

The Basis for Spiritual Unity – Part 1

Sermon Delivered on January 26th, 2025
AM Service

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Text:

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3: Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4: There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6: One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Introduction

In John 17:18-22, our Lord Jesus prays to the Father, “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. 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.”

In this priestly prayer, we see **our Lord praying for the unity of His church throughout the ages**. Our Lord Jesus’ prayer makes it clear that unity is important. Because when the world sees unity in the church, it will lead the lost people in the world to believe that Jesus Christ is truly sent from God. It will lead them to believe that His claims are true. Now, if **there is so much at stake** when it comes to believers being unified, **then we should endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. As we saw in our text, the apostle Paul also desires church unity.

Actually, there is much talk about unity in the church these days, and I believe we all want unity. But we need to ask ourselves what our Lord Jesus and what Paul mean by unity. Although church unity is vital, it is important to note that **our Lord and Paul are not speaking of unity at any cost** in which doctrinal truths are ignored or abandoned. No, if we are to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace **we need to know and hold to the truths that unite us as a body**. We must make sure that we all are founded on the biblical basis for unity.

The apostle Paul proceeds to list **seven vital truths that unite believers** in the one body of Christ. Having exhorted his readers to endeavor to maintain unity, he goes on to tell them **the nature and ground of true Biblical unity**. What is that blessed tie that binds us as believers? The apostle Paul mentions seven of them, namely, One Body, One Spirit, One Hope, One Lord,

One Faith, One Baptism, and One God and Father of all. **The repetition of the word ‘one’ emphasizes unity.** These seven elements are arranged around each member of the Trinity. In these three verses, the apostle Paul directs our attention to each member of the Trinity. He begins with **the Spirit** (4:4), moves to **the Son** (“**one Lord,**” 4:5), and ends with God **the Father** (“**one God and Father,**” 4:6). Christian unity is bound up with our common relationship with the one God who is a Triune God. Let’s look at each of these elements of Christian unity,

First, there is One Body

Ephesians 4:4 There is **one body**, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

The apostle **Paul uses several analogies to describe the church** as one living organism. He compares the Church to **a body** (Eph 2:16), to **a city** (Eph 2:19), to **a family** (Eph 2:19), to **a bride** (Eph 5:23-33), to **a building** (Eph 2:20-23), to **a bread** (1 Cor 10:17). All these analogies are used to illustrate the oneness and unity of the Church of Jesus Christ. And one of Paul’s favorite analogies to describe the Church is found here in verse 4, **a body**. There is only one body and only one Church. It is true that there are many local churches, but there is only one Body. I agree with David Cloud when he said, “*I believe there are three aspects to the church: (1) **The Local Assembly** (Acts 2:47; 13:1). This is the object of the vast majority of the Bible references to the church. Sometimes “church” refers to the local assembly in a general, generic, institutional sense (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6). (2) **The Heavenly Assembly** (Heb. 12:23; 2:12). The heavenly assembly includes every New Testament saint, because before God the church is already seated in heavenly places (Eph. 2:5-6). (3) **The Eternal Assembly** (Eph. 2:16-22). The eternal assembly is taking shape even today. It is not something that exists only in “prospect,” though its fullness is yet to be seen. Today, it exists before God and is growing (Eph. 2:21).*”

There are local churches in Ephesus, in Smyrna, and in Pergamum, and in Thyatira, and in Sardis, and in Philadelphia, and in Laodicea. There are local churches in all parts of the world. So, here in **Ephesians 4**, when the apostle Paul says, “**there is one body**”, he is not talking about local churches, he is talking about **the Heavenly Assembly**. The one Heavenly Assembly which is made up of all the believers from every nation, and from every kindred, and from every tongue, and from every people, throughout time and history and around the world. All people who are truly Christians are part of the one body.

This is the source of unity and harmony in the church. All believers are parts of one body. **There is one body, but there are many parts.** In the words of Paul in **Romans 12:5**, “**So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.**” Christ is the head, and the Church is the body. **The oneness and unity of the Church is essential for the work of Christ.** This is the beauty of the church, people of different educational, religious, ethnic, cultural, family background are bought together in one body and dwell and work together in unity and in love for the sake of Jesus Christ and His gospel. Members of the body of Christ may be differ in nationality, color, language, education, ability, and personality, but through the blood of the Saviour and the baptism of the Spirit they are united to Christ as living members of His Body.

The first basis for harmony among believers in the church that Paul mentions is that **we are part of one body—the body of Christ**. Our unity is not based on our nationality, ethnicity, education, upbringing, financial condition, or any earthly factor. No, biblical unity is built on the truth that **there is one body, whose head is the Lord Jesus Christ**.

Why is there one Body? This brings us to the next ground for unity and harmony among believers that Paul mentions.

Second, there is One Spirit

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

The second basis for harmony among believers in the church that Paul mentions is that there is one Spirit. Why is there only one body? There is only one body because there is only one Spirit. As there is one body, so there is one Spirit, who quickens a dead sinner, and baptizes believers into the one body of Christ at the moment of conversion. “**For by one Spirit**,” says the apostle in 1 Cor. 12:13, “**are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.**”

So, the Spirit of God brings each one of us into the body and **it’s the Spirit of God who indwells each one in the body**. That same Spirit indwells every believer. Of all believers, Paul says, “**Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?**” (1 Cor 3:16)

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that **the Spirit of God dwell in you**. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by **his Spirit that dwelleth in you**.

