

FROM THE MINISTRY OF

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UNITY OF THE CHURCH

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Penned by: The Preacher

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? (1 Corinthians 3:1-4)

CAUSING DIVISIONS

We as Christians can spend so much time debating and lecturing about this and that, getting caught up in our talk over Calvinism, Arminianism, post- tribulation, pre- tribulation, are we saved before baptism or during, and on it may go. We then build our churches with their own sets of rules, views and traditions, creating denominational organizations complete with their own names of distinction. Well, is this not true? Don't we label ourselves as Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Assembly of God, Nazarenes and Church of Christ just to name a few?

And let's not forget about those Churches that consider themselves "nondenominational" but yet are part of an Association of Churches. Even these churches have duplicated themselves with their own name of distinction along with their own set of rules and views. All these are causing a division within the body of Christ and making the church look confusing, not only to us Christians, but to the world as well.

Now, please don't get me wrong. I love my brothers and sisters in Christ who all attend these churches. And to make things even clearer, I myself attend or even have

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attended some of these churches. However, by us continually allowing these names of distinction, we are creating divisions not only in the eyes of us believers, but in the eyes of the world as well.

ONE TRUE CHURCH

According to the word of God, there is to be no divisions within the body of Christ. We are to be the one true Church, and this would include all our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. But, as noted above, there are so many church Denominations and Associations that are causing divisions among Christians. And why is that? Could it be because we think we have a better handle on the truth than the fellowship down the street? I do believe so, for why else would we do it? God's word sums it up best where it says: *"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"* (1Corinthians 1:11-13)

Now it may be true that we love our Lord and Savior from the heart. We may also be totally sincere in our faith as Christians, praying and ¹reaching out to the lost and other believers as well. However, at the same time we are building these invisible walls of separation. And the sad part of it all, we do it in plain view of the world who is watching and maybe even ²mocking. ¹(Mark 16:15) ²(Romans 2:23-24)

Please Note: If we examine most of the early churches in the New Testament, we would see that they were only referred to according to their ³locality such as a name of the city or of a person who owned the house. So, these types of labeling was not to show a distinction from one another but to aid the reader to understand their locality. ³(Romans 16:3-5, 1Corinthians 1:11, 16:19, 2 Thessalonians 1:1, Philemon 1:2)

LEARNING UNITY THE HARD WAY

So, God calls us to be one in Christ and to dwell in unity with fellow believers. Jesus prayed for this Christian ⁴unity so that the world may see our love for one another and thus recognize that he truly came from the Father and that the Holy Spirit dwells in us. And this unity can only be truly accomplished if we obey God by breaking down these dividing walls that we have made. Because let's face it, if we don't do it God may do it, and that in such a way we could never have imagined. ⁴(John 17:20-23)

The Syrian Christians were praying for revival and believing that God would do a great work in their land. They like us had their churches along with their different denominations. And then came the war with its bombings and terrorists. Churches were destroyed and down came their denominational barriers that separated

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believers. Syrian Christians groups who at one time may have questioned each other's salvation are now gathering for weekly prayers, asking God to move in their nation and in their churches. Now these same Christians continue to spread hope in the face of hopelessness, holding high not a political or denominational banner but the banner of Jesus Christ. (see video link in the reference area below)

And let's not forget what happened when persecution broke out against the early church as described in the book of Acts. For we read that: ⁵"As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." So we see that persecution doesn't stop the spread of the Gospel, but only increases it. ⁵(Acts 8:3-4)

JUST A REMINDER

We cannot put God in our own little theological box. Yes, sometimes we get up on our little "soap box" and act like we ⁶know everything, but the truth of the matter is we don't. Let us remember that ⁷God's ways and thoughts are much higher than ours so let's just humble ourselves before Him and let God be God. So let us quit leaning on our own understanding of things and allow his Holy Spirit to teach us his truths. We must embrace the truth of his word, and take upon ourselves the yoke of Jesus so that we can truly learn from him. For its only when we keep our eyes stayed on him can we be truly led by the Holy Spirit into all truths. And in all, let us remember what his word says to us: ⁸"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD. So if this is true with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we also must likewise be in unity with our God and with each other. Amen. ⁶(1 Corinthians 8:2) ⁷(Isaiah 55:8) ⁸(Deuteronomy 6:4)

IN CLOSING

So, let us put away our own petty deference's and all those things that can cause divisions and strife and seek the truth of God's word. For only in doing so can we find true biblical oneness and unity. For we are that ⁹one body in the Lord with its many members who are called to function as a whole. There is a world of people out there who need to hear the gospel and we are to be the salt and a light to them. Isn't that what we're called to do? Aren't we supposed to spread the love of Christ to the lost out there so that they may have eternal life too? So in all, let us fulfill our Lord's Prayer by being one in Him and fulfill the ¹⁰great commission which is sharing the Gospel with the world. We need to learn from His Holy Spirit as Christ shows us the way. Amen ⁹(1 Corinthians 12:12) ¹⁰(Mark 16:15)

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Reference from article above:

- "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! (Deuteronomy 6:4)
- Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (Psalm 133:1)
- "For My thoughts [are] not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)
- For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:20)
- And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)
- Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (John 17:20-23)
- As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. (Acts 8:3-4)
- Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. (Romans 2:23-24)
- Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. (Romans 16:3-5)
- For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every

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one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Corinthians 1:11-13)

- And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. (1 Corinthians 8:2)
- For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12)
- The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. (1 Corinthians 16:19)
- And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: (Philemon 1:2)
- Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: (2 Thessalonians 1:1)
- [Video on Liena"s Prayer: Please click this link](#)

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