

**Better Together**  
**Pastor Adraine White – Abounding Love Ministries**  
**September 3, 2023**

TEXT: Ephesians 4:1-6; 23, 16

As I read this text, I realize that the LORD has a dream and it is our job to fulfill it...

- He has a dream of seeing us TOGETHER...He doesn't want to see us FRAGMENTED, because HE realizes that we are BETTER TOGETHER.

I have to admit, that whenever the opportunity arises for us to come TOGETHER, I sense there is an excitement that begins to stir in our hearts at Abounding Love & I believe you all sense that stirring as well here at FPC

- Ran into Paula, who is a member here, at the Lakes on Thursday, again, I saw that there was that excitement about our coming TOGETHER
- I believe that is because we all are aware that we really are supposed to be TOGETHER..
- We may not have all of the answers on how to accomplish it, but we are fully aware, that *it's what's supposed to be...*

TODAY I believe my ASSIGNMENT is to exhort us & urge us to **STOP** waiting for a SPECIAL OCCASION or a FORMAL INVITE to get TOGETHER... *Let's just get TOGETHER*

- Walk the LAKES, Go out for coffee, Invite someone to your home, Visit one another's church during *Special* Events....

I love the INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP PARTNERS FELLOWSHIPS:

- KOZANS: It's a beautiful thing to see their home COME ALIVE as many INTERNATIONALS come TOGETHER and enjoy ONE ANOTHER'S company.
- If you're not involved, I encourage you to check it out!

I MUST ADMIT:

- I admire the way my husband and Pastor Gerrit purposely set aside time to connect... that relationship has yielded my husband and Bro. Jay Hyde doing the same thing....
- I look at the relationship between our Elder John & our dear friend Pastor Whitney Alexander
- I cherish the beautiful relationship that we have formed with the Kozans & **specifically** the relationship that LeeAnn, Garland & I share
- These relationships exceed the boundaries of Church, Race and even some Ideologies....we don't always AGREE, but we AGREE to LOVE....(1Corinthians 13)
- I realize that it's not enough for us to enjoy this TOGETHERNESS, we must bring others in to experience the TOGETHERNESS that we all are ENJOYING
- I try to make it a point to invite members & friends to accompany me to events that I attend here at 1st Pres because I want them to experience the heart of the Father as we come TOGETHER.

## **BETTER TOGETHER & ONE BATON ROUGE**

- **TODAY, I want us to focus on a TOGETHERNESS that supersedes any call for us to come TOGETHER that any man can manufacture...**
- **Our being TOGETHER** is about more than a PHOTO-OP....
- The LORD isn't interested in our **LOOKING like** we are TOGETHER...HE is interested in our **BEING TOGETHER**
- *JESUS died so we could BE TOGETHER*

### Ephesians 4:1-6

- AGAIN, we can clearly see that God has called us to UNITY
- HE is more concerned about the UNITY of the SPIRIT than HE is about the UNITY of our RACES or even the UNITY of our POLITICS....
- UNDERSTAND: There is a UNITY that the SPIRIT is capable of producing that will bring us TOGETHER, if we will allow HIM.....
- **IT'S TRUE:** We are different and it's NOT a mistake nor is it a CURSE, it's by GOD'S design
- Our job is to EMBRACE the DIFFERENCES, FOREBEAR One Another & COME TOGETHER so we can see what wonderful things we can accomplish when we do.....
- HEAVEN will look a lot different than what we are accustomed too....

### ACCOMPLISHING THIS UNITY WILL REQUIRE.....

- Humility, Gentleness, Patience & the ability to forebear ONE ANOTHER in LOVE
- Along with those attributes, HE wants us to possess an **EAGERNESS** to maintain the UNITY of the SPIRIT so ***we have to WANT IT BADLY...***

### LEE ANN'S QUESTION to Me..

#### WE MUST ASK OURSELVES:

- HOW BAD DO WE WANT WHAT GOD WANTS?
- Are we more interested in APPEASING our CULTURE than we are in PLEASING our FATHER?
- What MINDSETS are we willing to ABANDON to see that HE gets what HE wants
- ***HE wants us to be ONE...***

### SIDEBAR..... "50 on 50"

- I sometimes wonder... Was the HISTORIC FLOOD of 2016 an attempt from the WICKED ONE to hinder the plan & purpose of GOD that would have brought us TOGETHER in a HISTORIC way?
- Our city was on edge a month earlier due to the shooting of Mr. Alton Sterling....could "50 on 50" have been the start of something new for our city?
- *The storm reached its PEAK the Saturday before it was to be LAUNCHED...*

### Ephesians 4:10-12

- Those GIFTS were given to equip us for the WORK of the ministry with *ONE goal in mind....that we all come into the UNITY of the FAITH* & again not the UNITY of our race...
- TRUTH IS, our RACES may NEVER be UNITED but it's OUR FAITH that UNITES us....
- We are **ONE body, ONE Spirit, ONE Hope, ONE Lord, ONE Faith, ONE Baptism, ONE GOD & Father of uS ALL**....we belong TOGETHER!
- Clearly the FATHER is after one thing....and that is *that "we" might be ONE* (John 17:21)

I believe we have to see the BENEFITS of TOGETHERNESS:

- **Genesis 11:6** (We have so much work to do and the best way for us to ACCOMPLISH it is TOGETHER)!
- **Psalm 133:1-3**

TODAY,

- We have an OPPORTUNITY/GODPORTUNITY to set the atmosphere for the presence of GOD to COME in and REARRANGE our lives, our thoughts & our priorities...
- I believe HEALING can take place, marriages can be mended and hearts can be set at peace right in our midst if we'll just reach out and receive it!

Pastor Gerrit & Apostle White, THANK YOU ALL for continuing to foster ya'll relationship and as a result giving us opportunities to foster relationships with ONE ANOTHER...

- THANK YOU all for being ROLE MODELS of what TOGETHER should look like...your relationship is an INSPIRATION to us all!

MY DESIRE:

- Is that after today, each one of us will become EAGER to do our part in FOSTERING the UNITY of the FAITH... the WORLD needs to see OUT THERE what we are SEEING & SENSING in here....
- COMMUNION: Today we get to share at the COMMUNION TABLE as we REMEMBER & COMMEMORATE the sacrifice that brought us into a COMMON UNION...HE died, so we could live TOGETHER 🌸
- Ya'll, we **are** BETTER TOGETHER! *It just feels right.* GOD BLESS YOU & THANK YOU SO MCH for having us!

PRAYER: Lord, we are incapable of accomplishing your WILL of becoming ONE in our own strength and today, we do ask for your help. Help us to lay aside our preconceived ideas so that we can attain unto yours.

Our Lord Jesus prayed, that we might be ONE and today, we unite with HIM in prayer asking You to make us ONE. Help us to see the truth that regardless to the color of our skin, what our addresses are or what our income is, we are BETTER TOGETHER because TOGETHER is where you have commanded THE BLESSING. Amen

THANK YOU & GOD BLESS YOU! 🌸