

Unity

– A Study of Ephesians 4:1-6

1

The Beauty of Unity

- The Persons of the Godhead.
cf. Deuteronomy 6:4; John 10:30
- The majestic universe. Jeremiah 31:35-36
- The Old and New Testaments.
- Unity is “good” and “pleasant.” Psalms 133:1
- “Oneness” is the antidote against becoming unbelievers. John 17:20-21

2

Ugliness of Division

- Jerusalem was troubled with Judaizers.
Acts 11:2; 15:1ff
- Corinth. 1 Corinth 1:10ff
- Philippi had Euodia and Syntyche.
Philippians 4:2-3
- Ephesus had:
 - 1 Timothy 1:19-20 Hymenaeus and Alexander.
 - 2 Timothy 2:17-18 Hymenaeus and Philetus.
- Letter to Gaius mentions Diotrephes. 3 John 9

3

Ephesians 4:1-6, *“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (There is) one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.”*

4

Paul’s Credibility. (Ephesians 4:1)

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord”

Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; Philippians 1:13; Philemon 9, 13; 2 Timothy 1:8

- He is both a prisoner “of Christ” (3:1) and a prisoner “in the Lord” (4:1).
- The apostle was a prisoner **literally on many occasions during his ministry** (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23), and **specifically when he penned this epistle** (cf. 6:20).
- **Paul had become the prisoner “of” Jesus** in that he had surrendered his self-interests to the bondage of the Lord (Philemon 10, 13).
- **There is no virtue in hardship when one is estranged from the Lord.**

5

The Charge To Walk Worthily Of One’s Calling. (Ephesians 4:1)

“I ... beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called”

- The term “walk” (*peripateo* – “to walk around”) refers to the entire “sphere” of one’s existence. (8 times in Ephesians)
- The “calling” is God’s invitation. Acts 2:39; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; Philippians 3:14
- The “called” – “who have listened to his voice addressed to them in the gospel, hence those who have enlisted in the service of Christ” (*Thayer*)

6

The Charge To Walk Worthily Of One's Calling. (Ephesians 4:1)

"I ... beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called"

"Worthily" is an adverb that suggests a comparison between two objects that correspond with one another in some fashion – in this instance, both in kind and in quality. cf. Ephesians 4:17ff

7

The Disposition Necessary For Oneness In Christ. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

"with all lowliness"

"Lowliness" (*tapeinophrosune*). Low of mind.

"humble minded" – 1 Peter 3:8

- Paul, describes himself. Acts 20:1
 - And his life supported the claim.
- "Lowliness of mind" cf. Philippians 2:3, 5ff; cf. Romans 12:3; Matthew 18:1-4; 20:20ff
- **What a challenge for the people of God!**

8

The Disposition Necessary For Oneness In Christ. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

"with all meekness"

"Meekness" (*praytes* – found eleven times in the New Testament)

"Gentleness of attitude and behavior, in contrast with harshness in one's dealings with others" (Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain).

- It is used of "mildness."
 - 1 Timothy 6:11; cf. 2 Timothy 2:24-25
 - It is the opposite of "roughness" and "severity."
- Moses was described as the "meekest" man of the earth. Numbers 12:3
- *Praytes* involves radical submission to God and modesty in dealings with other people. Galatians 6:1; Titus 3:2; James 1:21;

9 1 Peter 3:15

The Disposition Necessary For Oneness In Christ. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

"with longsuffering"

"Longsuffering" (*makrothymia* – found 14 times in the New Testament) Literally suffering long!

- Used of God who demonstrates this virtue in His dealings with sinful humanity. Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9
- Used to describe man. (*patience*) Acts 26:3; James 5:7
- It is one of the virtues of the "fruit of the Spirit", Galatians 5:22, and is a requirement for every Christian. Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Needed in Ephesus ... Ephesians 4:31-32;

cf. Hebrews 10:36

10

The Disposition Necessary For Oneness In Christ. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

"forbearing one another in love"

"Forbearing" (*anachomai*) "to hold oneself up against, i.e. (figuratively) put up with" (Strong)

Mark 9:19 in the exasperated question of Jesus, "How long am I to bear with you?"

- "In love" (*agape* – 116 times in the New Testament).
- ***Agape* is a premeditated principle by which one lives as he attempts to operate in the noblest interest of others.**
- It is extremely difficult to act with *agape* towards those we do not particularly like ... 1 John 4:10-11
- Nonetheless, by the command to "love," we are challenged to

11 persistently act in the genuine welfare of others.

The Disposition Necessary For Oneness In Christ. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

"giving diligence"

"Diligence" (*spoudazo*) – 11 times in the New Testament. It carries the idea of constantly striving to put forth one's very best effort. cf. 2 Peter 1:5ff

"Make every effort ..." NIV

"Eager to maintain ..." ESV

"Endeavoring ..." KJV

- **It reflects the sustained zeal that every Christian must have for the promotion of unity.**

12

The Disposition Necessary For Oneness In Christ. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

“to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

“Unity of the Spirit”. Unity that is sought and initiated by the

Holy Spirit – by means of His influence through the word of God. Ephesians 6:17

“Bond of peace.” (*syndesmos*) is that which binds together, as ligaments do for the human body. cf. Colossians 2:19; 3:14.

- **It is the very opposite of that bitter attitude that always looks for a fight.**

13

The Disposition Necessary For Oneness In Christ. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

“giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

“Peace” (eirene – 92 times in the New Testament) is a term of marvelous flavor. *“to weave together.”* (Barclay)

“till we all attain unto the unity of the faith”
Ephesians 4:13

WE CAN DO THIS! John 17:20-21

Every passage that condemns false doctrine affirms that men are expected to understand the Bible alike. Galatians 1:8-9; 2 John 9-11

14 **Amos 3:3, “Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?”**

Conclusion:

- It is clear to see that this chorus of qualities, if engaged by the people of God, will create an atmosphere wherein the redemptive plan of Christ can operate smoothly.
- **Growth is the result!**
- Surely every genuine Christian desires to see this state prevail in the body of Christ.

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