

Church Unity

Introduction

1. **This morning, upon our understanding that God only acknowledges one body, we then strive to in that one body. We can be that one body provided:**
 - A. **We acknowledge our Lord's standard for unity of the body.**
 - B. **We do not divide the one body based upon human philosophy.**
 - C. **We endeavor for unity in the one body through service to others.**

Ephesians 4:1-6

2. **We find within this text the standard of unity.**
 - A. **Christian unity has as its foundation, Christian doctrine and teaching.**
 - B. **Without the doctrine and teaching, there would be no unity.**
3. **But Christian unity also depends upon the desire in each and every Christian to be united.**
 - A. **Without that desire, there can be no unity.**
4. **This is why Paul says that we must "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."**
5. **Desire and doctrine are necessary for Christians to have unity.**
6. **As a gospel preacher, I can teach the doctrine, but I cannot teach the desire. I can teach regarding desire, but I cannot teach the desire itself. That is something that each must want on their own.**

7. **However, I can teach the doctrine, and that is what I will strive to do in this lesson.**
 - A. **We can have the united body that God desires us to have, provided . . .**

We Acknowledge Our Lord's Standard for Unity of the Body

John 17:20-22

1. **This is the Lord's prayer.**
 - A. **Many think of the model prayer as "the Lord's prayer."**
2. **This prayer was truly the Lord's prayer.**
 - A. **It was uttered for his then current disciples, as well as for disciples of all time.**
3. **In this prayer, Jesus prays for true unity. Unity based upon the highest standard for unity and the ONLY standard of unity.**
 - A. **There are many in the church today saying just the opposite.**
 - 1) **That unity does not mean conformity.**
 - 2) **But how could such a standard for unity exist and not demand conformity to something?**
4. **Jesus is the head of the one body.**

Colossians 1:18

- A. **Will we acknowledge his headship and desire unity as he desired unity?**
- B. **If we truly love Jesus, then this will be our desire.**

We Do Not Divide the Body Based upon Human Wisdom

1 Corinthians 1:10-13

- 1. There was division at Corinth.**
 - A. This division was man-centered.**
 - B. They were becoming sectarian in their thinking.**
 - 1) I am of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ.**
 - C. Why were they doing this?**
 - 1) They were basing their thinking upon the wisdom of men.**
 - 2) Paul so much as says so in verses 18-21 (read).**
 - 3) The philosophers of the day were divided into schools.**
 - 4) The members of the church thought they should do this too.**
- 2. This is what denominationalism does today.**
 - A. There are those who call themselves, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, and many many others.**
 - B. These denominations were all started by men.**
- 3. The same can happen to us if we allow the philosophies of men to prevail and not the power of God.**

4. As Christians, we cannot afford to be men pleasers.**Paul writes,**

Galatians 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

A. I want you to notice the last part of this statement.**1) Notice that word "bondservant." It means, "slave."**

Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

5. We only have ONE master.**6. To seek to please men, instead of God, divides the body of Christ.****We Endeavor for Unity in the Body with Our Fellow Christians****1. This may be the hardest for us to do.****A. Our society is constantly saying, "Do what feels good to self."****B. Burger King's motto has become our national motto, "Have it your way."****1) The Christian is bombarded by this mentality every day.****2) It is tempting to seek our own instead of our fellow Christian.****3) But as members of the body, we cannot afford to serve self.**

2. **There are several principles that help us to seek others instead of self.**
 - A. **The principle of "Everyone can do something."
1 Corinthians 12:4-27**
 - B. **The principle of "Esteeming others higher than self."
Philippians 2:1-11**
 - C. **The principle of loving our brethren.
Romans 12:9-21**
3. **If we strive to put these principles into practice in our lives, they will help us resolve differences in the areas that are not governed by doctrine.**

Conclusion

1. **Do we desire unity in the one body?**
 - A. **I can teach the doctrine.**
 - 1) **But I can't teach the desire.**
2. **We can have unity in the one body if we will...**
 - A. **Acknowledge our Lord's standard for unity.**
 - B. **Not divide based upon human wisdom.**
 - C. **Honestly and sincerely endeavor and desire to have unity in the body with our fellow Christians.**

