

Can't We All Just Get Along

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the importance of theology, the study of God's Word, and its practical application in our lives. It discusses the need for unity among believers, the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification, and the call to give ourselves and others more grace. The message highlights the lifelong process of sanctification and the significance of obedience, trust, and entrenching ourselves in God.

Scripture: Proverbs 6:16, Ephesians 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Romans 12:2, James 4:7, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 5:22, 1 Peter 1:15, Philippians 1:6

Topics: "Theology and Practical Application", "Unity and Grace in the Body of Christ"

Description

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Transcript

The message this morning is on theology, can't we all just get along? Well the answer is yes and it's no. It's both. So I'm going to talk about that because what we're doing, we're talking about theology which is the study of God's Word.

This is theology, the study of God on fire. How can we make it applicable practically? How can we apply it to our lives? And that used to frustrate me, I'll just be honest with you. Going to a lot of churches, I was raised in this valley, I was born at the hospital.

So I've been to a lot of churches. And just hearing sometimes people say, ok, we're in Romans chapter 9, we'll be here a few months, then by summer, end of summer we'll be in Romans 10 and there's a potluck afterwards. It's like, oh my Lord, you're talking about the fire, the Spirit, but it sounds like you're sitting on an ice cube.

I mean, theology, correct me if I'm wrong, but this should be the most important topic we can discuss. Not Star Wars, not this, not that, the most, God, God wanting to work through and in His people to fill you with His Spirit. I don't know what else is more important than that.

And to be honest with you, this is the number one problem in the church. It's the most pressing need in the church. Well, I should say maybe number two.

Number one is I believe a lot of people who think they're saved aren't saved. I'll hold that for a different time. But the number, the second thing right up there is people are not filled to capacity with the Holy Spirit.

This missing element in their lives. And what we're talking about, I made the mistake last week of thinking I would get through all seven activities of the Holy Spirit. Like, ok, I can do this.

Five minutes for each, right? Or six minutes for each. Well, we got through number one. And that was the Holy Spirit as a person, not a power.

So it's important to know that because people will say, and I've made mistakes, you know, you say it, it, and it's not a it. The Holy Spirit is a person. Throughout the Bible it's a pronoun, it's a masculine pronoun actually.

It's a person that comes upon a person or that's in a person or comes alongside of a person. Because they are, it's a distinct, they call it, the Godhead is three persons in one Godhead. And it's a good reminder that a person can be grieved.

Have you ever upset anyone? Or is it just me during the sermons? Right? Ok, a person can be grieved and the Holy Spirit in us can be grieved. So if the Holy Spirit, many people, here's what happened in my life. I was grieving the Holy Spirit so much through chasing a career and liking, you know, Mickey's Big Mouth, alcohol, and I don't know if that's still around, but it was just, I was quenching and grieving the Spirit.

So once I had this dramatic, impactful Holy Spirit experience and He said, now you're ready to preach, now you're finally ready to do what I called you to do, I wondered if I was even saved. Even though I knew I was, I gave my heart to the Lord, that terminology might bother some of you, but I repented and I believed at 12 and I was up at a camp, I think Camp Cedar Crest or something, I remember this powerful experience with the Lord, but then I began to quench and grieve His work. But it was such a dramatic experience that I wondered if I had ever been saved.

Because you go from little fire to tons of fire. You go from boring Christianity to I can't get enough of God. It's just a radical change, so let me encourage you in that area.

If you're grieving the Holy Spirit because of materialism, chasing the things of the world, pride, pride says I don't need more of the Holy Spirit, well then that's about as much as you're going to get. Because God falls, His Spirit, His presence falls on an altar, we're on the altar, emptied of ourself. To the degree you want to be emptied is to the degree you will be filled.

I remember it was said, anyone heard of D.L. Moody? You would have never heard of him had he not had an experience with the Holy Spirit. And a man said to him, Mr. Moody, the world has yet to see what God will do through a man fully surrendered to Him. And he said to that man, I aim to be that person.

I think that's a good goal for all of us in this room, all of us hearing this. I hope this isn't prideful, but I've prayed that. I've told God, I want to be that person in this generation.

I want, man, oh Lord, oh, this is going to be a tough one. Just during worship and His Word, it's unexplainable. I just contacted a friend of mine from high school, and I'm trying to stay in contact, my four closest friends in high school are all addicted to alcohol, on Xanax, and suicidal.

And you know what I say, but if it wasn't for the grace of God, there go I. How can that not impact you? Am I going to say, oh, I pulled myself out. I did this. If it wasn't for God's sheer grace.

You have to remove self-confidence, you have to remove holding back on things. You know God's called you to do certain things, but you just hold back. Because if the Holy Spirit wants you to do something, and you hold back from that, it will grieve and quench Him.

There's not a compromise. God will never compromise. God has never told me, you know what, Shane, you're right, you're good points there.

