

Unity & Division: When is the Right Time to Unify? To Divide?

(10/5/25)

Please turn to *Psalm 133 & Ephesians 4:1-6, 1 Corinthians 12:14-27*.

We're starting a new sermon series in the attempt to know **when's the right time to unify, and the right time to divide?**

- With WHOM should we try to have unity with?
- Are there people we need to cut out of our lives?

I'm not claiming to have mastered this! I'm on the same journey of discovery that you are, delving into the Scriptures and pleading with God for His wisdom on such things.

Let's start off by talking about Christians only and ask the questions:

- Should Christians work to be unified with each other and what does that look like?
- Are there times to divide from other Christians? (Next week).

[Psa 133:1-3 ESV] 1 A Song of Ascents. Of David. Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! 2 It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

How many of you have kids and/or grandkids? As parents we all want our kids to obey us, clean up their plates, and not leave dirty socks lying all over the house. ***Don't we also want them to get along?*** Whether they're still little and living at home with us, or all grown up and out on their own...***doesn't it make our hearts glad when they like each other?*** Doesn't it make us both **sad and anxious when they're fighting** and not speaking to each other?

Despite their differences here's what we know: **all these kids came from us!** They have our genes, we're raised in the same home, and even look like each other to some degree. Imagine being together for Christmas and everyone is enjoying each other's company! OR some of them aren't there because they had a falling out years ago that no one's gotten over.

We start today's sermon by saying that **God is, first and foremost, a FATHER.**

Anyone who knows Jesus as their Savior becomes His sons and daughters:

[Jhn 1:12 ESV] 12 But to all who did receive him [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

[Rom 8:16 ESV] 16 The [Holy] Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

[1Jo 3:1 ESV] 1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

Here in America, **we don't tend to call our fathers "father,"** we reserve that for Catholic Priests. We tend to have affectionate & familiar names for them like "dad, daddy, dada, papa, or pa" etc. *All of my sons call me "daddy" and I LOVE it!* No one else on the planet calls me that except my sons and if someone else did, I would think it quite strange and even correct them.

When Jesus walked the earth, **the Jews also had an affectionate and familiar name for their dads: Abba.** Now look at this:

[Rom 8:15 ESV] 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

[Gal 4:6 ESV] 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

One of the things Jesus said that enraged some of his peers **was He called God "Abba."** Not only was He suggesting that God was His Father—which was blasphemy!—but Jesus used the affectionate/family term as if they were close.

Let's look at the 2 verses I have on screen for you: ***WE—you and I!—are God's kids AND we get to use the affectionate "daddy" term of Abba when we call on Him!***

Here's how all of God's kids are already bonded to each other, already unified:

- We all have the same Dad.
- We all have the same Savior we're in covenant with, Christ Jesus, Who made our adoption possible.
- We're made in the image of Jesus Who was made in the image of Father—we have the DNA and we "look" like them.
- We are called the Body and Jesus is the Head.
- The same Holy Spirit—Who is God—lives inside of all who know Jesus as Savior.

- *The Holy Spirit is the unifying factor for all Christians, prompting us to love, forgive, make peace, and reconcile with other Christians.*

[Eph 4:1-6 ESV] 1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, **bearing with one another in love**, 3 **eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**. 4 There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

How does Abba want His kids treating each other? Let's go through the verses:

Verse 2: "bearing with one another in love."

Have you ever said to someone: "bear with me"? If we've asked someone else to do this for us, we're looking for them to extend grace and patience to us. The word "bear" here isn't Winnie the Pooh, but meaning "lift" like an object. If you were carrying a child you're bearing the child. If you were walking with a backpack, you're bearing it.

When we ask someone else to "bear with us" **we're asking them to help us with an emotional burden we're carrying: to carry it with us so our load is lightened.**

Summary: God wants His kids to help each other bear burdens. To approach each other with the attitude of ***"how can I help lighten their load?"*** vs. ***"what can I get from this person?"***

GIVE EXAMPLES

Verse 3: "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"

Abba God wants us to **be at peace with each other and the basis of this peace is the same Holy Spirit within us.**

Our bond with each other IS the Holy Spirit.

Let's talk about why that's an **important distinction** from other things that could be our bond such as: we're all His kids, love, etc.

Us being His kids is a truth and a great one. We're all called upon to love the brethren and sistren. **While those are concepts the Holy Spirit is a Person.** Not just any Person, but part of the Godhead.

