

# The Unity of Diversity

by Alan Martin

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*This sermon from Ephesians chapter 4 emphasizes the importance of preserving unity in the church, highlighting the need for humility, patience, and love to maintain the bond of peace. It stresses the uniqueness of individuals contributing to the whole body of Christ, not seeking sameness but harmony in diversity. The sermon discusses the role of church leaders in equipping believers for service, promoting unity in faith and personal knowledge of Christ, addressing dissonance to resolve tensions into spiritual harmony.*

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**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:1, Psalm 133:1, 1 Corinthians 14:40, Ephesians 4:11, 2 Corinthians 5:16, Malachi 1:10, Matthew 6:22, John 17:21, Romans 12:4

**Topics:** "Unity in the Church", "Diversity in Harmony"

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## Description

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## Transcript

We're going to be in Ephesians chapter 4, still the first half of the chapter discussing. Let's read together or follow me as I read to you, follow along. Ephesians chapter 4 verses 1 through 6. As a prisoner for the Lord, then I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received in all lowliness of mind, in meekness, in long-suffering, forbearing with one another in love.

Make every effort to keep or preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. For there is one body, one spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. So though we might choose to identify ourselves by a particular group, there's only one church, only one faith, only one spirit, only one God, only one Father.

And we want to make sure that that's what we preserve. We don't want to magnify our distinctions and differences and make it appear that the body of Christ is splintered in a thousand little pieces because everyone has their thing that they insist upon. There's a scripture, I don't have it for us on the board, but

it's in the Psalms.

It says, where brothers dwell together in unity, there the Lord commands a blessing, even life evermore. When brothers and sisters dwell together in this unity, God is pleased and his favor will be there and dynamic things will happen spiritually. So let's look at the word peace, preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The idea of peace comes from a Greek root word,airo, which means to join together into a whole. That's the idea of peace, joining together things into a whole where they work together. They function productively, each benefiting from the other, adding to one another, complementing to one another, making the whole greater and better than the parts would be individually.

That's the idea of peace. So in other words, it's God's wholeness. So make every effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit to God-given wholeness.

God enabling us to dwell together in a wholesome wholesome way. Now, a clarity here. Oneness in unity does not mean sameness.

I want you to think about that. Oneness in unity does not mean the sameness. God doesn't want you to be the same as myself.

God doesn't want you to be the same as another person. You are individually unique for a reason. You have distinctive qualities about you that can only come from you and God wants those qualities in you to contribute to unity, to the wholeness that He desires.

It's not about making everybody a clone of one person. Oh, that if we just have that we pick this one person to make everybody just like that, that'll produce unity. No, that's not what you see in nature, is it? As a matter of fact, look in recipes.

Recipes are great because there are many different spices, not the same spices. You know that there's nearly 100 to 200 spices that cooks have to work with? We're told in history that food was so bland in Europe that when they brought some spices from the east, the king said, I'm never going to eat this dull food again. You send ships there and you bring me.

I never want to run out of those spices again. And so the great oriental spice trade became because they tasted things that they had never experienced before. So unity and oneness can come from a combination of many wonderful differences.

Just study nature. What do you see in nature? God is very intentionally making variety. He doesn't make things similar.

They say that no single, no two trees are alike. No two snowflakes are even alike. God is glorified in a dynamic diversity, a uniqueness.

I mean, things have distinct color, distinct shape, distinct size, and all of it brings him glory. And it's something that he's greatly exalted in. So the call to keep the unity of the spirit was never intended to make us clones, like I said, identical properties.

So Paul is not saying let's eliminate all of our differences. No. Let's endeavor to make sure our distinct and unique personalities come together in a wholesome, beautiful way that brings him glory.

What we're to guard against is corrosive and violent reactions. Certain elements come together, produce pretty violent reactions. That's not what we're asking.

We don't want that to happen here. We want you to be who you are, live who you are before God and in God by his spirit. Let's don't react to one another in a way that produces explosive emotions and words that can end up harming people.

We don't want that. Now, one way that I like to picture the beauty of God's oneness and unity is in an orchestra. A symphony orchestra, for example.

In a full orchestra, there are 44 different instruments. 44. And every single one of those instruments, even the ones that are similar in shape but different in size, every single one of those instruments produces a unique sound.

