

Unity That Brings Revival

by A.W. Tozer

Unity is necessary for the outpouring of the Spirit of God and is the key to a revival.

Duration: 34:50

Scripture: Genesis 12:1, Exodus 30:30, Psalm 133:1, Psalm 133:3, Matthew 5:6, John 4:14, Acts 1:12

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being absorbed in Christ and His Word. He believes that God cannot bless or bring revival to a church unless its members are fully dedicated to Him. The speaker gives examples of great achievements in history, such as the invention of the electric light and composing musical scores, where individuals had to be fully committed and dedicated to their work. He also highlights the need for unity among believers, focusing on the fundamental truths of Christianity rather than superficial differences. Ultimately, the speaker encourages the audience to have a determination to glorify the Lord alone.

Transcript

Dr. A. W. Tozer. Now, in the Book of Psalms, a psalm of degrees of David. I have referred to this psalm in times past here, and have used it to clinch a point or two, but this morning I want to talk about it at length.

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments, as the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore.

Here, painted by the pen of inspiration, held by the man David, is one of the most charming pictures in the entire Bible. It is a picture of brethren, and by brethren is not meant men only, but men and women, and young people, of united minds, met together in unity. And then, because they were thus met together, and because there was unity, we read about oil and dew and life and blessing.

Now, the coming together in unity was man's part. The pouring out of oil and dew and blessing and life was man's part. So I want to talk about the necessity for a united mind among people desiring a spiritual visitation.

This text shows, as the rest of the Bible will confirm, that unity of mind on the part of the people of God precedes the blessing. Now, I have heard God's children pray. I've prayed myself a lot of prayers that never should have been prayed, but the Lord edits your prayers, as you know, and makes them acceptable.

The Holy Ghost, the scripture says, knows what is the mind of God, or God knows the mind of the Spirit, and he presents our prayers rightly. So what God hears is an edited prayer, a prayer that he understands because he knows we do not. And I have prayed lots of prayers that took a lot of editing to make them acceptable, and I'm sure that you have.

And one prayer that we have made is, O Lord, send the Holy Spirit that we may become a united people. Well, that is all right, except that it is precisely backwards. The Holy Ghost comes because we are a united people.

He does not come to make us a united people. We could remember that. Lord, come and bless us and unite us and help us to get united in order that the blessing might flow and there might be an outpouring of oil and you and life.

That is the way we should pray. If you will look at the book of Acts, you will find in the 2nd chapter that when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. And then a few months later they prayed again, and when they had prayed the place was shaken. This is in the 4th chapter, where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

And they spake the word of God with boldness, and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. Now the assumption is they had been like that right along.

They didn't get that way because the place was shaken where they were assembled. The place was shaken where they were assembled, and they were all filled because they had been that way. And it doesn't say the multitude of them became of one heart, it said the multitude of them that believed were of one heart.

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. Now this teaches us that unity is necessary to the outpouring of the Spirit of God. I wonder if I might go to the technical world for a bit of an illustration.

If you have 120 volts of electricity coming up to your house, but you have broken wiring inside of your house, or a fuse blown, which of course is broken wiring, and you do not get power, you turn the switch but nothing lights, you turn the switch but the stove doesn't warm, you turn the switch but your iron doesn't come on, you turn the switch but no radio comes on. Why? Because you have a broken wiring. You have the power ready to leap in and do its work with all the appliances that you have in your home.

But where there is broken wiring, either because a fuse is burned which is put there for safety's sake, or because something else has come loose or broken, you have no power. Now unity is necessary among the children of God if we are going to know the flow of power. In the book of Philippians, the man Paul

says, If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. And look not every man on his own things, that is he his own advantage, but every man also on the things of others. Now, revivals have been mainly this.

Whether they have been big revivals or small, they have been mainly the achieving of a oneness of mind among a number of Christians. There is much isolated blessing these days, much isolated blessing, that falls short of this. Many ministries, many meetings fall short of this.

Revival, you see, is a persistence of the spiritual mood. It is a persistence of it. We all have times of spiritual moods, and there are occasional times in churches when there is a sudden spiritual mood that comes among the people of God.

But a revival is a persistence of that spiritual mood among the people, and it carries over from day to day and from week to week. This persistence enables the Holy Ghost to do what he couldn't do if it were broken. The average church is like this.

