

That They May Be One

by Stephen Kaung

The burden of our Lord Jesus is that His people may be one, based on the inness of God's people, and this can be manifested by abiding in Christ and having a correct relationship with the world.

Duration: 59:12

Scripture: John 12:24, John 13:34-35, John 14:16-17, John 15:10-11, John 17:11, John 17:21-23

Topics: "Unity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of unity among believers as a testimony to the world that God has sent Christ into the world. The speaker highlights that true unity is not achieved through outward compromise or negotiation, but through a genuine oneness that reflects the unity between God the Father and Jesus. The world recognizes the divisions among God's people and is not deceived by superficial unity. The sermon also touches on the concept of the fatherhood of God, which is only realized by those who believe in Jesus, and the authority given to believers to receive eternal life through Him.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to John chapter 17. John chapter 17, verse 11. This is the prayer of our Lord to His Father.

John 17, verse 11. And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world. And I come to Thee, Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given me, that they may be one as we.

Verse 21. That they may be all 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. And the glory which Thou hast given me, I have given them. That they may be one as we are one.

I in them and Thou in me. That they may be perfected into one. And that the world may know that Thou hast sent me.

And that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved me. Our Lord Jesus was going to leave His disciples. And as we find in John chapter 13, He did the last act for His own.

How He got up, took off His garment, put on the towel, poured water in the basin, and there He washed the disciples' feet. That was His last act for His own. An act of love.

And after that we find in John chapter 14 to 16, His last word with His own. How He comforted them by promising them the Holy Spirit. That the Holy Spirit will come and dwell not only with them, but in them.

And will never leave them, nor forsake them. And after His last word with His people, then He turned His heart towards His Father. In John chapter 17, we find it is recorded how He prayed to His Father.

And in that prayer you'll find from verse 1 to verse 5, He was praying for Himself. He prayed and said, Father, the hour is come. Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee.

His prayer for Himself is centered upon this matter of glory and glorify. He asked the Father to glorify the Son. Why did He ask His Father to glorify Him? Not because He wants to get the glory, but because after He was glorified, the Father will be glorified.

When the Lord Jesus prayed and said, glorify Thy Son. What does He mean? You know, when we think of glory or glorify, we always think in terms of getting something, gain something for ourselves. But not so with our Lord Jesus.

When He said, glorify Thy Son, all He means is simply this, that Thou will accept my sacrifice. Thou will accept my death. And Thou will demonstrate Thy acceptance by raising me from the dead to show that Thou art fully satisfied.

And that is, glorify Thy Son. The Lord is not thinking of Himself. To Him, to be glorified is not to have any personal gain.

For Him to be glorified is to satisfy His Father. To do the will of His Father, to finish the work that His Father has sent Him to do. And when the Father is satisfied, the Son is glorified.

That's the reason why the Lord said, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. Glory means satisfaction. When the Father is fully satisfied, then the Father is glorified.

And when the Son is satisfied, the Son is glorified. Now what is it that our Lord Jesus will be satisfied? He is satisfied only with this, that the work that the Father has sent Him to do is fully done. And He knows that the Father is happy about it.

That is the glory that He sought for. As Thou hast given Him authority over all flesh. The Son, who was equal with God, He emptied Himself.

He took up Himself the form of a slave. Even the likeness of a man. In other words, the Son laid aside all authority and power and honor and glory.

That were His rights, His due. He laid all these things aside to become a man. And now the Father has given all authority back to Him.

Over all flesh. Not only over all flesh, but over all things. And what does He do with the authority that the Father has given to Him? That all that He has given to Him, He should give them life eternal.

The authority that the Father has given to the Son. The Son uses that authority to give life, eternal life, to those whom the Father has given to Him. Authority is not to take away, but to give.

Authority is not to destroy, but to build. And with the authority that the Father has given to the Son, He has given to all who believe in Him, eternal life. I have glorified Thee on the earth.

I have completed the work which Thou giveth Me that I should do it. You remember, in chapter 12, some Greeks wanted to see the Lord. The Lord had a marvelous, triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

And now some Greeks wanted to see Him. And the Lord said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

And then He said, Father, glorify Thy Son. To our Lord Jesus, to be glorified means to lay down His life for us. To be glorified means to finish the work that the Father has sent Him.

