

“Oneness” – Beauty and the Beast 2

06/09/14 - Joseph & Sally Littlewood from Chadderton, UK celebrated 75 yrs of marriage. The key? “Whatever it takes to be one, do it. Argue a lot about the things that are pulling you a part & then enjoy making up. Love means being one.” Stout advice. This is God’s purpose in marriage & the church: oneness. Joseph’s advice echoes God’s appeal

in 1 Corinthians 1:10 (ESV) (Read 2xs, 2nd time add) I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, (There is a strong pleading, urging here from Jesus through the Paul.) that all of you agree (that these believers in the bride, the body of Christ have **one voice, one message**) and that there be no divisions among you, (**broken relationships** or opposing factions. Notice, God is pleading NO divisions, not “keep it to a few” but none!) but that you be united **medical term (restored or healed as a whole or complete thing – as one)** in the same mind and the same judgment. (**ONENESS. Not to be clones, but a diverse people (for Corinth is diverse city) who are ONE in purpose & mission.**)

God is pleading with us to have NO divisions, but even more He is pleading with us to **heal and build ONENESS. Why?**

When we pursue oneness through the power of the cross – (heal and build oneness)

we live-out the beauty of the cross. (live in the beauty and display the beauty of the cross)

01. Our Position 02. Our Problem 03. God’s Power 4:00

Position: Our standing, relationship with God based on Christ’s work - not our work. In this case – what about oneness is ours bc of Christ’s work.

01. Our Position - We are eternally ONE with God and each other through the cross.

1 Cor 1:10 (ESV) I appeal to you, *brothers*, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ...

- We are eternally ONE with each other through the cross of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (NLT) 12 The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

Corinth was a diverse city and the small Corinthian churches (like CGs, but w own pastors), reflected this great diversity. I wish at times we were more diverse racially– I see that day soon. But we are a mix of different cultures, economics & political beliefs. We are crafted uniquely for the body – each needed to display the beauty of Jesus and His cross. Christian Faur – creates amazing art using crayons, but not how you think. Pointalism is the technique. A good picture of how the diverse uniqueness – even in this body – is used by God for a bigger beautiful picture of Jesus.

The Corinthian churches were a living expression of the power and beauty of the cross. Many races, cultures & classes had become one in these churches & for the first time both men & women were worshipping together. Did not happen in this day. We are ONE with each other in Christ – no superiority by race, by status, or by money, We are all ONE. Amazing so many diverse and was once opposing individuals could be one – even here. Beautiful!

- We are eternally one with God through the cross of Christ. 1 Cor 1:10 (ESV) I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ... (May we soak this in and rest in the beauty of our oneness in Christ!)

1 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV) But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. (One with His Spirit – means we have literally been united with God, joined with God, married with God as one. **HE IS IN US! – GOD IS IN US!** That means – he who spun the stars into existence, who created the moon, the sun, the farthest star and the closest flower, your favorite ocean and your most desired mind blowing meal - He who fashioned all of the beauty of creation – is with you, in you, and one with you through the faith in the Jesus/cross. **What does that mean for us?**

Oh this is good... hear Jesus tell the why, the **beautiful** why of our Oneness with God!

John 17:21-24 (NLT) 20 “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. 21 I pray that they will *all be one*, just as *you and I are one*—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. Jesus prayed and still prays (says Rom 8:34) for you and I to live in the oneness we have in the cross. 22 I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. 23 I am in them and you are in me. May *they experience such perfect unity* that the world will know that you sent me and *that you love them as much as you love me*. 24 Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me *because you loved me even before the world began!* Jesus is praying we would know the **joy & love** that God the Father has **loved him with from eternity past**. Being **ONE with God means**: we get to experience **the love & joy** that God the Father, God the Son, & God the Spirit have shared for eternity. 1-God created us - **to give us** this perfect joy & love. 2-Sin separated us from it. 3-Jesus came & died in our place so we could once again be ONE with the joy & love of God’s presence. This is the why of oneness.

Rest in our standing today: One with God through Christ – we are united in the love and joy of God's presence. God's full acceptance, God's full pleasure, & God's full delight rests on us forever!

Heard stories of my sister Sarah standing in front of a mirror often saying: "I'm bootiful!" Cute! How important it is for a little girl to believe this! Even more – how important it is for a little girl to hear this from her father. I will say this with full conviction – it is even more important that we hear this truth from our heavenly Father. Hear him today daughter of the King – you are fully accepted, pleasing, and delightful to God. In Christ, you reflect His beauty. And son of the King – His full acceptance, pleasure, and delight rests on you as well in Christ. We, as the body of believers, reflect the power of God yes – but also his beauty. This delights our God!

Rest in our standing today: One with God through Christ – we are united in the love and joy of God's presence. God's full acceptance, God's full pleasure, & God's full delight rests on us forever! 14:00

02. Our Problem - In our brokenness, we often live divided - distorting and missing the beauty of the cross.

*I want to do something different here. I have two questions I need your help answering. **Here they are.** I think together, we can help each other, as the bride or body of Christ, see why God is pleading with us, urging us to pursue oneness and have no divisions. For just a few moments – I want you to answer the questions out loud. I will repeat your answer & Aaron will make them appear on the screen. Hopefully this list will help us see the urgency of God's pleading. Ready!?!?*

- **What image of the bride or God - does division in the body give to the world?**

What are we saying about the bride and/or God to the world – when there are divisions in the body?