We come on Sunday and we get a little blessing, and we lose it until Wednesday. And then we come and get another little blessing, and we get back up on a peak, and then we lose it until Sunday, and then we get back on another peak. It's a continual going up to the peak and going down into the valley and going back to the peak again.

It's better to do it that way than not to do it at all, but it's a whole lot better to stay on a high level than to come down in the middle of the week and have to come to a prayer meeting to get back up. Now, a prayer meeting is necessary, and you know that I am urging you to come to the prayer meeting Wednesday night. But we shouldn't ought to have to come in order to heal up broken wares.

We ought to stay one. That is, we ought to be persisting. The mood, the spirituality ought to persist.

Now, I've talked about a oneness of mind, and I must make clear what I mean by it in order that you might not misunderstand me. I am not referring particularly to identical doctrinal views. Probably it would be impossible to achieve them.

You see, a Protestant church is like a democratic society. I believe the Church of Christ ought to be like a democratic society. There are two kinds of governments now in the world.

There is the democratic society, which is one but is free to have a variety of opinions, and we usually do have a variety of opinions. But when the chips are down, we're together. When the need arises, we're together.

In the United States in 1941, there were divisions everywhere, divisions among the people. Everybody was after everybody else, and then the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor, and they united the country overnight. The news of that bombing brought them together, and Democrat put his arm around Republican, and the Republican and the Democrat put their arms around the straddler in the middle of the road.

They were united until the war was over, and then they went back to slugging it out again. It's the same all over the world. You and your Canadian Conservatives quarrel with your Canadian, what do you call them? I hear it over the radio how they fight back, and you'd think they were scoundrels and ought to be in jail, and they don't mean it at all.

But just let somebody declare war on Canada and you'd be one in a second. Everybody from the kid on the corner stopping traffic to your Prime Minister, everybody would be united. I believe that you can have differences of opinion and yet be united, because differences of opinion are incidental, but the union and unitedness, they're fundamental.

You see, there's another kind of society then, or government in the world, and that is the totalitarian government, and there you're united because you have to be. If you have an opinion, you don't dare whisper it. Even if you whisper it, somebody is likely to turn you into the Gestapo.

So everybody is united, and when they have an election, everybody votes for Khrushchev, because they'd rather vote for Khrushchev than to go to Siberia and dig in the salt mines. So everybody votes the same way. They are united, but they are united from fear and intimidation and brute force.

And so in the Catholic Church everybody is united. There is very little place for a difference of opinion at all, because they tell you what to believe. You either believe this or you cannot be saved.

This is necessary to salvation, that you believe all this. When a thing has become a dogma, it is necessary to salvation, and you either believe it or else you're out already. In the Protestant Church it is quite otherwise.

There are certain great basic truths that we stand for and that we believe are necessary. I wonder if I could reach out and pull in a rather grotesque and maybe a little bit silly but at least illuminating illustration. What is necessary to our lives and what must we all have? We must all have a heart and it must all beat so many times per minute.

It varies a little bit, but it doesn't vary much. And we must all have lungs for the getting of our blood purified by oxygen. We must all have lungs.

And we must all have a brain and a mind. We must all have a spine and a nervous system. We must all have that.

There are certain other organs we must all have, the tallest, the shortest, the oldest, the youngest. We must all have them. There are certain things you can take away from men, and they're still men, and they can still function as men and be men, but you can take them away.

You can cut off a man's hand, you can cut off his leg and he can peg it for the rest of his life. You can take a lot away from a man and he's still a man, and he can still think and he can still talk and he can still write and he can still do anything that he could do before. But there are certain things you can't take away if you take them away.

He dies. Cut out his heart and he's dead. Cut out his lungs and he's gone.

Let his blood leave his body and he's gone. Let his kidneys stop functioning and in a few hours he's gone. So in the Church of Christ there are the great organs of truth, the great organs that must function.

They must be there or you don't have a church. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, begotten of Him before all ages.

God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who with the Father and Son together is worshiped and glorified. And I believe that Jesus Christ, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary.

And he suffered and he rose again after his death from the dead the third day and ascended to the right hand of God the Father Almighty. These are the great organs of truth. We believe them.

We believe in righteousness. We believe in the resurrection of the dead. We believe in the coming of Christ again.

