

True Biblical Unity in the Church

by Keith Malcomson

True biblical unity in the church is based on the Blood of Jesus Christ, the unity of the Spirit, and the unity of the Word of God.

Scripture: John 5:7, John 17:21, Acts 2:42, Ephesians 4:3, Jude 1:3

Topics: "Church Unity", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Keith Malcomson preaches on the essential elements of unity in the church as revealed in I John 5:7-8. He emphasizes that unity is achieved through the Blood of Jesus Christ, which reconciles us to God and unifies believers who trust in the forgiveness and redemption found in the Blood alone. Malcomson also highlights the unity of the Spirit, stressing that true unity is created by the Holy Spirit and preserved through attributes like lowliness, meekness, and love. Additionally, he discusses the importance of unity through the Word of God, stating that any unity that neglects the truth of the written Word is not genuine unity.

Transcript

I John 5:7-8, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."

Just as the Father, the Son (the Word) and the Holy Ghost bear witness together in Heaven so also upon the earth three agree in the same beautiful unified manner: the Spirit, the water (the Word) and the Blood. This reveals that these are the three essential unifying elements in the church on the earth that agree together in the cause of unity in the church.

1. Unity through the Blood

Only through the Blood of Jesus Christ are we reconciled to God and are thereby unified together as His people. There is no peace, unity or agreement amongst men unless they have come through the blood-sprinkled way of redemption. Only those who through repentance and faith have lost all hope in religion, man and self can be unified. Only those who turn to and trust wholly in the Blood alone for their forgiveness, justification, redemption and sanctification can be made one. Only by blood can we enter into the covenant of grace and be made one in that covenant. Only the blood can deal with all enmity in our hearts and unite us with a holy God. So also only a blood-bought and blood-washed people can be united.

The greatest divide in human history was between Jew and Gentile yet through the Blood of the Cross, Jew and Gentile were forged into one new man called the Body of Christ. We are not united by being nice to each other. We are not united by avoiding disagreements. We are only united because the Blood has dealt with our sin.

One of the most precious verses in the Bible about unity is Psalm 133:1, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Notice that it says "brethren." Only spiritual brothers are united spiritually and only unity amongst brethren is blessed of God. Any unity between those birthed of God and those who are strangers to the new-birth is not a unity blessed of God. In the New Testament the term "brethren" means those birthed from the same womb. Christ in His ministry rejected all religion, good works, customs and religious tradition but pointed to the new birth, the born-again experience, a supernatural birth from above as the only means to bring sinners into the same family making them brothers. Only brethren are called to unity.

Even in the early Church spiritual movements which did not believe that the Blood was necessary for unity began to arise and infiltrate. In Jude 1:11 we are told, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain..." This means to traverse or travel in the roadway or pathway that Cain walked in. What exactly was that the way of Cain? This "way" is what I call 'the ecumenical strategy.' We know very well that Cain rejected Blood-sacrifice and replaced it with good works and the labours of his own hands. Look at this bloodless unity in Genesis 4:8, i) "And Cain talked with Abel his brother..." The false ecumenical unity of our day emphasises dialogue between those who follow the way of the blood and those who follow the way of human works. Notice that Cain took the initiative in this talk. Although he gave the impression of outward unity his heart was angry because of the acceptance of Abel by blood and he hated his brother. The contemporary emphasis on ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue is the way of Cain. ii) "...and it came to pass, when they were in the field..." Notice that dialogue led to being in the field together. The field is a place of work and labour. In our day dialogue leads to enemies working together in so-called unity. You cannot evangelise, worship or pray with those who are not clear on blood-atonement. iii) It was while they were in the field together that "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." Ecumenical bloodless unity leads to this: the death of those who emphasise the Blood. The end result of the contemporary ecumenical dialogue and unity will be the destruction of true biblical Christianity. We must realise that below the veneer of the loving, smiling, unifying, ecumenical compromise is hatred and murder. There is no love for our faith in the blood amongst the works-based ecumenism and Catholicism of our day.

2. Unity of the Spirit

Ephesians 4:3-4, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;" Here we see that true unity is a unity of the Spirit. Notice it is the Holy Spirit that is mentioned here not some mystical vague religious spirit of unity. This is a true unity created by the Holy Spirit. Our responsibility is defined as "endeavouring to keep" it. We are to make every effort and be quick and earnest to give diligent study in keeping, guarding and watching over this unity. It is vital to note that we are not to create the unity. It is not a unity created through dialogue. We merely recognise a unity that is already present and we guard it. Organisational unity as promoted in our day is not the unity of the Spirit. Nowhere are we told to bring about organisational unity between the churches. Outward structural unity is not true unity. In our day a unity is striven for at the expense of the holiness of the Spirit. It is an unholy unity. It is also at the expense of the truth of the Spirit who is active in leading all men into the truth not into a unity that sacrifices truth. This is counterfeit unity.

