

Unity - the Forgotten Factor

by Bill McLeod

The forgotten factor in seeking blessing from God is unity among believers, and this unity can be achieved through persecution, prayer, the Word of God, and preaching the gospel.

Duration: 49:58

Scripture: Psalm 133, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:44-45, Acts 4:32, Acts 5:12, Romans 15:5-6, Philippians 1:27

Topics: "Unity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of Christians coming together and preaching the gospel. He highlights the lack of personal responsibility among many Christians to share Jesus Christ and encourages them to be actively involved in spreading the gospel. The preacher shares the example of a successful church in Hammond, Indiana, where they have been baptizing 200 converts a week by instilling a culture of soul-winning among new believers. He also mentions the need for unity within the church and shares the story of a church that experienced revival and became like one person before God, leading to a hundred-year-long round-the-clock prayer meeting and a goal of one missionary for every member of the church.

Transcript

Tonight I want to share with you a very important but forgotten factor in seeking blessing from God. I presume that all of you are either members of a church or you're adherents to an evangelical church, that may not be true for all but I would think for most if not all, and as a result of that, that is a result of your experience of God, you're concerned to have blessing. I mean you want blessing in your church.

I don't know if I've ever met a person who didn't want blessing in his church. He wants to see people converted, he wants to see missionaries going up, money raised for projects for the glory of God, he wants to see God blessing. That's true of all the pastors I talk with, but they're not all having blessing.

And sometimes people say, well you know, how come we've been here for 75 years, this church, and here's a church just down the block and they started five years ago and they're already three times the size of our church. Now I get asked that question sometimes, and if I don't get asked it, I ask the question myself sometimes. Now certainly it's not because God is any respecter of denominations, because he is not.

We know that. There must be some other factor, there must be some other reason why God is blessing some churches in some places, and yet a church of the same denomination with an equal opportunity for reaching out is not getting the job done. Now then, in seeking for blessing from God, what is this forgotten factor? Well I think it's quite simple, and we're going to look at Psalm 133, where we'll get the immediate and very direct answer to the question.

He says, Behold how good, that is how good to God, and how pleasant, pleasant to man, what a pleasant experience for brethren to dwell together in unity. Then he says, It's like the ointment upon the head, that went down on Aaron's beard, and if you know anything about the way in which that ointment was concocted, you'll know it's a symbol of the Spirit of God. It went right down to the skirts of his garment, it says.

He says, Brethren, dwelling together in unity, it's like the Jew, and in the Bible, Jew is a picture of the blessing of God. It's like the Jew that descended upon the mountains of Zion. As a Jew of Hermon, he says, first of all, and then as the Jew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, then notice the next statement.

He says, There, there the Lord commanded the blessing. Do you believe it? Absolutely true. There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore, and people will be converted to Christ, where there is this spirit of unity.

Now I'm not talking about what we might describe as being a mindless unity, because you have that in churches sometimes, where nobody's fighting, but nobody's doing anything else either. It's totally a mindless thing. The preacher says, Do this, they do that.

The Lord says, Do this, they do that. And they go along with it, not because they're convinced it's right or true, they're not even concerned. And so there's much that we might describe as being mindless unity, and that doesn't bring the blessing of God.

But where brethren dwell together in a purposeful unity, there God commands the blessing. Now that's what he says, and I believe it. And to me this is a forgotten factor in seeking the blessing of God in our work for Him.

Now this is the testimony, the clear testimony, for example, of the book of Acts. Even before Pentecost, in Acts 1.14, it says, These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. A hundred and twenty people prayed for days with one accord.

Now I knew a church that had a week of prayer meetings and then had a fight and a split. So obviously when they were praying, they were not praying with one accord. Because it's not a matter of a bunch of people saying, Well, let's just get together and pray.

Then we try to have one accord while we pray. Well, the one accord may not last any longer than the prayer meeting. It's something that goes much deeper than that, and there are other things involved.