- **What does division in the body - do to us in the body? How does it affect us?**

God, me, us

What was the division about in this body?

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 (ESV) 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is *quarreling* among you, my brothers. 12 What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." 13 Is *Christ divided*? The divisions were over who was your leader, who was better, and who would lead us best. The reason is not the point – what it did is the point. *quarreling* > that led to "division".

Some of you are living in the brokenness of division – and you really know the pain and yuck of division. And, right now you want to know. Why? Why would I pursue healing of oneness?

It feels like God is calling you to join him in healing broken oneness to make you walk through pain? This hurts! Look at the damage this does to God, the body, to you ... But most importantly

Remember the Beauty of God our tasting of it daily – our **living in the joy and love of God** is at stake as is what so many others will taste or experience through our lives. **And, oh believer** - God doesn't say – figure it out or work harder. **He gives us His power.** 24:00

03. God's Power – Through the cross God heals and builds oneness.

1 Corinthians 10:17-18 (ESV) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be *emptied of its power*. 18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us *who are being saved it is the power of God*.

The cross has the power to save – bring us to God. But it also has power to reconcile us to one another - tear down barriers, heal divisions, and build – really build oneness that fights again division like Joseph Littlewood said.

- **The cross alone can heal divisions and build our oneness in God and each other.**

Eph 2:14-16 (NLT) 14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 15 He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. 16 Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

1960's it was worse than it is now racially. But the tension and push for justice is as high as it has ever been. And, many of us think – God can you heal our divide racially. My friend Jarvis – one of our inner city pastors we are beginning to work with said, "The greatest struggle for the black man – isn't the white man and how he treats him. The greatest struggle for the white man isn't the poor or rich black man. Our greatest struggle is what we do with the cross of Jesus. There - our struggles are exposed, crushed, and removed as a barrier to God in the power of Jesus. Now healing – that will take each other. The question is – will we, can we come together as ONE in Christ?" Jarvis James

Never been two groups of people who hated each other more than the Jew/Gentiles. Maybe equal to – but not more. God says, the cross united these two to be one. The cross didn't just heal the brokenness – it built one people out of two. This is not a theory – this is truth. The cross is powerful to heal division and build oneness.

How?

Philippians 2:1-11 (eSV) 1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my *joy* by being of the same mind, having the same *love*, being in full accord and of *one* mind.

- **Remember:** *The joy and love of God is at stake here as we fight for Oneness.*

3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but *in humility* count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which *is yours in Christ Jesus*. **Oneness will not come without humility!**

- Healing and building of Oneness is a long-term pursuit of one another in humility. *This ability or power is ours in our Oneness with Jesus (the Humble One).* Christ in you, God in us, amazing!

6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. *Humbled to God/us*

- Humility wasn't something He used as a means to an end – He was and is humble. *In His humility we see and receive the beauty of God through the cross.*

Division between God and us was healed by Jesus pursuing us in humility. Our divisions will be healed in the same power. Not just the same actions – but the power of God that raised Christ, crushed, healed our sin, will do same.

9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- **The result of the cross:** *The humility of Jesus – exalts Jesus – and humbles all.*

When we increase – Jesus decreases – and divisions happen.

Not suppose to be this way. In 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

When we decrease – Jesus increases – and He heals and builds ONENESS.

God wasn't giving us a prescription for how this one division could be resolved. Rather, He was trying to give us a description of how all divisions distort and kill the message of cross and more importantly how the cross can heal every division. In this case, the issue in Corinth – was they believed they belonged to a leader. The cross shows the perversion of believing we belong to human leaders or that we are called to serve them. The cross says – we don't belong to a human leader, we don't serve the leader – he serves us. This was and is Jesus' way. We must know the message of the cross so well, it can be the power of God to us who are being saved to heal divisions and build oneness. We must know the truths of the cross so well and deep – it will expose the lies we are believing that have caused the division & bring healing & oneness thru the Spirit of God who is in us.

We live-out the beauty of the cross – when we pursue oneness through the power of the cross.

Remember what is at stake:

1) Experiencing the joy and love of God's presence – the promise of the cross!

Don't settle for the pain, bitterness, and hurt of division, feuds, quarreling.

God in his presence – promises his joy and love. Let's fight for this through the humility of Christ.

- Who do you need to humbly pursue to heal a division or build oneness?

This will take Christ's humility that is in you, and time!

2) Displaying the beauty of the cross to the world around us.

- **The 7** (We began this journey together that says – we believe the beauty of the cross is powerful. It can change us and it can change our neighbors. So, we are calling us to pray for us – that our hearts would change from being selfish- and self-centered to being giving and generous of our time and love because that is what God has done for us in the beauty of the cross. So – I am going to ask you to continue to pray. And, if you didn't get a book begin, grab one and join us in displaying the beauty and power of the cross together.