A sound different from another instrument. And a composer that's writing a symphony to be played, in his mind he's familiar with the different sounds any particular instrument can make. And he chooses that instrument to make that sound at a certain time alongside other instruments making their sounds together.

And it becomes this beautiful work of art that leaves us at times just in awe. Because they're different, but they're so synced together into a beautiful wholeness. That's now the key to being able to create that wholeness.

Joining these distinctive qualities together in a beneficial way requires harmony. Harmony, the basic idea of the word harmony is to bring things together, to properly join them together in a wholesome way. Now, harmonizing a variety, even harmonizing a group of people, getting a group of people to live together in harmony that are very different requires two things.

At least two things, maybe a few more than two. But these are the things that are required first that were on my mind. First is it requires that every instrument be tuned to concert pitch.

Have you ever heard the term concert pitch? Concert pitch is determined to be a wavelength. It's actually set at 440 vibrations a second with concert pitch. So, I'm going to set my microphone down so I can give you an illustration of why it's important that things be at concert pitch.

Because the idea of concert, the meaning of the word concert is to agree in principle on a matter. So, if you want, like, they got together in concert and they agreed to, that's an idea. So, concert pitch is this, 440 wavelengths per second.

So, you know what makes something sound not too pleasing to us? If the wavelengths are off. Because what that means is they don't hit our ear at the same time. They're out of sync.

So, when you're tuning a guitar, you'll hear this wah, wah, wah, wah, wah, wah. And you'll stop hearing the different variation once the strings get the wavelengths in sync together. And when something doesn't sound pleasant to our ear, it's because two different wavelengths are hitting our ear.

Once those wavelengths begin to synchronize, they operate in concert together. And this is why every musician that, regardless of how skilled he is, before every practice and before every concert, what's the first thing they do? They tune their instrument. What are they trying to do? They are looking for the wavelength 440 waves per second.

And you realize that the, because that's what sound is, sound is a way that that wavelength is affected by temperature, by humidity, even by the space, by the type of architecture that's in a place. So, especially in areas of the country where there's an extreme difference in temperature from outside to inside, even before a musician begins to tune, they will bring their instrument in and open it up and let it adjust to the temperature in the room. So that all the instruments are at the same temperature.

Then they begin to tune them because if there's a change in temperature, it affects the tension in the wood or the metals of the instrument. And so it can affect their concert pitch. So they'll leave their instrument open, kind of come to room temperature.

Some of you have laid floor before, have wood flooring. And if you have done that or had flooring done, you've been told that oftentimes for oak flooring, oak wood flooring, they actually want the oak wood to sit in your home several days before they begin to install it. Because it will actually adjust and move and bend as the temperature changes.

So they want it to change, finish changing its shape as temperature changes before they begin installing. It's the same with wood instruments. So what does that mean for us? Spiritually, what is spiritual concert pitch for a believer? Am I saying, I hope you're following me.

Is it possible for some of us to walk into this door and need to be tuned? We've had something go on at home. We've had some issues. And the temperature in here and what happened out there is different.

And we come in here and we may actually be, I'm not accusing anybody here of being this, but we may not all be on the same wavelength. Oh, it's a beautiful thing when an ensemble, you know, really that's what we are. We are an ensemble of spirits and hearts and people.

And it's a beautiful thing when a group of believers is on the same wavelength as the Holy Spirit. When our minds and our emotions and the things going on with us adjust themselves to the wavelength of the Spirit to produce it. That's one of the things to produce harmony, to produce a wholeness from very diverse sounds.

Every instrument producing the sound must be tuned to 440 waves per second concert pitch. But it needs something else. It's not enough for all the instruments to be in tune.

All the instruments need to know what they're supposed to be playing and how fast they're supposed to be playing it. And what does that take? It takes two things. First, it takes a score, a musical score that tells them.

Because now there are groups, especially they probably tend to be in the jazz and the jazz where the musicians are so good and they play together so long, they go what they call ad-lib. And they don't have it. They're not playing by a score.

They're playing from a very ingrained and trained and professional sense of direction on the inside. But for most of the time, when we go to a symphony or a concert and we're enjoying what an orchestra is playing, they're following what someone else has composed. They're playing what they've been told to play, not what they want to play.