Let's meet in the middle. Never happened yet. It's either He gets me to a point of saying, okay, mercy, mercy, I surrender to you.

Besetting sin, let me encourage you in this area too. Give it to God. Toxic attitudes, bitterness, gossip, complaining, been there, done that, right? It's a struggle.

That will quench the work of the Spirit. So here's what I see. I see people often, sometimes focused on the wrong things.

And then chatty Cathy's, right, oh yeah, and their gossips and slanders and backbiters, and then they're not filled with the Spirit. Right. And the depression sits in, and a lack of enthusiasm, a lack of joy.

Gosh. Remember, I don't know if you've experienced me before, but you can't wait to get to church. It's just amazing.

All week, I'm like, oh, it's only Wednesday, it's only Thursday, man. And it's not Shane Idleman, because that's not me. But it's just, it's Saturday.

I'm like a kid on Saturday. I'm like, can we go to bed yet? You know, because Christmas is the next day. Christmas is the next day.

So that's what God does through that filling of the Spirit. And don't look to me as the example. Look to Christ, because I fall short all the time.

But like D.O. Moody, I want to be that. Why can't we say that? The world has yet to see what God will do through a man or a woman, fully surrender to Him. Why can't we say, Lord, I want to be that person? Because through all the people you love, right, to read, you love Oswald Chambers, you love D.O. Moody, you love A.W. Tozer.

I can point out flaws in all of them after reading their biographies. Something that still convicts me about A.W. Tozer, his wife, after he died, said, I know Tozer loved the Lord, but I don't know if he loved me. Because he spent so much time seeking God, and he neglected his family.

John Wesley and the relationship, and I don't know if it was Wesley, so I want to be careful here, but one of them did not have a good marriage. So you can be those heroes in the faith that we read about 50 years from now. There's no difference.

Elisha was a man just like us, and God used him. So is the Holy Spirit restrained in your life? Right now, right now, today, is the Holy Spirit restrained in your life? Remember, the Spirit yearns for righteousness, the Spirit yearns for purity, for humility, for repentance. The Holy Spirit yearns for those things.

So that was last week. And then we get into the next point is, what is another activity of the Holy Spirit? Now I should say this before I forget, because I thought of it three times, I forgot to make myself a note. We might have occasion where we did last week, where this service goes right into this next service.

It just flows right into the next service. The worship doesn't stop. It just goes into the next service.

And we used to do that, but I stopped because I was hit with the parking problem. I'm like, oh, okay, well let's stop worshiping God and let's just worry about parking. And so while I'm on this topic, I just keep reminded of that.

I knew that day when I made that decision, I actually submitted to many different people's opinions, and again, it might not have been a bad thing, because you want to meet in the middle and things. But now I think we're at a point where we need to just let God move. If he wants to move, people need to leave, they can leave.

Because here's what happens. You hear a message, you're convicted that God's stirring in your heart, you're worshiping, and then, okay, light's on, we've got to hurry, come on, come on, come on, come on, ten minutes. And you kind of, you know, the Holy Spirit says, all right.

And when I've seen the deepest change, it's not in quick worship. I've told you before, I spoke at men's events, I used to do that all the time mainly, and I'd fill in for pastors when they were gone, and there'd be people at the altar for an hour. Hour.

And sometimes people would come up and say, oh, come on, Shane, we've got to pray for them. No, you don't got to pray for them, just leave them alone. God knows what he's doing.

Them at the altar with God is a lot better than me standing next to them. Are you okay, brother? Are you okay? What's wrong with you? What's wrong with me? What do you think's wrong with me? God's breaking my heart. That's what's wrong with me.

And see, that takes time. And you can really cut the wheat from the chaff easily on this one too, because some people don't want to do this. They don't want to be challenged by God.

They have comfortable Christianity. So can't we all just get along? Let's talk about this work of the Holy Spirit. Here's an interesting thing.

This is why you've heard me say it before. If you have a problem with somebody, the Holy Spirit in you and the Holy Spirit in them doesn't have a problem. Have you thought about that? Every time I get upset at somebody, I'm like, you know what, this is not good, because the Holy Spirit's like, yeah, you go get him, Shane.

Yeah, you tell him, you go tell him. The Holy Spirit is a spirit of unity, bringing us together, drawing us together. And it stinks.

Isn't it hard? Because you do not have to get the last word in. You do might have to apologize when you're not even wrong. You might need to pursue peace even though it's not your fault.

I don't like that. My fault, my fault, yep, you come apologize to me, right, to me. But that's what the Holy Spirit says.

You humble yourself and you go. And I will tell you, the most spiritual people I have ever known in my life, I can list a half dozen, are the ones who pursue peace. They would say things like, you know what, I'm so sorry if I offended you.