And because He has finished the work, therefore, He said, Glorify Me, Thou Father, along with Thyself, with the glory which I had along with Thee before the world was. In other words, our Lord Jesus left His glory, the glory of God, to come into this world. And now after He has finished the work that He was sent to do, He asked the Father to glorify Him with the glory that He and the Father had before time began in eternity.

He was returning to His Father. Now after He prayed for Himself, then He turned to pray for those who were with Him that night. From verse 6 through verse 19, He prayed for those disciples, the eleven that were with Him that evening.

And then from verse 20 through verse 26, He prayed for those who believed in Him by the word of those who were with Him at that time. And you will discover that in His prayer, for the eleven who were with Him is the same as His prayer for those who were believing Him by their word. In other words, you'll find the prayer of our Lord Jesus for His own people, both those who were with Him at that moment and those who were believing Him afterwards.

Now even though some were with Him that night and many, many more were not with Him, even though we came to the Lord at different times and in different places, and yet you'll find when our Lord Jesus prayed for His own people, He put all of us together as one and He prayed for His own people. Whether they were those eleven that were with Him that night or those who believed in Him through their words, through the centuries, His prayer for us is one. Because He came to this world to seek for one body, one bride, one family, one house.

That's what He came to seek. And in His prayer for His own, that includes us. The one burden that He had in His heart at that time, which He poured out to His Father was simply this, that they may be one.

How He longed and desired that all who are His will be one. Now who are those that He prayed for? They are those to whom He has manifested the name of the Father. They are those whom the Lord, whom the Father has given to Him out of the world.

They are those who belong to God. They are those who have kept the Word of God. They are those whom the Lord Jesus has spoken to.

They are those who have received Him. They are those who have known Him. They are those who are kept by Him.

They are those who are sanctified by His Word. They are those who are not of the world. In other words, those whom He prayed for are all those through the centuries who have believed in Him.

The Father has given us to Him. And He has kept us, sanctified us by the Word. He prayed for all of us.

And His prayer burden is just this, that we may be one. Dear brothers and sisters, if this is the burden of our Lord, not only at the time when He was leaving His disciples, but throughout the centuries, even today, our Lord Jesus is the great High Priest. He is by the Father's side.

He is interceding for us. Brothers and sisters, do you know what is His burden at His Father's side? Do you know what is the prayer? What is the intercession that He intercedes for us on earth throughout the centuries? It is no different than what He prayed that night. He is still praying that prayer for His people.

He is praying that we who are His may be one. That is His one burden. Are we one? I believe that as we are drawing to the end of this age, more and more, God's people begin to feel the need of being one.

That is the reason why you have on this earth the ecumenical movement. But of course we know this is what the Lord is praying for. He prays for something much more than just an outward union.

But He has put into the heart of every believer a consciousness. A consciousness that we are one. No matter how different we are.

No matter what background we have. No matter how many distinctions we have in this world. We who are the Lord, there is a built-in consciousness within us that we are one.

We know we are one. We know we should be one. And not only we have this inward consciousness, but we have the teaching of the Word.

The Word teaches us that we are one. We are one body. Even though we are many, yet we are one body.

And we are members one of another. This we know. We cannot teach people telling them that they can be divided.

If people are divided, they know it is not right. They have to defend themselves with some reasons to justify their divisions. But deep down within their hearts, they know that no matter what reason they give, it is not sufficient.

We all know deep down within our heart that we are one. And we should be one. But what is the oneness, the unity that the Lord Jesus is looking for among His people? Not the outward thing.

Not trying to join people together outwardly through compromise, through negotiation, through give and take. The world will not be deceived by such union. Probably such union can deceive some of God's people.

But they cannot deceive the world. The world knows how God's people are divided. They are not one.

What is the oneness, the unity that the Lord is looking for in His people? In verse 11, our Lord Jesus said that they may be one as we. They may be one as we. Verse 22.

They may be one as we are one. The oneness of God's people is patterned after the oneness of the Godhead. That they may be one as we are one.

As the Father and the Son are one. We know that in the Godhead there are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There are three persons and yet one.

Three in one and one in three. It is a mystery we do not understand. It has been revealed to us and we believe by faith.

We cannot explain it but we know that God is three in one and one in three. In essence, one. In function, three.

The oneness in the Godhead is a perfect oneness. The Father and the Son are one in the Spirit. There is no need to have a committee.

No need to have discussion. No need to negotiate. No need to compromise.

No need to argue. But you'll find that in the Godhead there is that perfect harmony. There is a perfect agreement.