In other words, **God lives within us prompting us to maintain peace with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.** To forgive, be patient, ask for forgiveness, reconcile, serve...all the things the Lord calls upon us to do.

Parents watch their kids and know instantly whether they're getting along or not. Kids tend to be caught up in themselves, and when one starts fighting with another, they might think its just the two of them in the room. A parent, on the other hand, can read the "temperature" of all their kids at the same time and the "atmosphere" of their relationship.

- Are they getting along and things are at peace?
- Or is there tension about to explode?
- Are the kids enjoying each other's company?
- Or are they arguing, fighting, and quipping at each other?
- Are they all together?
- Or did some not show up because of a falling out that happened in the past?

A parent whose kids are getting along is happy and AWARE.

A parent whose kids aren't getting along is unhappy and AWARE.

Abba God is aware of whether we're at peace or not.

- He's aware when we enjoy each other and when we don't.
- He's aware when we're talking and when we've stopped talking to each other.
- He knows when we're getting together, and when we're avoiding each other.

What is His will? Let's not make this complex because it isn't: **He wants His kids to get along.** And when we're not, the Holy Spirit will bring it up to us that its time to bear with one another in love, and remember that we're unified through the Holy Spirit.

People like to ask **"what is the Lord calling me to do?"** and verses 4-5 show us one answer: Abba God is calling us to remember that we have the same divine Dad, we're part of the same faith, the same Baptism (meaning we died to the old self), and the same BODY.

DEMONSTRATE SLAPPING SELF

If I started hitting myself, poking myself in the eye with my finger, kicking myself, etc.

would anyone attempt to stop me? Would anyone tell me to quit hurting myself and perhaps even ask me why? Maybe you would go so far as to counsel me?

- The reason you would do these things is because if I poke myself in the eye, I could damage my eye perhaps to the point of blindness?
- If I punch myself in the nose hard enough it might start to bleed and I could break it?
- If I kick myself in the knee, I could cause some serious damage and hinder my ability to walk?

Let me approach this from a different angle. **Suppose my eyes had a will of their**

own and so do my feet. Suppose they can both talk. One day my feet say to my eyes:

"We do all the work walking, and all you guys do is sit there! We don't need you!" So my eyes shut...but when I start walking I'm running into walls and tripping over things...because **my feet NEED my eyes.**

Let's turn those tables. My eyes say to my feet: *"we see all things and you bums are just down there getting dirty! We don't need you!"* Our eyes see the bathroom, or the fridge to get food, or the sink to get water...but the feet don't budge because they're mad at each other. The result is we get nothing to eat or drink and can't go to the bathroom.

So now let's read this:

[1Co 12:14-20 ESV] 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

IDK what part of the body you think you are, ***but all parts are necessary and important.***

We all must work together to do the will of our Abba God.

Let's read on:

[1Co 12:21-27 ESV] 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less

honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more representable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. 27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Let's summarize these verses:

- Abba God DESIGNED the body and He didn't create any unnecessary parts. All are important.
- Abba God ASSIGNED whatever part you are. I'm clearly a mouth. Whatever He assigned you to be, that's your purpose.
- Abba God ENGINEERED the body to be a team—every part needs all the other parts to work properly. The eyes need the feet to take them where they see to go, and the feet needs the eyes to know where they're going.
- DIVISION happens when part of the body a) falsely believes it doesn't fit in or b) falsely believes it doesn't need another part to operate.
- The EYES are in a lofty position, one of leadership and direction. If they start to believe they don't need the feet, they'll soon find out they're paralyzed! Think of a factory owner who becomes so prideful that he doesn't value his employees and next thing you know, they go on strike. All work stops and the factory isn't producing anything.
- The FEET seem to be in a lowly position, one that does the all the work. If they start to believe they don't need the eyes to tell them where to go, they quickly realize they're blind and start running into walls and tripping over things. The factory workers need the vision and direction the owner gives them so they know where to walk and w/o it, the factory would go under.

We, the church, need each other. ***Our Father designed us to work together and rely on each other.*** To bear one another's burdens. To support each other.

He also designed us that, **when we're not unified that we're weak**, don't go anywhere, have no vision, no direction, and we run into walls and trip over things.

Abba Father wants us to get along, be at peace with each other, and be unified.

CALL TO ACTION & PRAYER