Paul's statement is not a call to create unity or initiate unity; the unity is already there. The key to unity in the body of Christ is the unity of the Spirit. The word "unity" means oneness. All who have come by way of the Blood are indwelt by the Spirit when born-again (Rom.8:9). This is the basis of our unity. It is not a man-made unity. Neither is it an outward organisational unity. It is a spiritual unity created internally in the believer by the Holy Spirit. As a result there is an outward unity amongst true born-again believers. In verse 1 we read of the call to unity in the church: "...walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called..." We are to walk appropriately in a certain set manner. This is our responsibility in keeping this Spirit-created unity. In verses 2 and 3 we are given five key attributes in preserving unity: lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, love and peace. These are attributes of the fruit of the Spirit. This is how the Spirit works in the heart of true believers to keep the unity. It is this heart attitude towards other genuine believers that keeps the unity of the Spirit. Of course there are difficulties and problems with unity amongst genuine Christians but the answer is not to sacrifice truth or the character of the Spirit in order to create it. It is by this indwelling of the Spirit that unity is created and it is preserved by His character being produced within us.

To understand our unity as believers we must understand the nature of unity. Unity is not only the absence of disagreement; it is the unity of a similar experience, nature and character. The unity between Father, Son and Holy Ghost is the fundamental example and measure of our unity together in the body. John 17:21 "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Christ's prayer for unity was only concerning a certain group called "they". This did not involve all religious persons and establishments in Israel for He had already said in verse 9, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Those who are to be unified are very carefully identified as those who have eternal life, who know Him, to whom He has manifested His name, who are given to Christ out of the world, who have received the Word, believed the Word, kept His Word and who have been sanctified by it. They are also hated by the world and they are not of the world. Let us note that in verse 12 Judas was excluded. So we see that this prayer for unity is very exclusive. Many are left outside this prayer. This is the very nature of the unity of the Spirit. We cannot make unity larger than Christ makes it. True unity created by the Spirit is a unity carefully defined in John 17 as well as in many other scriptures. It is the Holy Spirit Himself who has defined unity through the inspiration of the scriptures.

3. Unity through the Word of God

Any unity that is created through neglecting the truth of the written Word is not true unity. We have just seen that the saving, keeping sanctifying power of the Word of God amongst those who are to be one is very fundamental. This is the mark of those who are one. There is no oneness apart from the Word of God. A unity that sacrifices the written Word, the truth and doctrine is counterfeit. The preaching and teaching ministries of Ephesians 4:11, who bring God's Word to the body of Christ, is for a very vital purpose. In verse 13 we read "Till we all come in the unity of the faith..." Every member of the body of Christ should be progressively moving forward into deeper realms of the unity of the faith.

This term "the faith" is not talking about having faith in God. It is a statement used many times in the New Testament to speak about the body of doctrine or the full spectrum of biblical teaching held in our Bibles (Acts 6:7; 14:22; 16:5; Php.1:27; Col.1:23; I Pet.5:9; I Tim.4:1 etc). That is why Jude wrote, "...that ye should earnestly contend for the faith..." which means to fight for it or to agonise, labour and strive for it against an enemy or anything that endangers it. He also says, "...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." This means that "the faith" was once and for all transmitted or entrusted to

the saints of the early Church and placed in the written scriptures. It is very evident that "the faith" is under attack. There is a satanic attack upon the truth of God in the written Word. False unity will always attack the Word, set it aside or devalue it. The ecumenical unity of our time likes to proclaim that 'truth divides.' In their minds doctrinal truth is dangerous to unity but in fact God's Word contradicts and exposes what they call unity to be a false man-made, organisational, religious structure. It is another tower of Babel. Their unity is a unity contradicted by God's Word.

Keeping the unity of the Spirit is in utter agreement with the unity of the faith. You cannot have one without the other. And the same Holy Spirit who calls us to "the unity of the faith" also calls us to "contend for the faith"--there is no contradiction. Where you get true unity you will get a true contending for the truth in order to preserve it. This is evident in the biblical history of the early church beginning at Pentecost. Acts 2:42, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers..." Please notice that in the early church "doctrine" was placed before fellowship, breaking bread and prayer. To unify in worship, evangelism and prayer at ecumenical events without such gatherings being governed by sound doctrinal preaching and teaching is counterfeit unity. The early church adhered closely to continuing steadfastly in doctrinal purity without compromise or deviation. This led onwards to the wonderful harmony of oneness that was experienced amongst them, v46, "And they, continuing daily with one accord..."

True church unity is of the Spirit, the Word and the Blood. Any organisational church system that neglects this is a harlot church. An outward, organisational, man-created system of religious unity is described and prophesied in the Bible in Revelation chapter 17. This is a specific prophesy which reaches its climatic fulfilment in the last days just before Jesus comes back for His Blood-washed, Word-sanctified, Spirit-filled church. The Harlot church based out of the seven-hilled city of Rome is presently very busy in proclaiming herself as Mother and Mistress of all churches and in unifying all churches under her own papal headship through religious dialogue. Through her system of ecumenical dialogue she is busy mothering many other little harlot churches who were once grounded on a biblical base. What is very noticeable in the present time is that the Pope, Ecumenical leaders and key Charismatic leaders are all primarily using John 17 and Ephesians 4 as the basis for their pursuit of unity but they use these passages of scripture out of context in a twisted form. This is a vital contemporary issue and one for which we must earnestly contend in this hour in preserving a pure, holy, unified but undefiled bride for Christ.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/keith-malcomson/true-biblical-unity-in-the-church/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net