And not only do they have a score that they're supposed to follow, there's something else they have to follow. What's that? A conductor, a director. That's right.

Because they all might have their own interpretation. Well, I believe this. Well, I believe it should go this way.

I believe we should be fast. No, that's too fast for me. I think it should be slow.

So yes, we all have our Bible, don't we? And we all have our belief about what the Bible says. And we have our own ideas about how quick we should go or how slow we should go or what we should focus upon or how much we should be involved. And the way they deal with that in an orchestra is they give the authority to a director or conductor to lead.

And he sets the pace. And he actually tells certain instruments when they're to play. And according to the score, you know the part of some instrument is to do something called rest.

What does it mean to rest? Well, that means you hold your instrument ready to play, but you're not playing. Now, I'll tell you a secret about Dina. Dina, in order to have a ride home, her mother made her join the band.

It was not because Dina loved music. But then when she was in high school, there was a next-door neighbor who had a son in the band. So Dina's mom made Dina join the band just so she would have a ride home from school.

Or Dina was not musically inclined necessarily. So they gave her the job of playing the cymbals, the big cymbals. And some instruments and some things are designed not to play that often.

All right, let me kind of demonstrate for you, okay? Like, for example, the big cymbal. Can you imagine? Oh, say, can you see by the dawn's early light, what so proudly we hail? It'd drive you nuts. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang.

Oh, but it's wonderful when it's this way. The cymbal guy standing there. Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave o'er the land of the free? Boom! Right there.

Perfect. Right on time. Beautiful.

See, that's sometimes our part. It's not often, but it's essential. Dynamic.

Unique. Let God decide who and when. Let Him direct.

But when He is in control, when He is directing, it's beautiful. Not doing our own thing. Not playing when we want to and how we want to.

It's learning to let God direct and unify and bring us together, you know, in these dynamic ways. So, how many of us gather in our Bible study or our worship service ready to follow the exact leading of the Holy Spirit? It's wonderful when we learn to do that, okay? Now, and this idea of tuning, I'm going to put it this way. Because I've told you that the tuning of instruments is affected by changes, what if last week all of us were in tune with the Spirit? Does that mean we're going to be in tune this week? No.

Right. Tuning is something we need to regularly do. Sometimes even throughout the day.

You might even check yourself if something has happened and the temperature has changed. You might check to see if you're still in tune. Before you start playing, before you start saying what you're thinking in

your head, you might stop in tune first and make sure you're still in tune, you know, with the Holy Spirit.

All right. You know, do you realize that there's a verse, I don't have it up here. Well, I might have it.

2 Corinthians. Do you have that up there? 2 Corinthians 5.16. Do you have that? Yeah. Look at that.

Thank you. Rudy, would you read that for us? Because this is something that Paul said, not knowing others in a certain way. Yeah.

See, that's why Paul says we're to keep the unity of the Spirit. Because if we try to know each other according to our natural flesh, no. It produces a lot of noise and it's not too pleasing to God.

You realize that there are ensembles, there are groups of people that can assemble and be so out of sync with God's Spirit that He doesn't even want them playing? They kind of sound like the junior high bands that all the parents have to come and listen to them play. The junior high band concert. I mean, they are learning, so we're glad that they're learning.

But we don't usually make recordings of them, you know, and sell them, do we? We're just glad that they're getting started. And we see the difference between the junior high years to the senior years when it becomes more and more beautiful. But there's a verse there in Malachi chapter 1 verse 10.

Tom, can you read that for us? Malachi 1.10. Do you have that there? There are times when it doesn't sound good and the honest response is, then we'll see over. You know, God can feel that way looking down at the church. It'd probably be better for them just to shut the doors and not meet.

If this is the way they're going to meet, everyone doing their own thing, not in sync with me, not making something beautiful together. God can feel that way. You know, remember Jesus said, these people draw near me with their lips, but their hearts are far from it.

We just don't want that to happen. So, how does this all relate here to Ephesians chapter 4? Well, we're to preserve the unity of the Spirit through this beautiful wholeness of God, this harmonizing. And to do that, we have to learn to get in tune with the Holy Spirit's spiritual concert pitch.

And we need a director to help us do that. And that is why God gives leadership to the church. Now, let's read these verses together again.

