

## The Basis for Spiritual Unity – Part 2

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AM Service

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### 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 this section the apostle Paul stresses church unity. He calls believers to maintain spiritual unity of the church. He writes in verse 3, “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Christians must be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The unity that we are to endeavor to maintain is **not a superficial unity**. It is **not a unity at all costs**. The apostle Paul is **not speaking of unity at any price** in which the fundamental truths of the gospel are abandoned. If we are to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, we need to know the tie that binds us together as one body.

Our Lord Jesus has done everything needed to bring Jews and Gentiles together, establishing one Church, as our text reveals.

Ephesians 4:4 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.

Having exhorted the believers in Ephesus the duty of maintaining unity, the apostle Paul goes on to list both its nature and basis. **There are seven elements** he mentions here and as I pointed out last time 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 “one God and **Father** of all” (4:6). Christian unity is bound up with our common relationship with the one God who is a Triune God. Last Lord’s Day, we talked about the first three elements, focusing on the Holy Spirit. In the words of Paul, “there is one body, and one Spirit, and one hope of your calling.”

The first basis for unity and 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, but biblical unity is built on the truth that there is one body, whose head is the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Second, there is One Spirit.** There is only one body because there is only one Spirit. As there is one body, so there is one Spirit, who quickens dead sinners, and baptizes believers into the one body of Christ at the moment of conversion. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are all partakers of the same Spirit, thus we are one.

**Third, there is One Hope.** 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. 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!**

Now in verse 4, Paul moves from the Spirit to the Son, that is, Jesus Christ.  
[Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism.](#)

**Fourth, there is One Lord.**

Paul now moves from the Spirit to Jesus Christ. One Lord. There are many lords, but there is only one Lord. There ought to be unity among believers, because they all have one and the same Lord. There is not a different Lord for the Jews and another for the Gentiles! There is not a different Lord for the believers in Ephesus and another for the believers in Galatia. There is not a different Lord for the believers in States and another for the believers in Africa or Asia or Australia or Europe. Members of the One Body may surely **differ in their views on many things**, on things that are **non-essentials**, but they are to be **united on the essential and important truth** that there is one Lord—the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul asserts that there is but “one Lord.” The Greek word here that Paul uses is the word “*Kurios*”. It is one of Paul’s favorite ways of referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word **Yahweh** or **Jehovah**. Jesus Himself claims that He is Yahweh.

[John 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before \*\*Abraham was, I am.\*\*](#)

Here our Lord, claims that He is the God who appeared to Moses at the burning bush and revealed Himself as the Great I AM. And we know that’s exactly what He intended, because of the response of the Jews ...

[John 8:59 Then took \*\*they up stones to cast at him:\*\* but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.](#)

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Yahweh. Jesus is Jehovah. This is the consistent truth proclaimed in the Scripture. The inspired writers viewed Jesus as none other than God Himself. As there is only one Lord, there is only one Saviour. Salvation rests in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

[Romans 10:8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth \*\*the Lord Jesus\*\*, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be](#)

saved. 10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

The confession of faith that Paul refers to is the content of his preaching. It is affirmation recognizing that Jesus is Lord or Jesus is Yahweh. Our Lord Himself declares in *Isaiah 45:6*, “That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. **I am the LORD, and there is none else.**” And He goes on to say in verse 21, “and **there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.**”

The Lord Jesus Christ is that One Lord, and one God and one Saviour. Jesus is Lord. He has been given this exalted name and “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.” (*Phil 2:9-11*)

This is the great foundation of our unity, we believe and confess that there is one Lord! **If a person or a religious group denies this foundational truth**, that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, **we are not in unity with them**. True unity one with another is experienced only upon this ultimate foundation—Jesus Christ is Lord!

### **Fifth, there is One Faith.**

*Ephesians 4:5* One Lord, **one faith** ...

The term “**faith**” has several of meanings in the New Testament. Sometimes, faith **may refer to the act of believing** or other times, it **may refer to that of one’s belief**. In both senses it is true that Christians have only one faith. But in context, the faith here refers **not to the act of believing** but rather **to what is believed**. Here, the apostle Paul is **not referring to the act of faith** by which a person is saved, but rather **to the body of doctrine** revealed in the New Testament. It refers to **the substance of one’s belief**.