I didn't mean for that to happen. Can't we work this out? And I hear them say that, I'm like, well, that's humiliating, because they didn't do anything wrong, really. But their heart was so much for unity.

And that's a lot of what my heart is for, is unity. Let's just, these silly, trivial things that people argue over, my goodness. We have to work through that.

So can't we all just get along? The second point, remember the Holy Spirit's not a person, or is a person. Number two, the Holy Spirit unifies believers. Ephesians 4, 1, I think we have it up there, Ephesians 4, 1 through 6. Paul is saying this to the church in Ephesus.

He's saying, I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of your calling. Okay, so if all of you are called as believers, walk worthy of your calling, which you were called. Okay, Paul, what does that mean? Well, here's what it means.

With all lowliness and gentleness. It doesn't say sometimes. He's telling me I have to live my life in a state of humility.

I can't get the last word in and be proud and arrogant and type A personality and a steamroller. Right, because in life, you're either the steamroller or you're the pavement. That's what the world tells you.

Those are your two choices, is it not? That was actually my nickname when I was in corporate America. Here comes the steamroller. I was 70 pounds heavier and, you know, type A personality, not loving the Lord, and you know what that means.

But you go into life gentle and lowly and hard, not thinking more. Can you imagine if we put others first? No, go ahead. You can park there.

I've done this just because I see somebody coming for a spot at Vaughn's Park. I'm like, oh, go ahead, go ahead. And like the flesh doesn't want it, but I know the Holy Spirit.

And then every time it opens up a dialogue later. I see them in the store and, oh, thank you so much. And come in with lowliness of heart, lowliness of mind.

I didn't do this good the other day, though. I'll just open up. I pulled in somewhere and a guy, he was, I could tell he was probably high on meth, crystal meth.

And he came up to the side of my truck. I'm like, hey, man, I don't have any, I don't have anything. And he goes, I don't care.

And he's explicit, right? He goes, I didn't ask you. I want you to get out of your car. I'm like, oh, I just said I don't have any.

What happened here? So I wish I would have went low and gentle. I just looked at him, you know, and as we tirade, he rode off on his bicycle. I'm like, what an opportunity I had.

What an opportunity. I said, hey, man, I'm so, I could have, I could have, but I didn't. I struggle.

It was hard, because in the flesh, you go, okay, you want me to open this door? You really want to go there? I'm like, what is this, come on, come on. But to go in, you would stop so many issues, so many problems, and that's really one of the things we're trying to do on Wednesday night that's coming up this Wednesday, is to go in lowliness and gentleness and hear, to seek to be understood, or seek to hear and to listen, not to always be understood. So anyway, we go with lowliness and gentleness, how are you doing so far? Well, it doesn't get better.

With long-suffering, suffer long, long-suffering, well, I just told them, sorry, we just worked on it, I'm not going to keep going through this. Yes, you are if you're long-suffering. Bearing with one another in love, isn't that an interesting word? I'm to bear with you, you're to bear with others.

We bear with one another in love. Where does that word come from? Grin and bear it, right? I have to bear it. So you see this picture of a Christian who, I'm bearing together with others in love, endeavoring, that's an interesting word, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

So endeavoring is a constant working at it. Because we're doing great Sunday, come Monday, we've got to keep endeavoring to do it. There is one body, one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all.

So that's just a quick way of saying it's all one. We're all united, we are one. And because I'm on the Holy Spirit, it's not in my notes, but I think I'll take an opportunity to tell you about this when it says one baptism.

You'll hear the word often in Pentecostal churches, you need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And I've said that before, and what a person's trying to say is you need to be overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit. But biblically speaking, there is one baptism.

When a person becomes a believer, they are baptized into the body of Christ. There's one baptism into the body of Christ. But there's subsequent fillings of the Holy Spirit.

So you can be emptied and then filled with the Spirit. And Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit began to speak. And Paul being filled with the Holy Spirit.

And Jesus coming out of the wilderness being filled with the Spirit. So the correct terminology would be you need to be filled with the Spirit. You need to have that overpowering, empowering work of the Spirit in your life.

But I don't go against those who use the word baptism of the Holy Spirit because I know what they're saying. And I like what R.A. Torrey said. He said, I'd rather have the power of the Spirit and not quite get the term right than have the term right and miss the power.

Oh, I could camp out there for a minute. Because so many people that want to be so theologically correct, and I love correct theology. But they want to have just every nuance correct.

Every Greek participle. Every Hebrew little jot. They lack the power.

They lack the power. Or you have somebody on fire for God who's learning the Bible and they might mispronounce a word like I do. But they have the power.

They have the power of the Spirit. So I like both, right? You know, just the wonderful theology and the power of the Spirit, that's the whole point of the title, or actually the series, Theology on Fire. So let's learn from this.

