Title: One Mind and One Mouth

Description: In this Sunday evening message from Romans 15:5-7 and Ephesians 4:2-3, Pastor Anthony Kim of Calvary Road Baptist Church continues part 2 of the series Anatomy of Christ's Church. In a fragmented world where division seems the default of human nature, Paul points the church to the God of patience and consolation, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, and to the command, receive ye one another, as Christ also received us. From lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearing one another in love, the church is not told to create unity but to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, already forged by the one Spirit. The sermon warns against making fellowship broader or narrower than the Spirit, and it calls the body to look to Christ, who pleased not Himself, and to receive one another this week.

Transcript:

Well, if you have your Bibles with you, go ahead and turn with me to Romans chapter 15 and we'll be in verses 5-7. And then we're going to be flipping over to Ephesians chapter 4 beginning verses 2 to 3. Again, Romans 15 verses 5-7. And then Ephesians chapter 4 verses 2 and 3.

We're going to go over how to stay unified in a broken world. We live, yes, in a broken world. And we see more and more in our world being more fragmented as time goes on. One group begins to divide and create a subset of their group and that subset group breaks up into another group and so on and so on. The fragmentation seems to never end in the society that we live. Division, then, seems to be a default setting of human nature.

Isn't that what Satan did with Adam and Eve? Isn't that what happened with Cain and Abel? And so on and so on. So we continue our week two of our six-week series on the anatomy of Christ's church. We turn again our focus to the one anothers of Scripture. The instructions that are given to us as believers in Christ, the way we are to behave ourselves according to God's family in Christ.

Last Sunday evening, we looked at a specific command for followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. We looked at John 13:34 where the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Love one another as Christ loved you, that ye also love one another." And then we then looked at Romans 12:9-10 and how genuine love looks like which comes from our Lord Jesus in which it is never neutral. The Apostle Paul goes on and says that your love when it is in active pursuit looks like an

active detesting of evil and joining to that which is good. That's one of the fruits of genuine love in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we see that the true family of God is infinitely greater in bond than all of our physical relationships. There is no greater bond than what Christ does to brothers and sisters in Christ. This family of God that will be our family for all of eternity. And he shows us clear instructions how that relationship is to look like right here in this present world by Christ, His body. See the world cannot separate this kind of relationship. After all we are adopted into this family. We didn't choose God. No, God chose us. So he's the one that put us together.

And it's for us to understand how then are we to love one another? How then are we to do all the one anothers that are commanded in scripture? And if you're looking from the outside in those that are not part of the family of God, you may ask, how is this even possible? How is it possible? Because instead of competing like the world does and self-exaltation, how can I get myself to the top so that people can honor me and respect me? It is a paradigm shift in God's family. That role is now reversed and we are at the bottom as it were as servants honoring everyone else above. We saw that with honoring the widows, the true widows of God's family and then honoring the servants and masters simply the employee-employer relationship that we are to honor those that we serve. And we saw in so many other things how we are to honor our parents, honor our father, and honor our mother.

And it almost seems like this word honor is not even wanting to be mentioned because it's so rare today that you actually get to see this in true churches of God, Christ's church, and it becomes less and less in the world. Because we live in such a transactional type of world where honor means how do I get to the top as quickly as possible, and by getting through no matter what it takes even if you hurt somebody along that path.

Christians are not to act in that sort of way of self-exaltation, honoring of oneself, but we are in fact to eagerly give honor to one another in respect. We're supposed to respect each other. We're supposed to recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Christ before all other relationships in this life. That our relationship as brothers and sisters in Christ cannot even compare to anything in this world and the kind of love given to us because it is Christ himself who gave us his love that cannot be replicated in the world outside of Christ and that we out of that experience of Christ loving us then we can share as he has loved us to one another and we are devoted then not only to God but we are devoted to one another. We saw that with the word

kindly affectionate. That word kindly affectionate, it gives the same meaning as your devotion to God. And then you are now to devote yourself to one another.

Now, just to kind of bring things into perspective, one third of all the one another commands in the New Testament are instructions for Christians to love one another. One third. The other third is what we're going to go over tonight in this sermon is the one another commands that deal with how to stay unified.

Unified in the one spirit that gives us the ability to be united. So unity is the other third. And then we'll go on and touch on other aspects of one another's but that will be for another time.

