who used the costly ointment on Jesus - did not view it as a waste!

**D. Unity is REFRESHING (v. 3)**

Nothing is as refreshing in a hot, dry climate like Israel as the morning dew which glistens with the morning sun, giving a cool refreshing start to the day and supplying the water needed to prolong the life of the grass and vegetation.

"Unity is like a cool breeze on a hot day!"

**v.3**

Just as God commands blessing upon Zion, so He commands blessing upon those who dwell in unity: "United we stand, divided we fall"

## IV. The Lord's Prescription for Unity (Eph. 4:13)

3 Essentials to Biblical unity:

1. Sharing a common relationship
   (the oneness of being, which comes "in Christ" - see: Eph. 4:1-5)

2. Sharing common convictions
   (a oneness of thinking which comes from the Bible - Amos 3:3; I Cor. 1:10)

   Agreement not necessarily in every detail or fine point of doctrine, but in the indisputable, clearly revealed essentials.

3. Sharing a common goal
   (a oneness of service which is focused on Christ)

   Sharing a common cause

   Disunity is so destructive because rather than working together you are working against each other.

   Unity is:
   1. Playing on the same team
   2. Heading in the same direction
   3. Serving the same Master

Four attitudes that promote unity:

1. Unselfishness

(Acts 4:32 - "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.)

2. Humility

(Phil. 2:2 - "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.)

3. Compassion & love

(I Pet. 3:8 - "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous")

4. Peace

(Eph. 4:3 - "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace")

CONCLUSION: If we work as a team, God can do a great work through us.