Unity recognizes that we are all one in Christ. So black, white, red, yellow, green, whatever it is, female, male, we're all, even though there's different roles, we are all one in Christ. So think about this.

How do you treat your family? Why should a believer be any different? If we gossip about our family, I don't. I don't know if you do. I mean, well, maybe somebody needs a swift rebuke on this one.

If you are around others and you are putting down your spouse, you are absolutely in the wrong. You need to repent and apologize this morning. That is just uncalled for, to see people, oh, you know, my old ball and chain, she won't let me do anything, or you know that guy, he won't, and they're just constantly pulling each other down.

That's terrible. We wouldn't do that, hopefully to family, we shouldn't do that with believers either. Now, here's the biggie on this point.

Here's why this is so hard. Unity does not come naturally. It comes supernaturally.

So unity is not just going to, as I walk around town, going to come naturally. It's going to come supernaturally, but as I submit to the work of the Holy Spirit, and as I say, God, that position, that attitude wasn't right. Can you help me? I'm submitting to that, and as you're submitting, you're being filled with the Spirit.

So as you're submitting to the work of the Spirit, it comes supernaturally. Attitudes have to be put aside, amen? Egos have to be crushed, and agendas have to be flexible. That's how you strive for unity, because we want the opposite of all these, right? Attitudes have to be put in place, I'm always right.

Egos have to be crushed, my way or the highway. And agendas have to be flexible. Isn't that sometimes why we get perturbed? Right? Well, that's not on my agenda.

That's not what I had planned today. The Holy Spirit will wreck all of your plans. He'll have you give a flat tire just to minister to the tow truck driver.

That's how, he does not care about your plans. So just get that out of your mind right now, that your plans, your agenda will be wrecked. But it's a good thing when you say, well Lord, whatever you want to do with me.

And then you can have peace as you're waiting for the tire guy to show up. And I would encourage most of you to learn how to change it on your own. But that's a whole other thing.

It hurts to truly love and forgive and to strive for unity. It hurts, doesn't it? It hurts our pride. When you say I was wrong, that doesn't even sound good, does it? We should have handled that better.

It's humiliating, but you will be filled with the Spirit. And also the third thing we can glean from this is unity walks differently. Your walk will be differently.

It says walk worthy. What is worthy? Walk like you're supposed to. Walk worthy of the Gospel.

Walk worthy of what Christ has done in your life. Strive for unity rather than fuel division. What do you do? Do you strive for unity rather than fuel division? With all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

So here we see clearly in the text, with all long-suffering, I'm to be bearing with one another, I'm supposed to love unconditionally, and all these things. Now, God's Word throws a little twist into that. Here's the twist.

There are degrees of separation that should take place in the church. Do you know that? But let me just, before I get to that, remind you that unity of the Spirit is not compromise. A.W. Tozer said, God blesses the peacemaker, but he abhors the religious negotiator.

See, people could say, Shane, you preach on unity all day. Why don't you go be united with the church down the street? We just preached on it. You a hypocrite? No, you're wrong unity.

Because true unity is unity of the Spirit, unity of truth, unity of doctrine, unity of what Christ, if they say, if somebody says Christ is not who he is, I can't be united with them. I can buy them a burrito and witness to them. Right, healthy burrito.

But there's something that happens there. So degrees of separation. There's a good article, I think it's in your bulletin, or the thing we passed out, we don't do bulletins anymore.

Degrees of separation by David Murray. He said, one of the most difficult challenges to address in the Christian life is this. This is one of the most difficult challenges you will face.

Is our relationship with other Christians. It's like walking on a tightrope with heavy weights on each end of the pole. On one side is the biblical command to unite with professing Christians, while on the other side is the call to separate at times from professing Christians.

Did you know that? I don't know if many of you sometimes, if you haven't read a lot of the Bible texts and the New Testament especially, that we're supposed to, like he's right, we have this pole. I need to be united with believers. I need to humble myself.

I need to not try to get the last word in. But then on the other hand here, I'm supposed to divide and separate from those who name the name of Christ. But let me just tell you this.

I put key here, I wanna highlight it. We must focus on defaulting to unity, I believe. If you look at the New Testament, the default mechanism should be on humility or unity.

So in other words, okay, I'm going to default on humility because what's the other opposite side of that? If I'm going to default on always defending, always being arrogant, always being prideful, always being right, always separating, I'll develop a hard heart. So my goal needs to be unity. My goal needs to be unity.

But if Scripture commands, I will separate. Now this could have turned into a whole nother sermon. But here's what you have to, on this topic.

You're either living in Mayberry land or Pharisee land. You old-timers remember Mayberry land? Right, oh golly gee, gosh. You know, just love everybody.

And oh, who cares what they're doing? Who cares if they're sinning? Can't we just love? You know, just love everybody. Who cares about all that stuff? But then Pharisee land, oh, I don't like this side either. I just read this this week and just put down my Bible and said, oh God, help these people.