But for now, would you please stand out of respect for God's word and follow along with me in your Bible as I read from Romans chapter 15 verses 5-7. And then we'll flip over to Ephesians 4:2-3.

Beginning in Romans 15 verses 5-7. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Now flip over to Ephesians chapter 4 and we'll be in verse two and three after giving his therefore in verse one. He goes on in verse two with these words, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

We're going to examine Romans 15:5-7. And let us begin with these verses. Apostle Paul writes to us in the text for our admonition as believers. He sets the supreme standard in this chapter 15. And let me just briefly go over that before we go into our text this evening.

The supreme standard of unity is in fact Christ's selfless acceptance of us. Christ's selfless acceptance towards us. You see whenever God demands something of us in scripture he will always point us directly to the Lord Jesus Christ as our supreme example. He is our supreme example.

For example, in Colossians chapter 3:13, Paul commands us to forgive one another. And then he adds, "Even as Christ forgave you." And then in 1 Peter

2:21, Peter instructs servants how to endure unjust suffering minus paying for our sins on the cross. Peter points to Christ leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps. Then going back to Paul uses of this exact pattern following Christ as our example.

We then look at Romans chapter 15 and we'll look at verses 1-3. He summarizes here in these first three verses his counsel from Romans chapter 14. Paul counts himself among the strong not out of arrogance but out of spiritual awareness of who he has become in Christ. He makes everything back is because of Christ and what he has done in my life. After all, he is set free from every law in which he was bound to. All of that was now gone and now he served Christ. Every slavery that was beholden to him as a Pharisee is now all gone by the blood of Christ. And yet Christian liberty must not become a cause of grief.

Let me just contextualize this. We have strong mentioned as a believer strong in the Lord. But in Romans chapter 14, we also get the idea of weaker brothers and sisters in Christ. That we shouldn't use our Christian liberty of those who are stronger. Just like the example of self-exaltation, we shouldn't use this as a way to dishonor people. But it's different in Christian liberty that the more we're given of Christ and more that we understand of his word, it looks completely different from self-exaltation to then honoring our weaker brothers and sisters in Christ to loving our weaker brothers and sisters in Christ.

So he gives this whole counsel in Romans chapter 14. He spends the whole time there. How the one that's strong is to minister unto the weaker brother and sister. So we must not cause this is his intention in Romans 14 as counsel. We must not cause a fellow believer to stumble on nonessential practices secondary issues. We shouldn't get bogged down by those things such as dietary restrictions amongst the Romans. There were those that were vegetarians versus those that were meat eaters. And there were those that observed special holy days. And he speaks to these very things that you may think, well, and this will be a stronger brother or sister in Christ. Like, why is that so important? And he goes, "No, this is important that I'm going to spend a whole chapter on this section for you to know how to deal with this situation in a Christlike way.

See, those with sensitive conscience that cannot eat or drink anything like supposedly a stronger person, a stronger believer, nor merely to please ourselves by looking down on weaker brothers and sisters by despising them

or putting harsh judgment because God has, by the way, accepted both. We're at the end of the day, we're brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen. And so Paul reminds each believer that we must answer directly to Jesus Christ as our ultimate judge, our ultimate master and not to fellow Christians. And so he spends this whole section explaining this in detail. And we are in danger of usurping Christ's role as the judge by judging one another. That's the danger. I don't think anybody would say that you want to take Christ's role in judgment, but your actions speak louder than words.

So Romans chapter 14:17, Apostle Paul says these words, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." So here we get a picture of the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. And he is the one that helps us to not focus on the non-essentials but to focus on the primary essential things that we are to live by.

Let me just transition to Philippians 2:4 and 8 to add more context to our text here. The apostle Paul teaches about abandoning a self-absorbed life through self-preservation and instead adopt a humble self-sacrificial mindset of Jesus Christ. That the priority then is the well-being of others above our own personal comfort by taking on the form of a servant. Taking on the form of a servant. And you asked the question then why Paul points to Jesus as the ultimate model of this attitude for even Christ pleased not himself. He didn't cling to his divine status. He could have sent a legion of angels at the cross, but he didn't. He had every right. After all, he is the ultimate judge. Yet, he withheld all of his rights. He had all the privileges in his glorified state, and yet he did not take all those privileges while here on earth. Again, Christ pleased not himself.

