



Sermon Title: Uniting for God's Mission

Date: 7/30/2023

Ephesians 4:1-16

Today we're going to explore the concept of unity. A concept that Jesus Himself prayed for, not just for the original disciples but for the church today as well. **John 17:22-23**. Unity is essential for us as a church to discuss as we strive to be a church that is unified on all fronts.

Big Idea: The spirit has unified us; we need to live in peace.

We don't want to be the ones trying to create unity because God has created it by His Spirit! There are three ways that we can strive to maintain this unity.

1. Embrace your divine calling.

Ephesians 4:4-6

God's church and the people in it do not have separate hopes. They are called together to eternal life and to enjoy God forever in resurrection glory. God is described in scripture as the God of hope! **Romans 15:13**

There is unity within the church because of what we share. No matter how many people enter the kingdom of God, the number "one" used in this passage will never change. There will always be one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. God's people are the ones to carry out His will TOGETHER as Christ's church. Jesus gave the Great Commission to His disciples, and we are to do as they did. **Matthew 28: 19-20**

2. Realize that you need to strive for spiritual maturity

Ephesians 4:7-13

We know God's saving grace is without bounds or limits, but the grace with which He appoints gifts to men is "according to the measure of Christ's gift." Different people receive different portions to carry out their opportunities to build and grow the church. Paul is drawing attention to the source of these gifts here: God Himself.

This is God's way of instituting public ministry. His goal is that those with these gifts may "equip the saints for public ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ." We can do what we do only by the grace of God, and we need to steward it with that in mind. 1 Peter 4:10

God's people serve their fellow Christians by using God's Word to help them grow their faith. Doing that in the best possible way requires training and building up, and your leaders are not excluded from that.

We become mature believers when our faith and desire to become more like Christ grows. This is the goal of every Christian, and we need to help others reach this maturity. 1 Corinthians 14:26

The spirit has unified us; we need to live in peace. You live in peace through realizing your calling as God's child and bringing the Gospel to those who need to hear it as a church.

3. Fulfill your role

Ephesians 4:14-16

Paul tells us that there are consequences to not maturing spiritually. Paul gives a remedy and antidote for the deceitful schemes: speaking the truth in love. This speaks to not only how we are to relate to one another in God's family but it's how we protect each other! 1 Corinthians 13:4-6. If we are to love one another as a church body, we need to be speaking the truth of the Word and moving against false doctrine and teaching to truly be unified.

Speaking the truth in love is how we fulfill our roles! Each person in the body of Christ has a part to play. 1 Corinthians 12:14-20, Paul talks about the many members being in one body and all having a different role - the same way we all come together and have a role to play in the church body.

Romans 12:4-5; All church members do not have the same function. Unity and uniformity are not the same thing, and while the church needs to maintain unity, we still carry the unique image of God within us.

Though we all have different roles, we are all members of one body, and we need to care for each other and watch out for each other with that in mind. 1 Corinthians 12:26. You can make a difference by using the gift that God gave you. in the way that you serve the body of Christ here at Grace! Every Christian has a role in maintaining the unity that the spirit has provided. We need to live in peace. We all have been divinely called children of God.

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **How is unity in the church different than unity on a sports team?**
- **Is it ever appropriate for there to be disunity in the church? Explain**
- **Describe areas in the church where you see unity.**
- **How do you contribute to unity in the church?**
- **Describe areas in the church where you see the need for more unity. What role can you play in promoting greater unity?**