Ephesians 4, 7 and 8. But to each of us, grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says, when he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people. And then it jumps to verse 11, Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 and 13.

So, Christ himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the stature of Christ. So, do you see what Paul's saying? God's given the church directors, apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, to equip. The word equip means to join together properly.

The same word for equipping is used of fishermen mending their nets. So, what happens when they go fishing, either because of the amount of fish they caught or the snags that they experienced on the floor, the bottom of the lake, or the sea? The nets tear, and the places where they're torn need to be re-tied together, rejoined together. That's this word.

So, apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers are given to tie you guys back together when you get all torn up about things, because I've seen you get torn up about things. I've seen breaks in relationships. I've seen breaks in fellowship.

He said this, or she did that, or they didn't do this, and someone needs to come together and do a little bit of mending, a little bit of repair work. That's this idea of equipping. Another way I like to picture it is like a little bit of spiritual chiropractic.

You know, some of you have kind of gotten out of joint with some other else, and when your joints are kind of out of joint, you get on each other's nerve. And when you get on each other's nerve, when you have a nerve pain, it kind of makes doing anything difficult. It makes it difficult to get things done, and so what does a chiropractor do? He realigns the joint by making ajustamiento, adjustments.

He adjusts to give, to re-put, so you're connected well, and sometimes I feel like I am the church's spiritual chiropractor. You come in, and you're a little bit of cueco. You know, you're a little bit out of shape, and you need someone to come back, and it's all right here, just to stretch you out a little bit.

Come on, you need a little patience. You need to remember some mercy. You know, get you properly adjusted so that you're not flinching all the time or so super sensitive, that you can fit together and operate in God's wholeness, being on the same wavelength.

That's the purpose for leadership in the church, not to do everything for you, but to teach us how to work together as a family in a proper relationship, love and honor and mercy and kindness, where together we make something beautiful rather than just a bunch of noise that is difficult to live with. Now, I can admit, and how many, most of us here can admit, it's our natural tendency to expect others to adjust to us. They make me uncomfortable.

I don't like the way they do that. I wish they would, you see, isn't that your first way of thinking sometimes? How many of you in your first thought ask yourself this? I wonder if it's something in me that's causing this difficulty. I wonder if there's a way that I can make an adjustment to promote wholeness and wellness.

I was talking to someone earlier, and if I read that sign over there and it's blurry, why did they allow that sign to be put up there without getting the words clear? And then I go on down the road and I see another billboard that said, man, why did they allow that picture to be put up there that wasn't even in focus? And then I see something else and I said, man, I know that, it's just that I don't think it's very defined. What do you think the problem is? Why am I seeing all this stuff that's not right? My eyes, oh, there's something wrong with my eyes. You mean the way I see everything might be the problem? Yeah.

Maybe your eyes need an adjustment. Maybe you see others the way you see them, because you need a new set of glasses. If your eye be single, your whole body will be full of light.

But if you're seeing things from a double standard, or you've got different agendas, and your whole agenda is not on the same wavelength as the Holy Spirit, you just won't see people the way Jesus sees them. And it usually won't produce what it does, what his wonderful work can do. Oh yeah, this is, there's something, as I get ready to wrap up this.

Most of us are not necessarily troubled by how loud music is. If it's too loud, it's uncomfortable. I remember going to a Spanish conference at Apostolic, it was an Hispanic Apostolic church, Dorcas, you remember, you were there, Vivian was there.

I had a headache for three days. We sat in the front row and it was painful, it was so loud. So it can be too loud, but that's not usually, because good music can be loud.

But you know what's not pleasant when it's loud? When you're in a place and everyone's talking, and kids are running around, and they're yelling, and the dogs are barking, and someone's dropping things, and there's sounds from all over, and there's no order to it. All it is is chaos. You know what we call that? Noise.

If it were talking, because I love it when you get into a church and everyone is singing as loud as they can, like it was at the 75th anniversary. It's beautiful. The volume, as long as it's in sync.

But when we're out of sync, it's those situations that we can barely even think. It almost makes us sick being in those situations. And it's not just the volume, it's the lack of order.

This is why God says for his people, do everything decently and in order. Do it well. Do it in consideration with others.

