Keeping Our Unity

A Study through the book of Ephesians

Ephesians 4:3-6

Did you know that one of the most important ways we witness to our community around us is through living in unity with all who follow Christ? Let's talk about this today.

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed for me and you, He asked the Father in **John 17:23b, "May they [all of His followers] be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."**

Notice that our unity with each other demonstrates to the world that God sent Jesus and He loves us a lot.

How does our unity demonstrate this? Because each one of us have Jesus and His redemptive work in common with each other. We are sinners alike saved by God's grace in Christ, we are together the broken ones healed by the Lord and we were all in bondage set free by Jesus.

And when the world sees us, as different as we are as individuals, and yet unified together by who Jesus is and by what He has commonly done for us, it clearly demonstrates that God loves us and sent Jesus to accomplish all of this. In this respect, it is only reasonable to conclude that our unity with each other is imperative.

This is why we find in Ephesians 4:3-6 that the Holy Spirit makes promoting our unity with each other one of His primary ministries, as He calls us to contend for it. Let's unpack these verses in order to be better equipped to this calling of unity.

Ephesians 4:3, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."
First, notice it is the "unity of the Spirit", we are not called to manufacture unity but rather recognize that it already exists in the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit and is always available to us in Him.

The term, "through the bond of peace", can be translated through being tied together to peace. As stated in Eph. 2:14, "He [Jesus] is our peace". The Jewish believers and the Gentile believers with vastly different backgrounds are now tied together to Jesus and has become one body.

We see from this verse that we are called to "make every effort" to keep this unity. In other words, keep doing all the work necessary to protect and to maintain our unity.

Making "every effort" means work hard on ourselves to promote unity as seen in Ephesians 4:2, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

Making "every effort" means work hard for our brothers and sisters in conflict to promote unity as in Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God."

Making “every effort” means work hard on praying when unity is under attack by the enemy, as stated in Ephesians 6:18, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert always keep on praying for all the saints.”

When we don’t keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace, we violate the Holy Spirit and wind up personally grieving Him in our lives, as well as quenching His moving in our gatherings and ministries. Contending for unity is so important.

But conflicts and disagreements will arise between we Believers, how do we keep ourselves from violating the unity of the Spirit? First by making it a cardinal rule that no one gets to win in a disagreement except Jesus. Remember He is the peace we are mutually bound to.

Second we keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace by focusing on the seven spiritual realities that we are mutually integrated into as spelled out in verses 4-6. Notice the emphases is on “One” i.e. no other options.

Ephesians 4:4. “There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called”

- We are all integrated into the one and the same universal body/church.
- We are all integrated into the one and the same person and ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- We are all integrated into the one and the same hope of our returning Savior, Jesus.

Ephesians 4:5, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism;”

- We are all integrated into the one and the same Lordship of Jesus over us.
- We are all integrated into the one and the same faith fundamentals.
- We are all integrated into the one and the same spiritual baptism into Christ.

Ephesians 4:6, “one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

- We are all integrated into the one and the same relationship with Father God.

We don’t pick and choose what we decide to be unified in, these spiritual realities are already settled by God as He has spiritually placed all of us in each one of them when we by God’s grace put our faith into Jesus as our Savior and Lord and repented of our sin.

The biblical logic here is that spiritually there are no other viable options for those who choose to disconnect with others in the family of faith.

Again, how do we keep ourselves from violating the unity of the Spirit when there is a disagreement? By always acknowledging that the things that we are integrated and unified into, is way more important than what we are disagreeing over.