We believe in the blood of the Lamb. We believe in the redeeming power of that blood. We believe in the Lordship of Jesus.

We believe in the Trinity. We believe in man's sin. We believe in God's forgiveness.

These are the great organs of truth. You take them out of the church and you have not a church, you have only a religious organization. That's all.

Put them in the church and let them function, and you have a church then indeed. For that reason, the Christian and Missionary Alliance has always allowed, until recent times, and I've fought this tooth and nail, and I'm going to continue to fight until, as old Buddy Robinson says, until I lose my teeth and then gum it till I die. Because I am going to believe and continue to believe that there's a place in the fellowship of God's children for people who hold different views on things that don't matter, just the same as there is a place for a redheaded man in a church.

There's a place for a baldheaded man in a church. There's a place for a little short man in a church. There's a place for a tall, lean man in a church.

There's a place for a beautiful woman in a church, and there's a place for the plain one. We don't say you've all got to be redheaded, you can't join this church. We don't say you've got to all be named Mary, or you can't join this church.

We don't say everybody has to be named Jack. We say there are certain great fundamental truths, and we unite on them. Then you can be short or long, tall, black-haired, redhead, no hair.

You can be whatever God has made you. So that's Christian democracy at its finest, loving each other and being one. I'm going to explain in a few minutes what I mean by the unity that brings revival.

I'm telling you now what I don't mean. I don't mean the unity of fear. In fundamental circles a generation ago, we had a hierarchy that was just as powerful and just as tough as the hierarchy that controls the Roman Church.

Only, of course, they never had been elected, they just appointed themselves. And if you said anything that didn't jab with the notes of the Schofield Bible, you were out on your ear, skidding across to the other curb. Everybody had to believe exactly the same thing about everything, including the Second Coming

and the Antichrist and all the rest.

Everybody had to believe exactly what everybody else believed. I grew up in that kind of an atmosphere, and I was one of the first ones to rebel against it and fight it. The oneness I'm talking about then is not the oneness of a totalitarian church, where somebody up there tells you what to believe down here, and you all sit there and say, Yes, Father, Yes, Father, Yes, Father.

No. If I preach something and you search your Bible and find it isn't so, I don't want you to believe it. I want you to come to me and say, Brother, I liked your sermon, but you were off on this.

We have the book here, and that book tests whether we're right or wrong. Then I don't mean the oneness of passivity and compromise. In order to stay one, some churches compromise, and there's the oneness of passivity.

Nobody cares much anyway, so they just compromise. That's the beautiful unity of the dead. I suppose that there isn't anything that is any more united than a cemetery.

Everybody out there, no matter whether they are Democrat, Republicans, or whether they were Tories or Conservatives, while they live, they all lie there calmly together, because they're dead. When you go into a church where the pastor is careful never to say anything that can be pinned down, because he's afraid of hurting somebody who has a good big pen and a large checkbook. So he's careful to say nothing at all and take no position.

And everybody gathers around him. He's dead and everybody gathers a lot of dead people around him, and they call that a church. Not a church at all.

It's simply an agglomeration of dead men, afraid to have an opinion. The beautiful tolerance of the dead. Now what do I mean? I have a few minutes to tell you.

That clock is slow, but you don't know what time it is anyhow, and it doesn't matter. I want to tell you how God will revive this church, and how God will do it, and the only way he'll do it, there must be among us a oneness of determination to glorify the Lord alone. The Lord won't ask you whether you're Armenian or Calvinist, but he will ask you, are you determined to glorify me alone? Are you determined to glorify me alone? In order to have this unity, all the Lord's people are going to have to get together on this.

We're not going to honor men, although we will give honor to whom honor is due in a secondary way, but we're going to glorify the Lord. No one will seek honor for himself. I try to pray very often, maybe not every week, but I try to pray very often, O God, bless Toronto today, and if you must bless somewhere else, not through me, then bless somewhere else, but bless, Lord.

Glorify thyself. I don't want God tying his blessing up to me. I want God to bless any man that will meet his conditions anywhere.

If it's to be in Knox Presbyterian Church or Jarvis Baptist or Lansing or Yonge Street, wherever it is, I want God to meet his people wherever they meet his conditions. But I want to be in on it, and I want this Church to be in on it. So I want God to understand that I'm not selfishly pleading, Lord bless me and my people, but I'm wanting God to bless and honor wherever the people are dedicated to the glorification of the Triune God, and each glad to have God use the other if he wants to do it.