Paul asserts that there is one only faith. There is not one faith for the Jews and another faith for the Gentiles. No, there is **one body of doctrine**, there is only one body of truth for both Jews and Gentiles. There is one body of doctrine that was given by God through the Apostles to the church. It is called **the apostles’ doctrine** in *Acts 2:42*. Jude calls it “**the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints**” (*Jude 3*). In the words of Warren Wiersbe, “*The early Christians recognized a body of basic doctrine that they taught, guarded, and committed to others (2 Tim. 2:2). Christians may differ in some matters of interpretation and church practice; but all true Christians agree on “the faith”—and to depart from “the faith” is to bring about disunity within the body of Christ.*” (Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor)

*Like a mighty army moves the church of God.  
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod.  
We are not divided; all one body we,  
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.*

*-S. Baring-Gould*

This is what united the early church, they were one in doctrine. They were not united at all cost. Their unity was **rooted and grounded in truth and in doctrine**. But when the body of truth revealed in the Scripture is denied and ignored, there is not true biblical unity. If we are to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace **we need to know and hold to the body of truth** and doctrine that unite us as a body. So, Paul exhorts us “that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph 4:14). In Colossians 3:16, he admonishes us to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” This is the tie that binds us together as one body—one Lord, and one Faith.

### **Sixth, there is One Baptism.**

Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, **one baptism**.

Submitting to the same Lord, believing the same body of truth, **we also share one and the same baptism**. Some think that this refers to water baptism, the ordinance of baptism after one becomes a believer and follower of Jesus Christ. We are commanded as believers to be baptized. We should be baptized, but I don't think Paul is talking about external observance of water baptism in this text. I believe Paul is referring to “**spiritual baptism**,” the one baptism of the Spirit, **which takes place at salvation**.

The Paul spoke about this one baptism in his first letter to the Corinthians chapter 12.

1 Corinthians 12:12 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.

Paul here speaks again about the body. He points out how the body is one but has many members. And how each member has been ingrafted into that one body. And how does each member become part of the body? He says in here in verses 13 and 14, “**For by one Spirit 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. For the body is not one member, but many.”

‘One Lord, one faith, one baptism.’ **Faith and baptism are specifically linked to the Lord Jesus Christ**. When a person is saved and converted to Christ, he becomes a member of Christ's living body. He is baptized into the living body of Jesus Christ. Remember the words of John the Baptist in Mark 1:7-8, “And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: **but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost**.”

Paul writes this in Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27: For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ. 28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for **ye are all one in Christ Jesus**. 29: And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

That is the baptism that he is talking about. To all believers, the thing that unites us together is that we have been baptized spiritually. Paul in [Ephesians 4:5](#) is not referring to the external water baptism but **the internal work of the Holy Spirit**.

This is not the external observance of water baptism to which Paul refers in [Ephesians 4:5](#), that there is one baptism. When he refers to that one baptism, he is referring to the baptism of [1 Corinthians 12:13](#). In that **we have been brought by a spiritual transformation, into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ**. In the gracious and powerful work of the Holy Spirit, not only were our sins forgiven, but we are also translated from darkness into light. We were removed from one domain to another domain, from one realm to another realm, from the realm and domain of sin and death, into the realm and domain of righteousness and life.

### **Closing Exhortations**

[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.

We all have different roles in the body of Christ, and we will certainly differ in our opinions on many things. But, **in spite of the many differences we have, our calling is the same**—to live together in loving unity with other believers as we grow and mature and serve together and proclaim the gospel to the world.

**Christian unity is a high call, and a difficult call.** Actually, it's impossible apart from the assistance of the Spirit of Jesus Christ ([Phil 1:19](#)), for without Him we can do nothing ([John 15:5](#)). In the words of Paul, we must be “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ([Eph 4:3](#)). **We must be diligent** to preserve the true unity among all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. **But at the same time, we must be careful not to set aside these fundamental truths** that form the basis for true Christian unity. C. H. Spurgeon wrote, “*Fellowship with known and vital error is participation in sin.*”

Let us endeavor to keep the unity if the Spirit in the bond of peace but **let us also be careful not to forget and abandon the tie that binds us together**, namely, we are members of one body, we share one Spirit, one hope of calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all.

**AMEN!**