1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of **the Holy Ghost which is in you**, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

All believers have the Holy Spirit, and **it is the Holy Spirit which unites all believers together**. Don’t you experience this when you ran into a believer whom you never met before? Though you have just met, you immediately have a kindred connection as if you have known each other for a long time. Why? It’s because the same Spirit you have is the same Spirit that other person has also. There is a tie that binds you together because you both are indwelt by one Spirit and have been sealed by that one Holy Spirit.

The same Holy Spirit who indwells the apostle Paul, and the apostle Peter, and all other apostles, is the same Spirit who indwells you and me. The same Holy Spirit who indwells you is the same

Spirit who indwells the Christian right next to you. The same Holy Spirit that is at work in the people of God here in States, is the same Holy Spirit that is at work in the Philippines. The same Holy Spirit that is at work in the people of God in North and South America, is the same Holy Spirit that is at work in Asia, and in Australia, and in Africa, and in Antarctica, and in Middle East, and in Europe. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are all partakes of the same Spirit, thus we are one.

Third, there is One Hope

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in **one hope of your calling**.

The third basis for harmony among believers in the church that Paul mentions is that there is one hope of our calling. What is the hope of our calling? There are two words here we need to understand, namely **hope** and **calling**.

First, what is meant by hope?

Usually when we use the word “hope,” we use it as synonym to the word “wish.” Such as a wish that something desirable may happen, but it has no solid foundation and certainty: e. g. *“I hope it doesn’t rain tomorrow.”* or *“I’m not sure, but I do hope so.”* That kind of hope has no certainty.

But in the Bible “hope” is not uncertain. Hope as used in the Bible always has to do with certainty. It is **more than a mere wish** that it will happen. No, **the Biblical hope is sure hope and confident expectation.** Though it has not happened yet, it is absolutely certain. **It is certain because God has promised it,** and He never fails to keep His promises.

Second, what is meant by our calling?

Earlier in this book, the apostle Paul prayed that we would understand the hope of our calling.

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Our calling involves everything that God has done, everything that God is doing, and everything that God wants to do one day for you as a believer in Christ. It starts with a call to salvation. Peter describes this calling of God in 1 Peter 2:9, where he writes, *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”*

Followed by this calling to salvation is the calling to sanctification.

2 Timothy 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 9: Who hath saved us, and **called us with an holy calling**, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but **unto holiness.**

God's calling does not only involve a call to salvation and a call to sanctification, but also a call to glorification. The ultimate glorification of believer is when we become fully conformed to the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ. We see the complete fulfillment of this in [1 John 3:2-3](#), where it says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

So, the hope of calling is a firmly rooted confidence in what God has done for us in the past—**salvation**, and what He is doing in the present—**sanctification**, and what He will be doing in us and for us in the future—**glorification**. All believers have one hope. That one hope is not to make more money, nor to live long life, nor to be healthy and wealthy, No. That one hope is the yet future aspect of our salvation, the second coming of Jesus Christ, when we will be completely changed to be like Christ and share His glory. Paul refers to Christ's coming as "the blessed hope."

[Titus 2:13](#) **Looking for that blessed hope**, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Then the apostle John says that when we see Jesus at His return, we will be changed into His likeness. Then he adds in [1 John 3:3](#), "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Earlier in [Ephesians 1:13c-14](#), Paul says, "ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." All believers have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul used the word 'earnest'. That word '**earnest**' is the same word we get for engagement ring. It's the downpayment on our inheritance. It is our future. This is our confidence. This is our one hope. It is a sure hope. It is a blessed hope. **It is Christ in us the hope of glory!**

Closing Exhortations

As I have mentioned, there are a lot of differences among God's people—nationality, color, language, education, ability, and personality. But, in spite of the many differences, we are part of the **same body**, we are indwelt and guided by the **same Spirit**, and we have the **same hope** of calling. The better we truly know and understand that there is one body, one Spirit, and one hope, the more we will be motivated to "[walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.](#)"

Brothers and sisters in Christ, **we have such powerful grounds for unity and harmony**. May we **focus on them** and **not let any differences separate us** from loving and communing with every other believer in Jesus Christ. May these truths cause us to live differently. May we all live always these things in mind with the delight of these glorious truths.

Let me speak to those who are outside looking in. In other words, those who are still lost in their sins; those who have not experienced the new birth. If you have not been born again, you are what theologians called unregenerate. And **being unregenerate, you are without Christ, without hope, and without God** in the world. You may hope, but your hope has no solid foundation. But it doesn't have to stay that way. Hope of salvation is offered to you and can be

yours! But it's only through Jesus Christ and Him alone. Oh, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. May you be able to sing with us the great gospel hymn 'The Solid Rock' by Edward Mote:

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus' name*

*When darkness veils His lovely face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil*

*His oath, His covenant, His blood
Supports me in the 'whelming flood
When all around my soul gives way
He then is all my hope and stay*

*When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless to stand before the throne*

*On Christ the solid rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand.*

AMEN!