It was the Pharisees, they were watching Jesus to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. So they might have something to accuse him. I just cannot even believe that.

Talk about fault-finding, arrogant people. So on this issue of dividing or separating, you have to be careful. Don't be, you can't be on either side.

It's not just, oh golly gee, just let everything go. And it can't be Pharisee land. This is what, this would be the sin sniffers.

Right, you know the sin sniffers, everybody that walks in. Hey, how's it going? Good, you guys married? Oh, well. Why'd you ask? Why'd you ask? Well, where were you last night? How many did you have? Right? They're just looking for anything.

They're fault-finding. Because you can elevate yourself when you start to find faults in others. It kind of makes you look a little better.

And there's both attitudes, isn't it? I've gravitated between both. This side, you know, just let it go. Just love and just let it go.

And then this side, where, you know, it's just pounding and pounding with the word of God. We need to look at Jesus's example. So here's a few things he talked about.

I borrowed from the article. Number one, degrees of separation. Well, maybe I should tell you this up front, because this should have been a whole other side of the sermon.

But Matthew 18 tells us to separate. That's one area. If somebody's in sin, and we go to them and say, listen, you're in blatant sin.

Let's just make something up. Business practice. Money laundering.

You know, the way, oh, this is just so evident. And we go to them, and I don't care. And then you bring back to maybe somebody from the church.

And the evidence, and you talk to both sides, and you see this person, you're talking to them, and they're just unrepentant. You know what, well, you guys don't know how hard it is to make a living. You don't know.

And they're just, whoa, rebellious, unrepentant. And you say, listen, if you don't repent and turn from this, I'm gonna have to take it to others. Now, I personally don't believe when it says take it to the church, you put somebody's picture on the power screen, that 90% of you don't even know.

I think you go to those within their sphere of influence. If it's in leadership, then the whole church needs to know. If it's smaller sphere, smaller sphere, smaller sphere.

Again, this is personal preference. I've seen them do that in churches, and it hurts a lot of people if it's not called for. So you would go to the sphere of influence, and the friends, you say, listen, this guy's in blatant

sin, we need to disfellowship.

We need to love them, but we can't, because when you start to fellowship with them, you're basically condoning what they're doing. Oh, it's no big deal, let's just still get lunch. Yeah, no, don't worry about it.

We're still fellowshiping. So the Bible calls us to come out from that relationship, to love them as a brother, but to cast them out like a tax collector, and you let them experience their disobedient attitude. Because if you're just, oh, it's no big deal, you're not helping them.

Now, you have to be careful and cautious. There's a lot of different things on this side of it, but that's one area. If somebody's in unrepentant sin, they're not repenting, they're full of excuses, I can't fellowship with you.

There's actually been times when I've had to say, listen, if you're not gonna come in that type of situation, if you're gonna keep coming to church, and we can't allow you to just come and sit in church as if no big deal. You need to go back to your wife. I can't, oh, there's such and such again, good to see ya.

I mean, what is that? So you have to draw a hard line in those areas. Another area, I forgot to actually reference the scripture, is when Paul said, when those who name the name of Christ, if you've got, let me use a young adult example, because I know a few right now that are struggling in this area. They've got, they're a Christian, they're on fire for God, and their friend, professing Christian, go to church with them, but then Sunday night wants to grab a six pack and hit the nearest, you know what, club, let's go to LA, let's hook up, let's not live right, let me just leave it there for the rated G version.

And you're like, well, wait a minute, we just went to church, and you're professing Christ, and what's going on here? Paul says, you need to separate from that person. And Paul said, I'm not talking about unbelievers, if you had to do that, you'd have to go out of this world, because that's characteristic of an unbeliever. But somebody who names the name of Christ, who lifts up holy hands, who worships, and then goes and does that, hey, listen, I have to separate from you.

That happened to me in 1999. I'll never forget, we were coming home from, I think it was Laughlin, or Havasu, one of those places with the Corona, you know, Igloo, and jet skis, and I'm driving home, I'm almost crying, going, I've been called God, and I can't live this dual life, I can't do this anymore, and I finally told the person, he got really upset, still to this day, when I see him, still to this day. But that separation had to take place, because often, you're not strong enough to pull them back, they will pull you down, right? You remember the example I gave, is it easier for me to pull somebody up to me, right here, or is it gonna be easier for them to pull them down? So those are two areas where you do separate, and it's a biblical command to separate.

And I would say, I love you enough to separate, because here's what happens, the person gets mad, the guy told me, oh, you're Superman, you're Superman Christian now, huh? I just need God. But then let that conviction stick in. Let that conviction, you planted the seed, that's all you need to do.