Throughout his earthly life, Jesus set his mind entirely on honoring of God, feeling every reproach against the Father as his own. And because differences between strong and weak believers remain in this life, we must then desperately need to endure and endure the very end.

So let me go to Romans 15:4 that reminds us that everything written aforetime in the Old Testament was written for our learning. Think of the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness. As they were in the wilderness, what were they craving? They were craving the past. They were craving Egypt. Both the physical and the spiritual failures were all due to the Israelites looking back instead of forward to the promised land.

And we see that they grumbled. And grumbling according to God is sin. It is a sin. And this story was preserved to instruct and warn believers in the final point in time of our redemptive history, which is the church age in which we live, that we are to follow as Christ coming. That privilege does not equal immunity. We are not exempt from judgment when we turn to sin. The Lord will chasten his children. He will. Or else you are not his own. So that through patience and comfort of the scriptures, we might have hope. Again, hope is looking ahead. Our desire as believers in Christ is the hope of the second coming. Whether we are living or we go to meet him in the air, but it's always our desire is to see and meet Jesus face to face.

And we look forward to that day. But until that perfect day comes, all differences will not cease until that moment. We will have our differences. We will, you see, until that day, Romans 15:5 points us to the God of patience and consolation.

So now we begin at our text. This is what you're supposed to be thinking about. That the God of patience and consolation is our ultimate source of patience and consolation of how we are to treat brothers and sisters in Christ by being patient and consoling, that he shows that you show longsuffering and mercy and restraint toward human weaknesses and mistakes and even rebellion as God was so patient to the Israelites.

Think of that, that God of patience and consolation. If you are thinking of Him, you can also experience patience and consolation toward your brothers and sisters in Christ. See nothing stopped the Lord Jesus in his earthly walk. Think of him. He endured relentless opposition without finding any earthly encouragement even amongst his own disciples. Where did he draw his strength from? He drew his strength solely from knowing the father was with him. When we center then our lives on him, differences will never drive a true wedge between us from our fellow believers in Christ. We find consolation right in times of sorrow in times of overwhelm of anxiety or even pain that we know that Christ experienced all that and much more and notice the goal the goal of all of this in Romans 15:6 that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So here we come to the meaning of our text that our unity must be both real of one mind and visible one mouth. There must be this oneness in reality of our lives. Its supreme purpose is not merely pleasing other people. Notice in the text it says to glorify God. Are we of one mind and of one mouth in glorifying God? Are you doing that consistently? Or are you trying to receive

glory from man? Note that phrase he ends with God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which affirms Christ's full deity here that shares his essence with the father and we see this in other parts of the apostles letters 2 Corinthians 1:3, Ephesians 1:3, Colossians 1:3, and then also found in 1 Peter 1:3.

Therefore, Romans 15:7 concludes, "Wherefore receive ye one another," and here it is, "As Christ also received us to the glory of God." The reason why we can glory in God is because Christ received us that we can glory of God. And think of how Christ received us. Let's just take a pause there.

Let's just think about that. Think of how Christ received you. He accepted us just as we are. We didn't have to do anything to impress him. I said that earlier this morning that the ones that were in Matthew 7, they were trying to impress God. There was nothing impressive about us. There was nothing impressive about us. And you accepted or rather he accepted us in our sin knowing every sin we would commit. He knew every sin that we would commit and yet he still accepted us. He still received us. He put away our guilt by his death while patiently bearing with our remaining peculiarities. Right? We still have our peculiarities all throughout. And yet he receives us again and again and again and again.

You see, if the sinless son of God warmly embraced us as sinners into his family, how much more must forgiven believers embrace one another despite disagreements over issues of conscience on non-essentials. So the key is to remind yourself again how Jesus accepted you and how he didn't care about the non-essentials. What did he care about that you would be forgiven of your sin? That was the primary essential reason why he went to the cross. And then we see how then that was out of love and that we can love others in that same sacrificial love and then that we can forgive one another because he forgave us. And then now He accepts us with everything that we are and that we can also accept others in which Christ received us all to the glory of God. All to the glory of God.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 10 verse 24, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." So if Christ was able to receive us, you can certainly receive your brother in Christ or your sister in Christ. And then we see Matthew 11:29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Don't you want rest over disagreements, over the non-essentials, and just focus on the primary things of what we're supposed to be like in the family of God? There's

more than enough just to focus on the essentials. And that's why there's so many commands. I don't have time to go through all of them, but I want to give you the main point so that you can be unified by the Holy Spirit.