And we'll try and deal with these matters tonight as God will be with us. Acts 2.1, it says, When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly the world was changed. And it's never been the same since.

Because a group of people, I'm looking at it from the human side now, because a group of people were all together in one place with one accord, and God came. God came. Later on in the same chapter, you read that all that believed were together and had all things common.

Then in chapter 4, you read again, And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that all of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. Then in Acts chapter 5, And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch, just like one person before God. What was the result? It says, And believers were the more added to the Lord multitudes of men and of women.

And a few chapters on, it says that the churches, they walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and they were multiplied. The churches were multiplied. I know an evangelical church in the States.

They started 20 years ago with 14 churches. They now have over 2,000 churches. God is with them.

But they have a purpose, a goal, and they're given to that goal and purpose. I'm sure they have churches that are not doing too well, but they have many churches that are doing very, very well. It's a forgotten factor.

Church history. I don't know if you've read anything about the Moravian church and the great missionary movement that was spawned by God through that church many years ago in Europe, a place called Herrnhut, if I'm pronouncing it right. Count Zinzendorf.

You know, it was a very scrappy church. Every time they got together for a business meeting, they had a fight. I mean literally.

They were torn in all directions. Somebody described the average evangelical church as being 75 tigers with their tails all tied together, and the preacher's job is to untie the tails without getting scratched. And you know, the strongest tiger, he pulls the church in his direction.

Often that's what goes on. That's how that church was. And then God came.

Some people were praying for revival, and revival came. And the church got straightened out and they became like one person before God. And you know what some of the results were? They had a round-the-clock prayer meeting that lasted for a hundred years.

It never quit for a hundred years. And you know what their goal was for missions? One missionary for every member of the church. They didn't quite make it.

I was just doing a little arithmetic today, and I know of an evangelical church in North America, they have one missionary for every 5,000 people. I know another group and they pride themselves on the strong missionary program, and they have one missionary for every 500 people. Not 5,000, 500.

That's a little better. One missionary for every person? Is it possible? There are other factors here. But that beautiful spirit of unity that the Holy Spirit saw and blessed.

I'll say again, it's a forgotten factor. The Apostle Paul wrote nine epistles to seven different churches. He wrote a total of 13 letters altogether.

But he wrote nine epistles to seven different churches, and in every epistle he stressed this matter of unity. When he wrote to the church of Corinth, 1 Corinthians 1.10, he said, Brethren, I beseech you, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. And in every one of those nine epistles he talks about unity, unity, unity.

Because he knows what this means. That's where God commands the blessing. How beautiful to God.

How pleasant to men. It's awful to be in a church that's having a fight all the time. And maybe some of you have been in that kind of a church.

It's horrible. And sometimes people get scars that last the rest of their life, because they're in a scrappy church. I know one evangelical denomination, if they get a church like that, that's scrappy, and will not straighten out, they write them off.

They tell that church, You're no longer in fellowship with us. Go where you are. I'd rather like that.

I mean, give them a chance. But if they don't take it, let them go their own way. So it's a very, very important thing.

How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, for there the Lord commanded the blessing. Now we're not all from the same church. But if you're praying for the blessing of God in your church, this is one factor, perhaps the most important factor of all.

And it must be dealt with. And we ought to be praying to this end. A friend of mine used to be a member of the church I was pastor of in Saskatoon years ago.

He lives now in Vancouver. He was in Saskatoon recently, spent some time with us, telling us something of the blessing of God in the church he was in. But they had one man in that church that was just a constant, he was just like a bunch of mad bees all by himself, always stirring up the pot, always criticizing.

And a forceful personality, pushing people around, influencing people in the church. And it just seemed to be going from bad to worse. I met a business meeting one night, and this guy just blew his top and just disrupted the whole thing.

And so the pastor called him to prayer. And while one of the brethren was leading in prayer, this man I'm talking about that was in my home, he said, Pastor, I was so distraught at the way that the devil was using this man. He said, I just prayed in my own soul.