So that's when we are to separate. If you have a friend that says they're a Christian, and they continue in sin, which is clearly sin, but I need to be their friend, I need to be there for them, well first, you need to say, I can't allow this anymore. I'm here if you need me, I'm here when you're ready to repent and really talk, and not make excuses, but for this time, I can't be there with you.

We've made some hard calls in our family over the years, not close family, because close family's here right now, so careful here, but people I know that are kind of close family, you know, they say, listen, we can't continue in this, I can't, we can't continue going down this road. We love you enough to tell you the truth, and boy, they will get mad, but there might come a time when they will call you. And God uses that, because see, if you're not withdrawing, you're encouraging.

If I'm not withdrawing from a person who's sinning, I'm maybe encouraging in them. Now, there are exceptions, of course, say you're working with somebody who's, you're helping them get through a certain time of life, and you need to be there for them, they're bouncing ideas off of you, they're wanting to know God's will, you know, that's different, you've gotta use wisdom. That's why I said the default mechanism must be unity, not the Pharisee, because if it's a Pharisee, ah, I'm always gonna get him.

If it's unity, okay, I'm gonna default into unity, personally, I'd rather err on the side of unity than the Pharisee side, wouldn't you? I mean, if we're gonna default here, I'm not talking about allowing sin, but see, that's another thing in the church. There's so many that just, they just allow people to come that they know are in sin, and I've talked to pastors about that, I go, do you know that they're, he goes, yeah, but we just pray the Holy Spirit convicts them like, no, that's also your job. That's not just the Holy Spirit's gonna holy, because if you're allowing, see, I know, let me see, some of you over there don't think it's, if I know what's going on, I know how good to see you today, good to see you again, make sure to hit the Tithe box on your way out, right, and you're every Sunday, hi, good to see you, hi, see, you're allowing that to continue by your silence.

Your silence often speaks volumes. Now, we don't go out and just run to do confrontation, but we err on the side of unity, but from time to time, it will happen. Okay, here's areas we need to work on in regard to spiritual unity.

First, there's spiritual unity. Okay, we are united. That's why we commit different churches, different religions can't all worship together, right? These big ecumenical movements.

I've had people contact me, hey, we've got a Buddhist coming, we've got Hindu coming, can you come and represent the Christian faith and we all just sit down and see how we can come together? I'll get lunch and I can tell you about Christ, but I can't just put my name on something and come together as if, but see, that's not unity. Actually, God would frown upon that, because you're minimizing the truth as if it can be compromised. So spiritual unity is unity of truth, unity of the Holy Spirit.

But then second becomes association. Association and endorsement. Okay, so even though I don't, there's people that would come in I couldn't worship with, can I associate with them? As far as get lunch with them? See, that's a different realm, isn't it? Just to tell you, just to let you know that there's a new bishop down the street at that church.

We've texted before, he wants to get lunch. I would love to, I'm going to do that. I don't care what anybody says, I'm not saying arrogantly, because I'm not gonna say, oh, let's all come together.

I'm gonna use it as an opportunity to say, Joseph Smith and Jesus, they say different things. How do you choose the right one? The Bible and the Book of Mormon, they're off on many points. You ever wanna talk about it and see, well, what do you mean? Well, I'm glad you asked.

So to me, that's an opportunity. But the Pharisee side won't see that. They see me at Sharky's or wherever with them, they're, oh, hmm, hmm, he's compromising.

No, I'm bringing the gospel. But see, association, but you do have to be careful, because what are you endorsing? Would I go to that place or a different place and preach? But you can't mention these things, just preach as if we're all one. Well, then that would be endorsing something that's not.

And let me just give you a nugget of advice on this. I've studied a lot on this topic, as far as listening to different speakers and different pastors, many of them well-known that you would know. You need to allow a lot of grace, because we don't know what God is doing.

If it's not a cut-and-dry area, God might be working in somebody's heart, and might be making a difference. Perfect example, John MacArthur was asked to speak at the large Mormon tabernacle. He said, mm-mm, Ravi Zacharias, wonderful apologist, was asked the same thing.

He said, absolutely, let me preach the real Christ. Caught a lot of flack. John had great, good points, so did Ravi.

I mean, yeah, that's true, but because John MacArthur was worried about what's gonna be an endorsement. People went, oh, well, it is one. How many people would we cause to go the wrong direction? Ravi's like, how many people can I reach with the right Christ? So, I'm like, well, you guys gotta answer to God, you know? And people ask, well, what would you do, Shane? I'm like, I can't answer you, because there's so many variables.

Are there any restraints? Can I tell you what we believe, why we believe in the cross, that Jesus is the only way, the only truth, the life, the inerrancy of Scripture without any supplemental books? Can I talk about that? Well, sure, go ahead. Well, ooh. I mean, so again, erring on the side of grace, because the way I see something, might not be the way you see something.

Correct? Let me just throw out another example. Just hoping this stuff helps. There was a big, and they come up every year, there's another one coming up, I've already been asked to do it.

