

4 Things That Hurt Unity

Sunday PM 04/08/18

Introduction:

The Psalmist said, "How blessed it is for people to dwell in unity", *Psalm 133.1*. Christ desired unity for His people, in fact He prayed for it, *John 17.20-21*. His apostles drove this point home in various writings, *Colossians 3.14-15*; *Philippians 1.27*, *1 Corinthians 1.10*, and *Ephesians 4.2-3*. While we can all talk about the greatness of unity we must understand the kind of unity Jesus was talking about and some hindrances to that kind of unity.

I) Unity Is Neither Good Nor Bad In Itself (Another way of saying this "Unity Can Be Either Good or Bad)

- A) Unity in community improvement, serving God, helping others - good.
- B) Unity in a gang of smugglers crossing border-deplorable.
- C) Unity of faith is commendable, unity in rebellion is unrighteousness.
 - 1. *Numbers 16* the rebellion of Korah. *Verse 2 - 3a* "two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. They gathered together against Moses and Aaron."
 - 2. Jesus prayed for His disciples to have a particular type of unity, *John 17.21*.

II) 4 Things That Hurt the Spirit of Unity

- A) A lack of effort - things that pull together can push people apart.

1. Our foe is Satan but what happens if we stop resisting him, or we quit being alert to his devices? He will divide us and conquer us.
2. Our sin - too proud to confess and admit our wrongs, *James 5.16*. The church at Corinth despite its problems was unified against sin to the point that Paul had to encourage them to comfort the brother repenting of sin, *2 Corinthians 2.7*
3. Our purpose (why are we here?) - if we are not growing we die!
 - a. We should be growing in our ability.
 - b. We should be growing in strength and influence.
4. Our salvation - if it's not real, it hinders us, *Romans 2.24*.
 - a. Every time a Christian curses, is immoral, abuses another, etc.
 - b. It endangers our salvation and causes us to become divided.
5. We are to give diligence to unity, *Ephesians 4.3, 16*.

B) Exalting self - can't serve Christ and self at the same time. That is why it is called carrying the cross of Christ.

1. *3 John 9-10* quarreling and division results.
2. A 1996 survey of 400 preachers and church leaders stated that the number one contributing factor in conflict among church of Christ is "personality differences among members"
3. Once conflict begins it reoccurs regularly for 4 main reasons.

- a. If it is misdiagnosed as a doctrinal matter instead of the judgement/personality problem it really is.
- b. If biblical processes for conflict resolution are ignored. We all know the passages that tells us what to do when we find out a brother has an issue with us or we have problem with a brother. But many times, people just don't do what the Bible says.
- c. If conflicts are avoided rather than dealt with and then they reappear.
- d. If winning and not unity becomes the goal.

C) Disorder, *Judges 21.25* doing what is right our own eyes, no followship.

- 1. Is it any surprise the warning in *Philippians 2.14; James 4.11*.
- 2. What is God's plan? *Hebrews 13.17; 1 Peter 5.5*.
 - a. I know of a congregation where the members were complaining and the elders went to the various members and asked what they thought should be done. But no one tried to help them.
 - b. Sometimes members find it easier to criticize instead of work together.

D) Lack of growth - some were going back in Jerusalem, *Hebrews 5.11-12*.

- 1. Energy tends to go somewhere. In motor racing a car will fly apart by design. The energy of the crash is being funneled away from the driver. We can either

funnel our energy toward righteousness or die,
Revelation 3.1.

2. Are questions problems or opportunities?
3. Is there fear of the untried?

III) 4 Things Above Need Converting

- A) Lack of effort into diligence**
- B) Exalting self into serving**
- C) Disorder into fellowship**
- D) Lack of growth into growth**
- E) *Ephesians 4.15-16* what are you supplying for unity?**
- F) First you must be unified/one with Christ.**