He said, just like the Lord and I were there, I just called on God and I said, God, you can't let this go on! And he said he heard a crash. He opened his eyes and looked and the man was dead on the floor. He was lying dead on the floor.

He didn't ask God to take the man's life. But apparently there was no other way that God could do it with that person. So God took them out.

And sometimes it's necessary. Why should one person hold up the blessing of God? Achan did it and almost 40 people died. And the whole program of God just ground to halt until Achan was dealt with.

You know, the first time I went out preaching, well, I was in a church and I stayed there a year and a half, thought I burnt all the grass over until I, you know, like young preachers are, you feel like moving all the time. After a year, you've got it all done. You want to go somewhere else.

When you get older, you realize 10 years doesn't do it all. And I went to another church and I thought I was in heaven. I was associated with a different church, a different denomination.

And you know, the little bit I'd heard about this denomination, I thought it was just heaven. And then we had a business meeting and it was the annual business meeting. And a certain man did not get elected or voted back in as a deacon.

And he leaped to his chair and he roared like a bull. I mean, he leaped to his feet and he pounded a chair with his fist. I thought the chair would crack in two.

And he declared that the previous pastor was a thief and a robber and the present pastor, that was me. And the present pastor thought he was better than Jesus Christ. And he was storming out of the room and his two brothers, or his one brother and his two sisters went out of the room after him.

And after a bit, one of the sisters came back in and she said, he says he'll apologize if you'll make him a deacon. I said to the people, and I was a very young pastor, I said, how long has this been going on? Oh, they said 25 years. I said, 25 years? Why don't you do something about it? And I found out that man was a blasphemer, a deacon in the church.

Sinners told me about his blasphemy. I found out he'd been treasurer of the church at one time and he'd stolen hundreds of dollars from the church treasury. And the church found out, but they wouldn't discipline him because they didn't want the community to find out.

And the community always finds out that kind of garbage anyway. Because a lot of Christians have long tongues. Some Christians have tongues long enough they could use them for windshield wipers, shoot them out the side window.

I heard someone say that some Christians ought to have a roller skate under their tongue. I mean, it's long enough to slide it on the sidewalk. Well, they always find out.

And the community had no respect for that church because they knew some of these things were going on. I said, why don't we apply some discipline here? And they were just as glad as can be to do it. And it was done in the spirit of love.

But that's sad that for 25 years that kind of thing went on. And there may be some people in this meeting tonight that the devil is using in this way. You better be very, very careful.

He that sows discord among brethren is an abomination to God, worse than a scum. An abomination to God. Watch it.

Don't be part of the problem, be part of the remedy. Now then, unity. What causes unity? First of all, persecution.

That's what it says in Acts chapter 4. The apostles were threatened, beaten, threatened, told not to preach or teach anymore in the name of Jesus Christ. So they went back to the church, called a meeting together, called the people together, and told them what had been told them. Then what happened? There was a

spontaneous prayer meeting right on the spot.

And the people just became like one person that says, they lifted up their voices to God with one accord, and they said, Lord, you are God, you made the heaven and the earth and the sea. What happened when they finished praying? The Spirit of God, the place was shaken, the Spirit of God was poured out on them, and a second outburst of Pentecostal power was the result. Persecution.

It's not always bad. It drives Christians together. We're badly fragmented in North America because we don't feel the need of other believers.

We couldn't care less whether that other evangelical church in the same village or town goes down the tube or up, it doesn't really matter. It's not our concern. It ought to be, but it isn't.

I was blessed yesterday when Dick Siple was talking about working in a certain area with some people to help a church that was struggling. It didn't help his own church, but he wasn't even concerned about that because he was helping a church of God. And I thought that was so beautiful.

Persecution. Prayer. Remember Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew, if two of you shall agree on earth.

You know, the Greek word there is the word from which we get our English word, symphony. It's a musical term. I'm not sure I'm pronouncing that right, but that's how it's spelled.