I don't know. But there's a, where a lot of churches come together in East Lancaster at a park. And different churches, they speak, and it's a unity type event.

But because we don't believe and teach women pastors. If there's women pastors there on the platform, and I'm sharing that platform, and endorse, then am I endorsing that? You know, and like, oh yes, no, we're kind of, we're on the same page. And it's not an essential, but it's an important issue that we're hoping to talk about Wednesday.

Because a lot of the black church, they believe in women pastors, where we don't, what's the difference? Just to give you a nutshell explanation, if you're not gonna be here on Wednesday, is the word episcopal, bishop, and the word poman, which is pastor in Greek, both of them are masculine nouns, and we see the man leading the family, the leading the church. Not superior, not male domination, not male chauvinism. We see that God created us differently to complement each other.

So that's what, so we don't see, can I glean from Beth Moore, Anne Graham Lotz, Kay Arthur, can I learn from them? Can I listen to the woman pastor who has a wonderful testimony? Absolutely, I can learn, that's incredible, I was touched. But I can't come underneath your spiritual authority, because the Bible

would say that's out of order on how God designed it. If the Bible said, here's the qualifications for a woman pastor, I'd be the first to embrace it.

But not only do you have no qualifications, you see that God, how he created. Now, this area cracks me up. I probably won't get too deep Wednesday, because I don't want to upset people.

But what in the world is this thing about a position and a title? We shouldn't be craving and desiring that. There's something wrong right there. I believe in Genesis somewhere I read that your desire will be for your husband, and you will want to rule over, you will want to lord over.

But the man's challenge is going to be being a coward and lazy. So see how it's flipped? Am I getting too deep here? But see, that's what men struggle with, don't we? Men struggle, men struggle with being the spiritual leader. Oh, leading the Bible study, leading devotion to the kids.

But the woman says, listen, it's lacking in our home, then I have to pick up the ball, and now I'm leading. And God says, no, that's not creation. That's why this topic's interesting, because it's not about male domination.

Serve everywhere, do everything you've called it to be. If you're a woman, evangelize. Spread the message, minister.

But when it comes underneath spiritual authority, spiritual, you know, I use that word, authority in our culture. No, let me use a soft, gentle one. Servant leadership.

Okay, for example, there's a loud noise out back. Morgan, go check. Why? Why? No, it'd be like, ch-ch-ch.

What was that? Okay, if you guys don't know what I'm talking about, that's okay. But you know, because creation, right? Creation. Because I'm like, what is that noise? Here's a baseball bat.

See, it's how he created. Who's gonna say, oh, I'm better than? That's just how you create it. To die for, to go before.

That's why strong proponents, and there's people, I don't think women should be on the front lines of battle. Not because men are better, because they need to go forward and die for the spouse. Die for the women.

God created them. Weaker vessel doesn't mean weaker in the sense of, it's actually more precious. That word in the Greek is more precious.

You've got this wonderful, precious gift. Not weaker, precious gift, but in some sense, they're weaker. Strength, right? Who can bench press more, me or Morgan, right? But then they're stronger.

They're stronger in other areas. Are they not? They are strong. What man is gonna say, well, look, any good man has a great wife, because they're strong.

They are enduring. They're fortified. They can encourage.

They can build up. So God takes, here's my different designs, and they're going to complement each other. That's the whole point.

So that's why I have to keep my mouth quiet on this topic, because I don't think people should be striving for this position. Why should be this pattern? Well, then you've already missed it. You've already missed it.

If you have to go for a title, your heart's not right. And I would be called Shane if I could. Most of the time, just call me Shane.

Oh, but that doesn't sound, oh, I don't care. That's who I am. God just, who thinks is a better position? No, it's that God called me.

Shane, you're gonna go pastor, boom. This person, you're gonna be a witness in Northrop, boom. This person, you're gonna be a mom.

You're gonna raise your family. You're gonna do your job effectively, boom. God calls, God puts, God gives.

Who's gonna say I'm elevated, my position is best? That's not true, biblically speaking. God actually uses the foolish things to confound the wise, to confuse the wise. So my whole point when saying that is association, endorsement.

These are things I have to pray through. And also, I go to the elders and say, what do you guys think? If they all say, I don't think it's a good idea, then I submit to that decision because in the multitude of counsel, there's safety. I'm not gonna go against that.

I'm careful. And does it offend people on the other side? Yes, it does. It offends them.

But if I have conviction in my heart, they should respect that and understand that. But then there's friendship. So if I can't be part of a certain event, can I have friendship? Yes, I'm friends with these people.

We'll go to lunch, we do things. There's a praying for. There's a camaraderie there.

In the pastor I'm talking with Wednesday, I don't know exactly their doctrinal statement as far as could I associate with. I haven't studied a lot on that because we're friends. So we have a wonderful conversation, we are friends.

