

The Praise of Unity

by Ignatius of Antioch

The sermon emphasizes the importance of unity in the Church, submission to authority, and the consequences of disobedience.

Scripture: Luke 10:16, John 5:23, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Hebrews 13:17, James 4:6

Topics: "Church Unity", "Submission To Authority"

Description

Ignatius of Antioch emphasizes the importance of unity and submission within the Church hierarchy, comparing the relationship between the bishop, the Church, Jesus, and God to ensure harmony and agreement in all things. He warns against separating oneself from the Church and its leadership, highlighting the power of collective prayer and obedience to Christ through submission to appointed leaders. Ignatius stresses that disobedience to the Church authorities is disobedience to Christ and ultimately leads to self-confidence, quarrelsomeness, and pride, which are contrary to God's grace and humility.

Transcript

For if I, in this brief space of time, have enjoyed such fellowship with your bishop-I mean not of a mere human, but of a spiritual nature-how much more do I reckon you happy, who so depend on him as the Church does on the Lord Jesus, and the Lord does on God and His Father, that so all things may agree in unity! Let no man deceive himself: if any one be not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God. For if the prayer of one or two possesses such power that Christ stands in the midst of them, how much more will the prayer of the bishop and of the whole Church, ascending up in harmony to God, prevail for the granting of all their petitions in Christ!

He, therefore, that separates himself from such, and does not meet in the society where sacrifices are offered, and with "the Church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven," is a wolf in sheep's clothing, while he presents a mild outward appearance. Do ye, beloved, be careful to be subject to the bishop, and the presbyters and the deacons.

For he that is subject to these is obedient to Christ, who has appointed them; but he that is disobedient to these is disobedient to Christ Jesus. And "he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." For he that yields not obedience to his superiors is self-confident, quarrelsome, and proud.

But" God," says [the Scripture] "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble ; " and, "The proud have greatly transgressed." The Lord also says to the priests, "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that heareth Me, heareth the Father that sent Me. He that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ignatius-of-antioch/the-praise-of-unity/>

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