Okay? If two of you shall find yourself in perfect agreement as concerning anything that you will ask, it shall be done for you of my Father who is in heaven. And you know, when you begin to pray with a person, especially when you're praying meaningful, not mindless prayers. You know, oftentimes people are praying mindless prayers.

I can sympathize fully with George Whitfield, the famous field preacher. He was in a prayer meeting one time, and a brother got to praying. They were all kneeling, and a brother got to praying, and George Whitfield was really warmed up by this prayer.

He was amening and praising the Lord, and then the fellow couldn't find a landing field. And he went on and on, and the amens got fewer and fewer and fewer and fewer, until finally the fellow was praying. He'd lost him.

And all of a sudden, Whitfield got up off his knees, and he sat down. So when the fellow was finished praying, people got looking around, they all sat down. And Whitfield said to this brother, you prayed me into a good frame of mind, and then you prayed me right out again.

And sometimes we do that mindless praying. We want to make a good finish to our prayer, so we're thinking of some nice phrase to use. And we bring up five or ten minutes waiting for a nice phrase to come, and it doesn't come, because we're not talking to God.

It would be better just to quit. Like I heard about a fellow, he had no contact with the church at all. Somebody witnessed him, and he got converted.

And then he didn't know what to say. I mean, other people were giving testimonies. And so he got up and said, hooray for Jesus! I mean, that's all he knew.

And I'm sure that meant more to God than some of these great, great prayers you hear that touch the whole world and leave you as cold as an iceberg. But if you can get together with some person, and you can just become one, or ten people can become one person, or twenty people, or fifty, or whatever, and then God begins to bless and work. So prayer can bring people together.

Persecution. And then, of course, the Word of God. It ought to go without saying that if you're reading the Bible, and I'm reading the Bible, then we ought to be coming closer together all the time.

Somehow it doesn't always work that way. Now in the Bible you have this phrase, the faith. The faith.

And that means, basically, the Christian doctrines. Particularly those doctrines that refer to the incarnation of Christ, his death on the cross for the sins of the world, and his resurrection from the dead on the third day. The faith.

Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. The faith. Now, in Ephesians chapter 4, he talks about the faith.

And I quoted that verse, at least part of that, this afternoon. He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers for the protecting of the saints, unto the work of the ministry, for the identifying of the body of Christ, until we all come in the unity of the faith. And then notice what he adds.

Unto the knowledge of the Son of God. And you can't divorce that from the faith. So if I'm learning, if I'm reading my Bible a great deal, it ought to be bringing me closer to Jesus.

And when we think in terms of unity, it's unity in Christ, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it said in Romans 15. Until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And he says that we henceforth be no more children.

We have many baby Christians in our churches. People have to be pampered and pat on the back and praised and all the rest of it, or they don't operate very efficiently or well. All right, the Word of God ought to bring us closer together.

And here's something that really brings Christians close together. That's just preaching the gospel. Here's something Paul said and rang to the church at Philippi.

He said, let your conduct be as it becomes the gospel of Christ, whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs. But you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and are nothing terrified by your adversaries. That's beautiful.

But the average Christian isn't involved in getting the gospel out at all. That's something the preacher does on Sunday. And it seems that very, very few Christians really think they have a personal responsibility to share Christ.

Wesley used to say, all at it and always at it. And you know what Jack Kyle says down in Hammond, Indiana, and you may not agree entirely with his program, but for two solid years have been baptizing 200 converts a week. So something wonderful is happening down there.

Do you know what he says? He says when we get a Christian converted, before he has a chance to find out that soul winning is not the normal thing for the average Christian today, we get him soul winning because if he ever finds out, he'll never do it. But isn't that right? It's right, but it's so wrong. I may hear of your affairs that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

And you ought to be 100 percent behind your church's program for reaching the lost in Canada, or in some far country, wherever it is. One group I think of, they don't talk about home missions and foreign missions, they just talk about missions. And everything is mission.