Let me just take you to Ephesians chapter 4 verse 32 and also into chapter 5:2. Just listen to these words. Apostle Paul says this, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. Notice, forgiving one another as Christ hath forgiven you. Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and given himself for us. And I love the last phrase that this is an offering, a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. Oh, what a wonderful thing to think about that he when he sees this with his children, it's as if yes, I enjoy seeing this.

And this is what we desire. This is what glorifying God is. We know that God is seeing everything that we do if we're following through with his commands or not. And so then we must focus then on these particular texts for our growth and our unity in the Lord.

So now let's go into Ephesians chapter 4. Let us go to Ephesians chapter 4. And we're going to see here four essential virtues that are given on behalf of Christ to the believers in Christ. Let me just point you to verses 1 and two to give you the context before we go into our actual text. So if you look at Ephesians 4:1, you see the word therefore, which marks the transition from doctrine to practical commands, just as we see in Romans 12:1 and Colossians 3:1. Here Paul calls himself the prisoner of the Lord.

Interesting word to speak of himself. What this connects, rather, is that everything what Paul wrote in chapters one and three what God has done for him as a believer and for every other believer in Christ that it was done through grace that we are united because we are in Christ and that our spiritual wealth as it were is because of the Holy Spirit dwelling richly in us. And then he goes on and says an explanation to how believers then must now live based on all these things that are given to us as being equipped as it were as believers because who you are in Christ is going to be how you live your life in Christ. Who you are in Christ is how you live and it matters. Both matter.

So Paul writes from a Roman imprisonment and that's why this is apt for illustration. He's not viewing himself as a helpless victim here of Rome. Even though Caesar was as an emperor, he was not talking about him as prisoner in that context or any of the Jewish authorities or even the Roman guards that he was shackled to. No, he was bound willingly to Christ. The prisoner of the Lord. He was willing to be bound to him. His sufferings give weight and authority to his appeal here with an earnest plea to live day-to-day life in such a way like he is that you match the grace that you've been given and pass it on to others. That means of grace is offered each and every day. That God calls his children from a self-absorbed life to a unified Christlike life.

This helps so much when you're in a place of discouragement or despondency or you're just absorbed by just the cares of this world that one thing that brings you close is that you are bound to Christ. You're bound to Christ. Don't let anything else bind you. Another way of putting it, it frees you from being attached to this world that you know that you're attached to Christ and He'll never leave you nor forsake you. He'll always be there for you. He knows exactly what you're going through because he was tempted just as much as you were without sin. And you can trust him that he's going to provide the consolation and the patience in your heart to endure any sorts of afflictions just like Paul did in that prison cell.

And so now we jump to Ephesians 4:2. Paul outlines four essential graces that make this unified walk possible. Here is where the rubber meets the road. So first he writes with all lowliness, meaning with all humility. You see in the Greek Roman world of Paul's day humility was despised. It was looked down upon. If you mention that you were going to be of lowly estate they will say what are you? Are you out of your mind? Are you out of your mind?

People are going to say all sorts of things about you. No, no, no. You honor self-exaltation. That was a big theme in the Roman Greek world. Whether it was your wisdom or your strength, physical strength, it was all about your willpower. So, humility was despised. Christians were coined with this word in a derogatory way, in a bad way. But this is the very foundational virtue of Christ's character, isn't it?

Matthew 5:3, He tells in the sermon, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Philippians 2:7-8 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And then

finally, James 4:6, But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

You want more grace, receive the admonition with all lowliness. With all lowliness, just to kind of understand what this lowliness looks like, it's not constantly talking about how insignificant you are. You're not going around saying, "Oh, look at how low and meek my life is. Look at how insignificant I am." No. For even then, you still remain at the center. You still remain at the center. See, true humility is self-forgetfulness. It's self-forgetfulness. You remove completely the appearance of I in your life.

What do I mean by that is that Christ is now the one that you speak of more than I. Christ, his honor stands at the forefront. You are now honoring him. You are honoring him. And by doing that, you are being of humility, of true humility. See, you're not focusing on humility because that's focusing on your insignificance. No, by honoring Christ, you will then in part have true humility.

