Introduction

1. If someone asked what is the first essential for a Christian to be in a healthy relationship with Christ… would unity be your answer. Before leaving the Upper Room, Jesus prays that His disciples be unified.

2. In Ephesians 4, unity is the first step in the walk of the believer.

3. Think in terms of the human body. The body needs all parts working together in coordination with every other part in order to function healthfully. A displacement of even an insignificant organ or the maladjustment of any parts of the body can cause disease or disability.

4. A couple of weeks ago we talked about our identity in Christ which is foundational for the function of unity as it pertains to the body of Christ, His church.

5. Unity with Christ promotes and fosters unity with other believers.

6. We know two things about the unity that Christ is praying for and that is described in Ephesians 4. Christian unity can’t happen without biblical truth and the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:20-21).

Unity Is Not Created By Us

1. When Christ is praying for His disciples He is not hoping they find a unifying purpose but that they surrender to the person who defines the purpose just as He surrendered to God, His Father and God’s purpose, they would surrender to Jesus in order to fulfill His purpose.

2. Ephesians 4:3 “being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” God is not asking us to make unity, but to keep unity that already exists; it is the unity created by the indwelling Holy Spirit in the body of Christ in which there is oneness of mind, heart, and will and it fellowships with those who share the same life, purpose, and power.

3. Because of redemption we have everything we need for unity. In other words, we are positioned for unity. Ephesians 4:4–6 “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”

4. Positionally it is impossible to say that all gods are the same as Creator-God, John 17:18–19 “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

5. If there is “one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all,” there can only be one truth.
The Practice of Unity

1. When we are positionally submissive we will be practically effective.

2. Unity is not invisible, intangible, or uncertain. Unity is rooted in God’s truth and functions through God’s love. John 17:21 “that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.” John 17:23 “I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”

3. God desires unity among the body so that He would be on display through the daily lives of Christians living in unity together. (Acts 2:46-47)

4. Ephesians 4:2 “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.”
Ephesians 4:15 “but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,”
Ephesians 4:16 “from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

5. “With all humility”- Remembering the depth of our sin but knowing the greatness of Christ’s grace. Our model for such living is Christ in Phil. 2:5-8. Christmindedness is the willingness to humble and empty ourselves.

6. “Gentleness”- Our estimate of ourselves in relationship to God. The standard is not, “How am I acting compared to others” but “how am I acting compared to Christ?”

7. “Patience”- without irritation or annoyance, its long-suffering but it does not mean long-facedness, in scripture it almost always accompanied with joy.

8. “Tolerance for one another”- “lovingly putting up with all that is disagreeable in other people.” (H.A. Ironside)
This is not being blind to sin and difficulties but is being submissive to Christ’s love in our attitudes toward those differences and sin.

9. After looking at these character traits we realize that only in surrender to the person of Christ and living in the fullness of the Holy Spirit can unity take place.

Conclusion

1. A unified body doesn’t care about individual credit but is consumed with fulfilling the work of Christ for the Glory of God. It is service at the pleasure of the master and not in preference of the servant.