Not any man looking to his own honor, but every man on the honor of somebody else. No man seeking his own advantage, but every man seeking the advantage of others. That's first.

United in our determination to glorify the Lord alone. Second, united in absorption in the Lord's doings. Concentration is often ruined by side interests.

This persistence of the spiritual yearning is often ruined by side interests, and God wants his people to talk Christ and to think Christ and to dream Christ and to love his word and his ways, and to be so dedicated to it that the conversation normally swings around to it when they're together. And I do not believe that God can continue to bless nor send anything like a life-giving revival to a church until we are absorbed in something. To get anything done, you've got to be absorbed in it.

Nobody ever did anything when he only did it halfway. Men who have done great things have always had to be men. To make the electric light and the talking machine, Edison slept only four or five hours a night and worked constantly.

And so to compose the great musical scores, men have sat up all through the night. They said about Tchaikovsky that he used to stay awake hours upon hours, and when others were sleeping, he'd stay on hours upon hours. My opinion of Tchaikovsky's music is such that I wonder why he didn't just take a nap.

But anyway, what I'm saying is that in order to get it done, he had to stay awake and do it. One of the great English composers, Byron, said, I shut myself in my room and work as much as 18 hours at a stretch, never even get out to take a drink of tea. And that's something for an Englishman.

So you've got to be interested in something. And I think of these men, these hockey men and baseball men and football men, I just read here in one of the Toronto papers where they offered Joe DiMaggio \$220,000 to just come and be around and come up to bat occasionally after he'd retired and refused it. Just come and be around, they say.

They live, they're dedicated to that thing, completely sold out to it. I talked to a young man one time who convinced me that some people were dedicated bullfighters. He said, We are.

They're dedicated to it. They're dedicated bullfighters. Now I'd like to know why.

Why? What in the wide world could ever get in a man's head that he would dedicate a life made in God's image with abilities to do wonders and perform exploits and leave his name for generations to follow if he decided to go out and fight a bull? And we Christians are called upon to be dedicated. I read in a little book this morning a few chapters written by a friend of mine in Chicago, and he quotes a great Christian leader who has been around the world several times and knows conditions around the world, saying this. He said, The only religion that I have found in the world that people don't take seriously is Christianity.

The Buddhists take themselves seriously, the Mohammedans take themselves seriously, but the Christians play at it too much. We have the one truth that would save the world, and we're the ones who play, like children in the marketplace. We've got to be absorbed in the Lord's doings.

Third, we've got to be one in determination to see God's wonders. Now we can have what we'll have, and where we have what we'll have. Remember, my brother and sister, you have just as much of God as you want, and this church has just as much blessing as it wants.

No more. Say that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled, so says the mighty word of God, and it cannot be broken. Therefore if you thirst, you will be given water up to your thirst.

If you hunger, you will be fed up to the point your hunger takes you. Therefore this church, as a congregation of men and women and young people, we have as much of God as we really want. We've got to be united in determination to see God do his wonders.

I'd like to see God break out and break over and do some wonderful things for his people. I'm not a divine healing evangelist, but I'd like to see God lay his hand on some of our sick and restore them to health again. And I'd like to see God do some things the like of which aren't done in the average church.

And there's got to be a unity of prayer for God's outpouring. Now we've got to have to pray. Praying is God's method of getting things done on earth.

God says everything is possible to him that has faith, and everything is possible to God, and he unites God and the praying man in one. He says God is omnipotent and the praying man is omnipotent for the time being, because he's in touch with omnipotence and one that's in expectation. I see an awful lot of unbelieving humility, constant self-reproach, apologetic and timid and afraid.

If we dare not be, let's come boldly to the throne of grace, that we might have help and grace, grace and help in time of need. So let's come boldly and let's come. You say, shouldn't we be humble? Certainly we should be humble, but no man should be so humble that he doesn't ask.

If we're so humble that we don't ask, we're playing into the hands of the devil. We should be humble, but we should dare to ask. Ask and seek and knock.

Asking, and the man goes inside the door and shuts it. Seeking is trying to find a way to get into him. Knocking is banging on his door till he answers.

Ask and seek and knock. There must be expectation. We've got to point up our prayers.