Second, meekness, meaning gentleness. Meekness is simply strength under control. The inevitable fruit of humility is then strength under control, which is one of the fruit of the spirit is aspects of it rather is self-control.

You see, our pride must be held in the death of Christ. Look at what Paul says in Galatians 2:20. This is how meekness looks like. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Again, the death of Christ is what brings out the meekness out of one's life. You now live not according to your flesh, but according to Christ who lives in you.

Consider Moses here. How long it took him to understand meekness. It took him 40 years in the wilderness. He was transformed from a hot-tempered man. Remember he struck down an Egyptian in his anger and he spent 40 years after that in the wilderness. And we find in Numbers 12:3 these words of Moses: Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.

What a complete reversal. You see, a humble person is no threat to anyone. Is no threat to anyone. He was no longer going to be threatening anyone. Also, a meek person feels threatened by no one. You don't feel threatened by anyone of accusations, whether verbally or even physically. You're not threatened by anyone. That's the posture of meekness.

Strength under control. I could do something about this, but I'm not because the spirit of God lives in me. Not I, but Christ who lives in me. You died to your old self. You died with Christ at the cross. And that's why he says in Matthew 11:29, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart. Praise God. He gives us a new heart. A heart that is meek and lowly of heart that we can actually learn from Christ in this new heart. It's a wonderful thing.

But he goes on Apostle Paul to a third essential virtue that we are given is with longsuffering. With longsuffering. This literally means long-tempered.

Okay. I try to think about this myself. Like if I get upset, I can get upset again and again and again and again. It just keeps getting thrown to the back burner as it were. Yeah, that's what it kind of means. It just gets pushed to the side. You get tempered, it gets pushed to the side. Gets pushed to the side. It's a long tempered mentality. This is resolved patience. Resolve patience. Meaning you're not forcing yourself to be patient. Again, it's not focusing on the verb. Who are you focusing on in this situation? Who do you think? Christ. Again, Christ. When you focus on him, then you can do things with longsuffering.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we're going to have to endure for a very long time. Not to retaliate as Christ never retaliated. Think about this. I always go to this part. Judas kisses him and betrays him at the same moment and he calls him friend. Okay? I'm not saying that this is what's going to happen here. But I'm just saying that's to the extent he's not even angry with him. Not even one bit. 1 Thessalonians 5:14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. So it's okay to warn those who are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, those who are weak, support them that are weak, be patient toward all men. So there are different types of how to be patient with one another. And 1 Thessalonians 5:14 gives us those specific instructions. You can look at them later. And then James 5:10 says, "Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience." Think of all the prophets, how they were afflicted in their time, and yet they'd still prophesy for God. The fourth virtue is this last one from the apostle Paul forbearing one another in love. Here there's a subtle danger that as we grow in patience as we begin in our patience and continue to grow in our forbearing of one another we can get into a place of looking down with spiritual disdain upon our brothers and sisters in Christ who don't have yet the kind of patience that we have who have not yet matured. Paul guards against this pride by rooting all the three

virtues into this one another by the words forbearing one another in love.

Forbear those that have not experienced longsuffering yet that have not experienced lowliness and meekness and lowliness of heart. Not to the full maturity. And so he says, "Forbear one another in love." Do it in love. Don't judge. Do it in love. And it's a continual word forbearing. Not just forbear once, not forbear twice. Just like don't just forgive once, forgive seventy times seven. Here it's a continuous admonition for us. We're continually to forbear one another in love.

And 1 Peter 4:8 says this, "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." The whole idea is don't take things personally. Don't be offended.

Don't start judging because they don't understand you yet at your spiritual level. Yes, it is essential, but give time. God's timing. God's timing. As 1 Corinthians 13 reveals, this love reflects the very nature of God. God is love, and out of that love, he waits for us. 1 John 4:8, He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. Verse 16, And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. In other words, don't rely upon yourself right now. Your love is increasing over time. And as your love increases, what starts to happen is you're able to bear a lot of things.

Just think it was Christ out of his love bore our sins on the cross. Now again that was not for us as an example but there's a picture there of us bearing each other's burdens. Galatians chapter 6 verse 2. We are to bear one another's burdens. That is part of love. And pray for them. Pray for them. Admonish them. Speak truth with love. These are all things that we can do to forbear one another in love. There's a lot of bearing that we have to do. But here's the thing. We don't bear it alone. Christ is the one that ultimately bears our load. And he says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." He'll never put something on you beyond what you can handle.