Starting a church in Canada, it's missions. And I think that's right. But they've got a goal, it's not mindless unity.

And one of the reasons why some churches never get anywhere is because they're not going anywhere. I mean, they don't have a program to present to the people, and the people know it. They don't really know whether they're going east, west, north, or south.

There's something like a little story I heard. Matter of fact, we had it as a skit at a camp one time. And it begins with a fellow, he's a station agent.

And he's sitting in the station with his feet up on a desk, and he's reading a book. And a fellow comes in and says, uh, are there any trains going north today? And he comes down, he gets the big book, he checks the schedule and everything. And after about five minutes, he says, nope, there's no trains going north today.

Fellow says, thanks, and takes off. Same fellow comes back about ten minutes later and says, hey, are there any trains going south today? Same thing, goes through, takes five minutes, looks it up, no, no trains going south today. Comes back in ten minutes, any trains going west today? Looks it up, checks it out, no trains going west today.

Sorry. Fellow takes off, comes back in ten minutes and says, hey, are there any trains going east today? Looks up in the book, checks it out, five minutes, no, no, he said, I'm terribly sorry, no trains going east today. So the guy turns and hollers out the door, okay, kids, it's safe to cross the tracks.

Well, you know, some churches are operating that way. They really don't have a program. There's no trains going east, west, north, or south.

There's nothing happening. Then, and sometimes we're wondering, we're beating the people over their head, wondering why they're not getting behind the program. What program? I mean, it's mindless.

The people don't know what's going on. They can't get behind it because they don't know what it is. So it's got to be spelled out.

I've tried to read just about everything that Charles Spurgeon said and everything other people said about him. It's not that I, you know, he's not my example. Jesus is my example.

I've learned a lot from him. And you know, his church, they had marvelous, marvelous blessings from God. Thousands and thousands of people were converted.

And by the way, I read something in a publication a while ago where they were comparing Jack Hiles to Charles Spurgeon. They were pointing out that Jack Hiles was getting more people baptized than Charles

Spurgeon ever did. And they made this comparison.

But there's an old saying that all comparisons are odious. For example, Charles Spurgeon could go anywhere in the British Isles, and if they had two hours notice, he could get a crowd in the open air of anywhere from five to 25,000 people. Now, Jack Hiles couldn't get 2,000 anywhere in America.

I mean, preaching in the open air. And I'm not running Jack Hiles down. God is using him.

And another thing, they bring him in by buses. They got 140 buses bringing people into Hammond, Indiana, and that's great. But when Spurgeon preached, they never had buses.

Most people walked, and some people walked miles to be there. Totally different. And you can't compare one with another.

But I'll tell you, they had a program for winning the lost. They worked in every direction they possibly could. They had an orphanage.

They had a preacher's college. They had a circulating library for preachers. They had coal porters, 150 coal porters in the British Isles alone, besides missionaries in the foreign field.

They raised millions of dollars for the work of God. I mean, they had a program, and people just flocked in there. You know, it says in the Old Testament, they fell unto him in Israel, from Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord as God was with him, one of the godly kings.

Boy, when the people of Israel saw that God was with this man, they got right behind him. He knew where he was going, and they came in behind him. You know one of the things you read about him? It says, Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people.

For the thing was done suddenly. Also in Judah, the hand of God was to give them one accord. The hand of God was to give them one accord.

And I'm sure the hand of God is to give us one accord in all our churches, if we just find out what the hand of God is, what God has in mind, what he wants for our church, and not be a part of the problem. He that is of a proud heart stirs up strife, it says in Proverbs. Well, we're talking about factors that promote unity.

We talked about persecution and prayer. Then we talked about the word of God. Then we talked about sharing the gospel.

