

Epistle 347

by George Fox

The sermon emphasizes the importance of submission to authority, unity among believers, and obedience to tradition in the church.

Scripture: Acts 8:14, Acts 11:20, Acts 15:22, Romans 16:1, 1 Corinthians 14:32, 1 Corinthians 16:10, 2 Corinthians 12:17, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:9, 2 Timothy 4:11

Topics: "Church Unity", "Holy Spirit"

Description

George Fox preaches about the unity and obedience among the early apostles and disciples, emphasizing their willingness to be sent and their submission to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The sermon highlights the importance of exhortation, encouragement, and support within the church community, as seen through the actions of Paul, Barnabas, and other early Christian leaders. It also stresses the need for diligence, obedience, and love in fulfilling God's work and ministering to one another, as exemplified by the apostles' interactions and instructions to various churches and individuals.

Transcript

The apostles heard at Jerusalem, that the Samaritans had received the word of God, and they sent unto them Peter and John [Acts 8:14]. Acts viii. 14. Now Peter and John did not, in opposition, say, we will stay till we have a motion. But as the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets [1 Cor 14:32], so the spirits of the apostles were subject to the apostles. And when tidings came to the church at Jerusalem, that the Grecians had believed, they sent forth Barnabas to them, and when he came, he exhorted them; and when Barnabas had found Paul, he brought him to Antioch, (and there the disciples were first called christians,) and the the church sent the collection by the hands of Paul and Barnabas unto the elders [Acts 11:20-30]. Acts xi. 22, 23.30. and ix. 27. Paul and Barnabas took with them John, whose surname was Mark [Acts 12:25]; and Mark did not gainsay, and tell them, I must wait for a motion. Acts xii. 25. It pleased the apostles and elders, with the church, to send chosen men to Antioch, with Paul, and Barnabas, and Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren, and wrote letters by them unto the Gentiles [Acts 15:22f]. Acts xv. 22. saying, 'Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain that went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law; unto whom we gave no such commandment. It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you; men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ [Acts 15:24-26].' Paul said unto Barnabas, let us go again unto every city, where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do; and Barnabas determined to take Mark with them [Acts 15:36f];

and Paul chose Silas, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God; and they went through Syria and Cilicia [Act15:40f]; and as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem; and so were the churches confirmed and established in the faith, and increased in number daily [Acts 16:4f]. Acts xvi. 4. The brethren

exhorted the disciples to receive Apollos [Acts 18:27]. Acts xviii. 27. And Paul sent unto the Ephesians, and called the elders of the church, and exhorted them [Acts 20:17ff]. Acts xx. 17. Paul commends 'Phebe, a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea,' and bid them receive her in the Lord, and assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of [Rom 16:1]. Rom. xvi. Now if Timothy come, so that ye receive him without fear, let no man despise him, but conduct him forth in peace, that he might come unto me, for I look for him with the brethren [1 Cor 16:10f].

Paul said to the Corinthians, 'Did I make a gain of you by any whom I sent unto you?' 2 Cor. xii. 17. 'Or did Titus make a gain of you? [2 Cor 12:17f] Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister of the Lord, shall make known unto you all things; whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that you might know our affairs, and comfort your hearts [Eph 6:21f, Col 4:7f].' Eph. vi. 21, 22. Paul sent to the Colossians, Onesimus with Tychicus, to make known all things unto them that were done with him [Col 4:9].

Col. iv. 9. And when they had read his epistle, they were to cause it to be read at Laodicea [Col 4:16]; and Paul charged the Thessalonians by the Lord, that they did read his epistle amongst all the holy brethren [1 Th 5:27]. 1 Thess. v. 27. And Paul saith, 'Take Mark, bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry; and Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus [2 Tim 4:11f].' 2 Tim. iv. 11, 12. Paul said to Titus, chap. iii. 12. 'When I shall send Artemas or Tychicus unto thee, be thou diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis, and bring Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos, on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them [Tit 3:12f].'

Paul saith to Philemon, 'Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say [Phm 1:21].' Philemon 21, 22. John saith, 2 Epist. 'Look to yourselves, that we lose not these things that we have wrote, but that we may receive a full reward [2 Jn 1:8]. I wrote unto the churches, but Diotrephas, who loveth to have the pre-eminence amongst them, received us not. Wherefore if I come I will remember his deeds which he doth, prating against us with malicious words [3 Jn 9:f], 2. and 3. epistle of John.

And in Jude, such as go in Balaam, Cain and Corah's way, 'wandering stars, raging waves of the sea, wells without water, clouds without rain, trees without fruit, twice dead and plucked up by the roots, their mouths speak great swelling words, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. [Jude 1:11-13/2 Pet 2:17f] These are they that separate themselves, such as have not the spirit. But, beloved, build up yourselves in the most holy faith, praying in the holy ghost; and keep yourselves in the love of God [Jude 1:19-21].'

Jude. 'Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you [1 Cor 11:2]; and the rest will I set in order when I come. [1 Cor 11:34]' 1 Cor. ii. 11.34. Paul in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, chap. iii. iv. 'And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do, and will do the things which we command you [2 Th 3:4]. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us [2 Th 3:6].'

'Now we exhort you, brethren, to warn them that are unruly, and comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak, and be patient towards all men [1 Th 5:14], for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another [1 Th 4:9]; and that ye study to be quiet [1 Th 4:11], and walk honestly to them that are without; and that ye may have lack of nothing [1 Th 4:12].' 1 Thess. v. 14. And in 2 Thess. ii. 15. 'Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or our epistle [2 Th 2:15].'

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