Be a part of a dynamic whole. And as I wrap up our focus for today, it says that God gives leadership to the church, to bring them together, to help them be properly adjusted to one another, to create this dynamic spiritual wholeness of a Christian spiritual family. And it says to equip the saints for a work of service so that we can do something, accomplish something together that's beautiful, like a food ministry or like a Wednesday night supper or like blessing other people or neighbors with the good deeds that we sometimes have to come together to do, those beautiful things.

And then it also says this, to equip God's people for works of service. And it says until. I'm going to have you, what is the until? The works of service to build up the body of Christ until we reach something.

What does it say there? I think the verse is on there. Do you have it in there? Until what? Until we all attain to what? Well, first, what's the first thing on there? The unity of the faith. You know, faith comes by hearing, right? And hearing by the word of God.

You know what unity of the faith means to me? We all believe what Jesus said, not just, well, I believe. You know what that can be? A bunch of people who tell me, well, I believe pure nonsense and chaos. It's not about what we believe.

Do we believe what Jesus actually said? The unity of the faith. Sincerity doesn't keep a person from being wrong, does it? You can even be zealously wrong. I have been in my life too many times.

But leaders, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor, teachers, are to bring this adjustment in the body of Christ for works of service to build the church up until they all believe. They believe what God actually says. They believe what the Bible says.

Not just what culture, they think culture needs to say, or what's acceptable to the word. They believe what Jesus and the Father says. That's the unity of the faith.

And then the other thing it says, until we all reach the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. Now, in the Greek, it's epigenostos. And the idea of that word means it's contact knowledge.

You've made contact with the person. You were there. You saw it.

You heard it. It happened to you. You were firsthand eyewitness, and you know it.

That's idea of the Greek. Your own personal firsthand experience. There's two words for Spanish and know.

And I got to thinking this to try to help you understand. There's saber y conocer, right? To know, or know about, or to be familiar with. And so it's possible to saber who someone is.

We all saber who the President of the United States is, I hope. Who is the President of the United States? Joe Biden. But do we conocer him? Have we ever met him? Are we familiar with him? No.

So let me tell you, it's possible to saber who Jesus is. Y no conocer him. Not to know him.

Not to have experienced him. You know how I know? Look at me. Look at me.

I'm your pastor. I was raised in this church. And until I was 19 years old, I was smoking pot, snorting coke, and speed, and dropping acid, and living my party life while I was coming here.

I saber who Jesus was. I did not conocer him. I did not know him.

Once I came to know him, become familiar with him, my life has changed. And suddenly, I began to be on the same wave length as the Holy Spirit. And I began to experience Christian life.

And now, it's my heart to help us experience that together. To help my young people to go to camp. You know, it's a process.

Sometimes, I didn't even realize it. I didn't even realize I only knew about Jesus, and I really didn't know him. God, in his goodness, finished that process and made me.

Yes, sir. There is one thing that I think is important to us, and that is, in order to preserve the unity of Christ within the church, is sometimes a person doesn't have something with another person in their family that they can think to address them. You know, they address them when they need to address them.

Right. And that's a really good question. Thank you for bringing that up.

And let me finish with this then. What that is, and what Tom's describing, he called it either an issue or a matter. You know, another way to identify that or to define it is dissonance.

Dissonance. You know what dissonance is? That's when the sounds are kind of rubbing against each other. You know what God uses dissonance for? He suspends tension.

O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave? You see the resolve? He suspends it. He suspends a note. There's two believers that they're going through something, and there's dynamic tension.

It can become a thing of beauty when, by God's help, that tension is resolved into harmony. That's what we see. Brother, going a little bit back to Fr.

Monserrate and Chabela, it is possible to know Fr. Monserrate, the Lord, and yet misdemeanor. Yeah, right.

To be familiar with them, but insufficiently, right? Misdemeanor, it is possible. When Paul talks in Ephesians 4 that we're studying, the purpose for leadership in the church is to make sure that we all reach, because it is possible for some to miss the mark. Yeah.

And the goal of God is every one of us to know for certain Jesus for ourselves. And for this reason, I'm going to turn off my recording and talk to my history teacher.

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Video: [https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/B\\_MGInMvtyo.mp4](https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/B_MGInMvtyo.mp4)  
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