What about the Holy Spirit? We're all, you know, we all have the same spirit of God in us. We want to be filled, and maybe we are filled with God's spirit. In Ephesians chapter 4, it says, Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Holy Spirit in our church, in the bond of peace. Be at peace among yourselves, the Bible says. And how we need to listen to that injunction from the word of God.

Not allow anything to disturb the peace of the people of God. Speaking the truth, but always in love. So the unity of the Holy Spirit, certainly the Spirit of God wants to bring unity to a congregation because that's when he can begin to bless.

And our business is to walk so with God that will not disturb the work that the Holy Spirit is trying to do in our church. You know, I've been preaching for 37 years, I guess now, and the last seven years, well, even prior to that, I did a lot of preaching around the country. The last seven years, I get into a lot of churches, different denominations, and I come to one church and they're just ground to an absolute halt, maybe sliding backwards.

I come to another church and they're just having the blessing of God. Now, I don't think there's an exception to our rule. There's blessing from God always when God's people are like one person.

Then the Holy Spirit's working. How good, how pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity, like the ointment, like the jewel. Or like the Holy Spirit and then love.

And Paul talked about that, you know, in Philippians chapter 2. He said, fulfill you my joy. That is, experience my joy. That you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, having the same love.

You know, if you're filled with the Holy Spirit, you're filled with the love of God, and I'm filled with the love of God and the Holy Spirit, you don't have a different kind of love than I have. And I don't have a different kind of love than you have. So if you're filled with the love of God and I'm filled with the love of God, we can't have a fight in a million years.

It would be impossible. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, the unity of the faith, the Word of God brings us together, the Spirit of God brings us together, the love of God brings us together. Everything is moving in the direction of unity.

And the devil is down there just snapping around and trying to get the Christians to move in other directions, to get them away from the task that God has given them. I get so tired of hearing it, I hear it, I read it, and it keeps saying the church in North America is a sleeping giant. It might as well be a sleeping pygmy.

For all the good it does, giant or not, giant numerically or spiritually. All right? And then, you know, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, He doesn't have 50 different names. And it was to the name of Christ that Paul appealed to the church at Corinth.

Remember? I beseech you, brethren, by the name of Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. The name of Jesus. Now, maybe you didn't know this, but when the revival hit in 1971, Pastor Bolt from the Alliance Church, and I was from Ebenezer Baptist Church, and we were having some great times together, prayed together a lot, and counseled and so on, and traveled together and everything.

And we felt that God was moving us in a certain direction. We had decided that when the revival meetings per se ended, that we were going to unite our two congregations Sunday evening until Jesus came, and rent the Third Avenue, was it, United Church in Saskatoon, and go all out together as two separate congregations, but working together for the salvation of the lost. Now, it didn't work out because God led us in different directions.

I mean, I went on the road and I was not around. But this is what we felt. Well, God smiles on that, you know.

I've often wondered what would have happened if we had gone through with it. Anyway, here are factors that promote unity. What are some factors that promote disunity, carnality? You remember Paul Reddinger Church at Corinth? He said, whereas it is among you envying and strife and divisions, are you not carnal and walk as men? Envy, strife, divisions, carnality.

And he talks about this, you know, in the book of James, James 3. He says, If you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not from above, but is earthly, sensual, that means carnal, devilish. Demons are behind it.

The power of the devil is behind this kind of thing. Envy, strife, divisions, because the devil knows what he's facing and he's got a program to stop the church. And it's a simple program, divide.

And any way he can, he does it. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's welfare. Do we live this way? But God wants us to.

Factors that promote disunity are right here. Carnality and pride and self-seeking all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. There are many like that.

And when you have people like that in the church, you remember in the Old Testament, when Israel was in the wilderness, who was it? Who was it in the nation that fell to lusting? It was called a mixed multitude. The people who were half for God and half for the devil, they were the ones. And you often have that in churches.

You know, we have lots of people that they don't really mean business for God. And we're not to write them off. We're not to look down our noses at them.

But the Bible says, warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all. All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. Listen, Paul said that concerning Christian believers.