I have said before and repeated that one of the greatest snares in praying is to pray for vague things, pray vaguely. If you shoot at something that isn't pointed, if you don't shoot at a target, I used to go out shooting with men up in Pennsylvania. I do still when I get out that way.

You might not believe it, but I can handle a rifle. We'd go out and shoot at things. I didn't like it when they got a small target because it showed me up.

I liked to shoot something big, maybe an 8mm gun or a .30-30, and the thing would go boom, and the smoke would fly, and I'd almost fall over and I felt really big. But if I'd been shooting at something, I was red-faced because I'd missed it. Occasionally I'd hit, but mostly I didn't.

When we pray just generally and make a big boom, we say, Oh, he's a praying man. What's he praying for? What's he praying about? What's he got on his mind? Has God heard his prayer lately? He's shooting at a cloud. How do you know whether he hits it or not? He's shooting at the side of a barn.

Maybe he's hit it, maybe that's a knothole you see there. No, he didn't do that at all. If you point your gun at something and pull the trigger, then go look and face it and say, No, I didn't hit it, I'm sorry.

And if I pray for something and God doesn't give it, it doesn't do God any honor for me to make myself believe I have it. No. If you want to be filled with the Holy Ghost and you say, All right, now I'll take it.

That's what you think. You ought to be willing to let God test you and know whether you've answered your prayer or not. Well, God expects.

And then oneness to the submission of our Lord in the midst. Ah, this fusion of minds into a way for the Lord. This making out of many minds a beautiful mosaic highway for the chariot of God.

This is what we mean, and one in our resolution to put away forbidden things. Moral standards are pretty low in modern evangelical circles, even in the Christian and Missionary Alliance, I regret to say. We smile and shrug at things that people used to be horrified about.

We never have much of a revival until we have united to put away things that are forbidden. Public and private differences and personal sins. If there are public differences, they must be publicly made right.

If there are private differences, they can be privately made right. But we've got to be one. Not one, I repeat, as in the cemetery, because we're afraid to think, but one in these determinations to glorify the Lord in our midst.

Well, he says here that because they were united and dwelling together in pleasant unity, it was like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, went down to the skirts of his garment. Old Aaron. This is the only way I know that when Aaron was anointed high priest, he was bald-headed.

If he had had bushy hair, the oil would have stayed in his hair. But being bald-headed, it ran down his head and down over his beard and clear down to the skirts of his garment. When God poured the Holy Ghost on Jesus Christ, he didn't baptize him with the Holy Ghost, he anointed him.

There's a difference. Jesus was never baptized with the Holy Ghost, he was anointed with the Holy Ghost. And when he was anointed and the oil came in such profusion down over his head, it ran clear down over his body.

Just as Aaron's body had the oil drifting down around it, drifting onto his clothing so that he smelled like the oil that had been put on his head. So this living together in unity among the Lord's people brings a blessing of oil, that anointment that comes down upon us. It's the same ointment that ran on the head of Jesus, even the Holy Ghost, and comes all down over his people.

And you and I are members of that body which he is the head, and the oil that flowed on his head can flow down over his body which is you and me, and we can keep an unbroken continuity of life from the Jordan River. The life of the Holy Ghost came upon the head of Jesus, and it comes now upon you and me and upon all the people of God that dwell together in unity. Are we such? That's what I want to know.

Are we such? Are you such a one? Think about it. We're giving no invitation. We're only asking you to think seriously about this for the rest of the afternoon.

Don't go home and waste the afternoon chatting or listening or looking or think about all this. Are we such that God can bless us? Do we have this unity of determination to glorify the Lord alone, of absorption in the Lord's doings, of a determination to see the Lord work, of oneness in present expectation, of

submission to the Lord, and of a resolution to put away everything that hinders? If we are, then we are a united people, and we may expect any time the oil that flowed on the head of Jesus to flow down over us and bring oil and blessing and life forevermore. I'd like to see this church suddenly anointed as though spring were to come into a landscape, wouldn't you? We thank God for everything we have, and we thank God for the wonderful fellowship.

We thank God for all. But you've dwelt long enough in this mount, said the Holy Ghost once to a man. Rise, get thee over this Jordan into the land which I will show thee.

I believe it's time that you and I, as individuals and we as pastors and all of us together, that we determine that we're going to have something new and wonderful for this church. Amen? Amen.

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