And so we go on to Ephesians chapter 4:3 where Paul commands us to endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. That word endeavoring means to give diligence. Again endeavoring is an ongoing action, an ongoing command. But notice carefully, Paul does not tell us to create or even keep the unity of the body. Notice that in the text. Why? Because the unity of the body already exists. It is forged when the one spirit was poured out into the early churches and thereupon us here at Calvary Road. 1

Corinthians 6:17 says this, "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." Chapter 12, verses 12-13. 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. Here it is, verse 13. 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.

So the body has been formed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. And then Ephesians 1:13, In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. So while walking in the spirit is personal, keeping the unity of the Spirit can only be done together.

And so we see in Acts 4:32, And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. They were all knit together, as every true body of Christ is knit together in one heart and one soul. They were giving, right? It says they all had things in common.

Philippians 1:27 says, Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. And then chapter 2 verse two, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. These are a lot of texts to just confirm and confirm and confirm what the spirit does to the body of Christ. That nothing shallow is to be done. That we are to not do things alone but by giving no room to the flesh that allows the Holy Spirit to work in and through us towards each other in Christ's body.

And then just looking at church history the flesh has corrupted this unity in two opposing directions let me just share those two of them so that you are aware of how unity can be corrupted the first one is

That we build unity broader than the spirit. Meaning we welcome unregenerate people into church membership through outward confession without genuine conversion. A man or a woman that does not fear God. So that's first.

Second, others build unity narrower than the spirit, rejecting true believers in Christ because they refuse man-made rules or human traditions or loyalty to certain kinds of people in the church, elevating human preferences above scripture. Those are two ways to cause all sorts of problems in Christ's

church.

So what is the true standard for fellowship according to God? 2 Timothy 2:20-22 gives us how true fellowship looks like. I won't go into detail for the sake of time.

But in this community, the great house, there are two vessels, one for honour and one for dishonour. One honors by being constantly sanctified by the spirit for the master's use. The other is full of youthful lust that creates dishonor to God and is not useful for good works. And he goes and says these words, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart, within God's house. Again, in the context of this text, I can't go too much in detail. The pursuit is not meant to be done in isolation, but that we are to be sharing these things amongst each other so that we can do so. And he says specifically there, out of a pure heart.

That pure heart again we see the kind of heart that Jesus has that we adopt. And so we're all genuine children of God gathered on these biblical foundations. The unity of the body becomes then visible and pleasing before God. Now let me conclude with this. True peace can be harmonized together in this way. The spirit is wanting to join the church, the church members to be one mind and one spirit. But there are ways that we can grieve, we can quench the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit wants to unify God's people, true believers in Christ. So let us not grieve or quench the Holy Spirit when he is prompting you to stay unified in the essentials and be a little bit less judging towards those on the non-essentials in Christ's church.

So before you step out of these doors, examine your own heart.

Where have we allowed pride or impatience or preference over non-essential issues to make our hearts cold and not affectionate for fellow believers in Christ? Again, the answer is look to the Lord Jesus. Look to the Lord Jesus who pleased not himself and received his people and we are in turn to receive people like Christ received us this week. Put this truth into practice. Reach out to someone in our church body whom you disagree with over non-essentials or you don't know well because you've avoided them for so long. Invite them for a time of prayer, a time where you can focus again on the essentials of why we are believers in Christ, and why we are to stay united.

Do so in a prayerful way and God will be with you. Uphold Christ. Exalt Christ in the conversation. Share what Christ has done for you. That's what's going

to keep the unity of the Spirit between each other. So bear with one another in love. And as you do so, may the God of patience and consolation be with you this evening and through all of time.

Let us go to the Lord in prayer. Father, thank you for an opportunity to share your word. Father, there's just so much to look at for instructions in regards to staying unified in your spirit according to Christ for his church. I just pray God, whatever I shared this evening, God, I pray that your word will speak the clearest, the loudest, your commands would resonate to obedience.

And I pray that Christ will be exalted that all of us will look to Christ to bear more of these virtues in our lives because he is our supreme example. He is the one that received us so that we can receive our brothers and sisters in Christ the same way. Help us, Father, to do these things and help us to glorify you again with one mind and one mouth. To this end, Father, in Jesus' precious name. Amen.