Did you know that in Philippians 2.21? Concerning Christians. He said, I can't find a single person. I have no man like-minded that will naturally care for your state except for Timothy.

And I want to send him. But I can't find anybody else. Because all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

If you want blessing in the church, and you want unity in your church, you're going to have to work at it. You're going to have to do something personally. You're going to have to die to yourself.

You're going to have to allow yourself to be caught up in and lost in the program of the church. Even if it's going in a direction that maybe you don't exactly like. But especially where the program is designed to reach lost people, whether it's in Canada or in a foreign land.

Get behind it with all your heart. All right? Factors that promote disunity. And here's an added problem.

And it's something a little different, but it's basic to understanding what the problem is. In Genesis 49, Jacob was talking to his son shortly before he himself died. And he called him, you know, person by person.

And they're all heads of tribes. And when he came to Reuben, here's what he said, Reuben, unstable as water, thou shalt not excel. An unstable person will never excel in the work of God.

Now going over to Hosea, the Lord said about Israel, they have a divided heart. Now shall they be found faulty. A person with a divided heart, he's pulled like Paul was pulled between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

And had he not been rescued, he would have died. If God didn't rescue some churches, they'd die too. All right? The problem of a divided heart.

James talked about it. He said a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways, James 1 and 8. Unstable in all his ways. You know what happens? He projects that instability to the church, to the people around him.

And other people are influenced in the wrong way, as far as God is concerned. Now then, what's the remedy for all of this? Because, you know, it's useless for me to appeal for unity in any church or in any situation. I mean, just to appeal for unity, people say, it's great, yeah, see, that's fine, that's great.

And it doesn't affect things at all. Because really, I can't, I can't do this unless in my own spirit I am one person. Remember, a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

You can never depend on him. Today he's hot and tomorrow he's cold. He's for today and against it tomorrow.

You never know where he's at. What's the remedy for that problem? Because that's basic to the whole thing. Well, here's a starter, one of the Psalms.

Here's a prayer. Unite my heart to fear thy name. Now, he realized he had a divided heart, apparently, and he asked God to heal it.

That's where it all starts. And then a step beyond that. James talks about this problem.

You know what the Word of God says in the book of James about a divided heart? You know what the real problem in that person's life is? He's got an unclean heart. He says, purify your heart, you double-minded. Now, I've said that sometimes to people when counseling with a person.

And I've had people say, no, no, that's not my problem at all. I said, then why did God say it was your problem? Purify your heart, you double-minded. People are double-minded because they don't have a pure heart.

Because deep down inside, there's sin that has not been dealt with. And that's why they're of two minds. They never know where they're at, because they know they're not right with God.

And that problem has got to be solved. So the Bible says, cleanse your hands, purify your heart, you double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. And the next statement is, speak not evil one of another, brethren, brethren.

Unite my heart to fear thy name. And the next thing is, God, give me a pure heart. And I have to be honest about that.

I have to let God search my soul. There are many Christians that will never pray that prayer in me, that search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts, because they're afraid of what God might bring to the surface.

We've had people occasionally tell us, well, no way. There's too much garbage in behind. If I start there, there's just no way.

But you'd better start. You know, God will be with you in it. He that covers his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.

And I'll tell you, it's absolutely marvelous how God can work all kinds of hopeless situations out and set people free and take care of all the consequences. Because we've often counseled with people. Often.

Well, I don't know how often, but I can think of quite a few cases just as I think about it in a moment here, of people that should have gone to jail when they began to make things right. And I don't know of one of them that had to go to jail. One guy should have had ten years in jail.

Another fellow should have been fourteen years. And God just wiped the whole thing out. One guy jumped bail.

They've been looking for him for twenty-three years. And he got his life straightened out in one of the meetings and gave himself up to police the following day. And they listened to his testimony.

They were broken by his testimony. They just let him go. They said, Dave, we've been looking for you for twenty-three years.