But at that level. So see how there's different levels of unity that where we come together? And then of course the area of separation I just talked about. Also remember this, unity is an aspect of sanctification.

Are you kidding me? I'm on page two and there's four pages. Holy smokes. I know I'm not looking at the clock.

And this service will probably run into the next so I'm just telling you up front. I'm just gonna, I'll get to it next week. But let me do some important things I think God put on my heart.

Unity is an aspect of sanctification. Do you want to grow spiritually? Immature believers who sow discord will not grow. If you are not a person focused on unity, you will not grow spiritually.

Actually God hates that. Shane, come on, don't just turn to Proverbs. These things the Lord hates.

I hate hands that shed innocent blood. I hate feet that are swift to running to evil. I hate a heart that devises wicked plans.

I hate someone who sows discord among the brethren. When a gossip sows discord, it needs to be confronted. And we do confront gossip.

When it's common, when it's clear, when it happens often we will go, hey, this needs to stop. It needs to stop or this isn't a church for you because we're focused on unity. We don't care who did this.

Right? We have to be careful in this area. Tribalism prevents growth as well. You know, our tribe, our church, our denomination, it's the only right way and we're divided with others.

Disobedience prevents growth and unity. Disobedience prevents growth and unity. If you don't want your iron sharpened, you will not grow.

You know, iron sharpens iron, right? Take two swords, you see the sparks flying everywhere. That hurts. And if you don't want your iron sharpened, you're not going to grow.

So the third point that I probably won't get on this morning obviously is the sanctity, I'm sorry, the role of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify the believer. The role of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify the believer. I'm gonna close with this point.

What does that mean? It's the Holy Spirit's role to change you. Praise God. Oh, thank God.

But guess what? You have a part to play. You have a part to play in that. It's a lifelong process.

Here's what I believe that God had me write down this week. Please give yourself and others more grace. This point brought me to tears literally this week.

Please, please, give yourself, give yourself and others more grace. I remember at John MacArthur, they were interviewing him on a Q&A panel three, four years ago. He said the biggest thing he regrets in his ministry is that he didn't show others more grace early on.

I said, Lord, I want to remember that. Show yourself more grace and others. We err on the side, grace is love.

You're not out finding, see if fault comes and sin comes to me, then I have a responsibility to deal with it. But I'm not going to look for it, I'm gonna err on the side of showing you grace and you vice versa and show yourself grace because there's book titles out there. A New You by Monday.

Like that's a, a new spouse by Tuesday. Here's the one, my favorite, I even have it, I haven't read it yet. A New Kid by Friday.

Kevin Lehman, somebody gave it to me. The judgmental people are going, don't you know he's a psychologist? Don't err on the Pharisee side, right? Yes, I know, and actually, let me say something. Psychology can be great if they're grounded in Scripture.

Psychology is the study of how the mind works. If a person is a Christian counselor who brings in the word of God to confirm, because psychology teaches cognitive behavioral patterns. What you think you become, oh, guess what? I have something for that.

It's, it's, but we, but, I'm sorry, it's gonna be, I've had people go off on James Dobson. Oh, he's a psychologist. Well, do you know how much good he's doing? Do you know how much, and he brings in

Scripture? So here's where I was with, these things sometimes aren't realistic.

You won't have a new kid by Friday. Or a new spouse by Wednesday, but you can make changes to promote that. People sing that the resurrected king is resurrecting me.

There's victory in Jesus, victory has a name. But then people say, but Shane, where is the victory? Where's the success, where's the overcoming life? I'm not experiencing what I'm singing. Let me remind you, give yourself grace.

Life is a battle. You are contending, you are persevering, you are waging warfare. Give yourself grace.

Don't keep beating yourself up all the time. Show yourself grace. So this purifying work of the Holy Spirit that apparently we're talking about next week is, sanctification.

Sanctification, the purifying work of the Holy Spirit is called sanctification. And people tell me, but Shane, I'm not being purified. I'm not growing as a Christian.

Do you ever say that? People tell me that often. But Shane, I'm not growing. I'm not being changed by the Holy Spirit.

Then I have a question for you. Are you obeying? Are you obeying? Are you resting in God? Are you trusting in God? Are you waiting on God? Now I did something interesting this week. I looked into this word waiting.

And it actually means to become entrenched in. Like you build a trench, in warfare, they would entrench themselves, to become entrenched. Because we think, wait, I'm just waiting for God.

No, are you entrenched in God? Is he your fortress? Is he your high tower? Have you given everything and entrenched, engulfed everything and have him engulf you? It's an entrenching. I'm fighting this warfare. I'm seeking God with all my heart.

It's not just waiting as if you're waiting on your porch for the mailman. It's a praying and a seeking God.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/cDVsZnyKpu4.mp4>

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