Where have you been? And he told them what happened. How Jesus Christ had saved him, and then how six months after that, just the other night, how Jesus Christ had straightened his whole life out, and he wanted to make their past right. And that's why he was there.

And then the police chief, he was talking to a deputy chief, whatever it was. He broke down and said, three years ago, a preacher led me to Christ, and I haven't been making a very good fist of the Christian life. And he said, you coming here today and telling me this has just warmed my heart.

And he was crying. And he said, Dave, we'll pray for you. You live for God.

And they just let him go. I don't know how they could do it, but they did it. I know him.

All right. Unite my heart to fear thy name, O God, give me a pure heart, whatever it costs. And God can't forgive the sins I won't confess.

Remember what Duncan Campbell, the great revivalist, said? Just thundered it. Calvary doesn't cover it all. You know, we sing, Calvary covers it all.

Calvary doesn't cover it all. Calvary doesn't cover the sin. That you will not uncover, that's the problem.

And there's no way, dear people, that we can transport blessing into an assembly of God's people. We don't have our hands on the valves. God has his hands on the valves, and God will never let you and I put our hands on the valves of blessing.

And he knows where the church stands. And when the blessing of God is withheld, God knows why. Know how he longs to bless, how he wants to bless, and how frustrated God must be as he looks down on us, each one a little king on his own thron, a bunch of kings warring in one church, no unity.

And God has to go looking somewhere else. Now then, we're going to close in Romans chapter 15. He says, Brethren, he appeals to the God of consolation to make God's people to be like-minded, to be of one mind.

He says, after Christ Jesus. But the marginal reading says, according to the example of Christ Jesus. All right? He wants us to be one after the example of Christ, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the next word is wherefore. Wherefore, receive you, receive you one another, even as Christ received us to the glory of God. How did Jesus receive you? With reservations when you came to him? Not at all.

He freely forgave us, the Bible says, all trespasses, every last one of them, no matter how serious, how bad they were. They were all forgiven and washed away. Receive you one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Do you receive your brother and sister in Christ this way in your particular church? There may be some people, you know, whose personality rubs you the wrong way. That just proves itself isn't dead, that's all. You know the old saying, watch it, your reactions are showing.

We don't have these bad reactions, you know, when we're crucified with Christ, and the Lord Jesus is living his life out through us. We find it so easy to receive other people, no matter who they are. Receive you one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

And that's really where it ends, and that's where I'm going to end tonight. Maybe in your church, maybe some person, or there may be some people that you don't really love with a pure heart, fervently, as 1 Peter 1.22 says we should. You better find out why, deal with the problem.

But remember, the deeper problem is the problem of a divided heart, a divided loyalty to God. And that's the problem we have to get solved, first of all. Or any attempt to create a spirit of unity in a church will be an abortive attempt.

It isn't going to work until God's people get right with him and right with one another. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore.

Now as I close, listen. I don't know, do you believe it? I'm asking you, do you believe it? That God will command a blessing when he sees unity? Do you believe that? All right, then let's do something about it. Whatever we can do in our own personal circle, life, family, and, you know, the influence we may have, let's work to this end and keep praying for God to be with us, to create that spirit of oneness and unity where God can work.

I don't think it will ever fail. We've got to believe it and we've got to work with it for the glory of God. Don, may this or one of the other sessions spoken to your heart personally, maybe you want to slip out to the prayer room and get on your knees before God and deal with issues that God is talking to you about, whoever you are.

And Brother Neil will be closing the meeting, I presume, with a song or a prayer. Why not slip out if God has spoken to you? Now is the time when the thing is warm in your mind and the Spirit of God is convicting you, because, listen, even the Word of God, the devil can take out of your heart. And if you don't believe that, read Luke 8. It says distinctly that the devil comes and takes away the seed of the Word of God out of people's hearts.

And what you feel now, you may not feel tomorrow. That's why we say deal with it now that God is speaking to you.

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