There is a perfect oneness. There is no shadow, no shade, no darkness, no doubt. One.

Perfectly one. And the Lord said that they may be one as we are one. Our oneness is to be like the oneness of the Godhead.

Now, what is the oneness of the Godhead? The Lord said, Thou, Father, art in me and I am in thee. In other words, the oneness of the Godhead is based on the inness. It is not that the Father is alongside the Son, or the Son is alongside the Father.

It is the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father. And because there is such inness, so you'll find such oneness. You remember even towards the very last, Philip asked the Lord Jesus, O Lord, if you only will show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.

And how he grieved our Lord Jesus. The Lord said, Philip, you have been with me for so long, and you're still asking me to show you the Father? Do you not know that the Father is in me and I am in the Father? If you see me, you see the Father? It is not I who is speaking, it is the Father who speaks in me. Don't you know that? The Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father.

And because there is an inness, so the oneness is perfect. It is just a matter of being alongside. No matter how united they are, the oneness is not perfect.

But the inness makes the oneness, and the Lord Jesus said that they may be one as we are one. Dear brothers and sisters, how can we be one? What makes us truly one? Unless it is an inness. But I cannot be in you, you cannot be in me.

How can that inness be a reality? Hear you hear, the Lord Jesus said. Verse 22 And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one as we are one, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfectly into one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me. The inness is based upon this fact, that we are in Him, and He is in us.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 30 it is said, By God ye are in Christ Jesus, whom God has made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. As we believe in the Lord Jesus, something happens. God puts us in Christ.

I think this is the most glorious thing, this is the mystery of the Gospel. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, God does something marvelous. He puts us in Christ.

And if you read Ephesians chapter 1 you'll find all this in Christ is such a mystery. Thank thee unto God who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. In Christ He has accepted us.

In Christ He has forgiven us. In Christ He has adopted us. Everything is in Christ.

And God has put us in Christ. So brothers and sisters, we who believe in the Lord Jesus, we are in Him. We are in Christ.

We are in God. Every one of us is in Him. And He is in us.

He is in every one of us. And because we are in Him, and He is in us, therefore there is an inness among us. We are in Him.

He is in us. And because of this inness it is now possible for us to be truly one. So our oneness is also based upon this inness.

Whenever we act outside of Christ. Now of course in Christ is our position. It will never change.

God has put us in Christ. Thank God for that. It is eternal.

It never changes. No matter how you change, you are in Christ. Once God has put you in, nobody can take you out.

Not yourself, nor anybody else. That is our position secured for us by the finished work of Christ. We are in Christ.

But dear brothers and sisters, so far as our condition is concerned, our condition may change. Sometimes we may abide in Christ, sometimes we may be away somewhere else. If we abide in Christ, the oneness is there.

But when we are outside of Christ, in our daily life, then you'll find this oneness is broken. If we abide in Him and He in us, that is to say, He lives in us. As our brother mentioned last night, I'm crucified with Christ, it is no longer I, it is Christ who lives in us.

It is Christ who lives. And if Christ lives in us, then we are one. If Christ lives in you and Christ lives in me, it is Christ who is living.

Then we are one. But if it is you who lives, it is I who lives, then we finally clash. The oneness seems to be broken.

Our oneness is in Christ and He in us. It is based upon this inness that is oneness is maintained. How can we be one? In the prayer of our Lord Jesus, you'll find a very strange thing.

Because we know that His burden for His people is that we may be one. And yet you'll find in His prayer He mentions a great deal about the world. The relationship of believers with the world.

Now why is it? What is the world? The world is a cosmos. The world is a system. The world is an organization.

Now who organizes it? The arch enemy of God. He organizes the world into a system to oppose God. He is the ruler of this world.

Outwardly you'll find the world is one organization, is one system. There is a oneness there. Whether it is social, whether it is economical, whether it is political, whether it is educational, whether it is cultural, or whether it is religious.

You'll find the world is one system. It is one organization. A united front against God.

Of course we know even that unity is a heterogeneous unity. It is not a homogeneous unity. It is held together by force, not by love.

But at least you'll find the world is a unity. It appears to be a unity, a system. And that's the reason why the Lord Jesus, as He is desiring His people to be one, a unity, we have to have our relationship with the world corrected.

What is our relationship with the world? This is the negative aspect of the positive unity among God's people. In other words, unless our relationship with the world is proper, our union, our unity with one another will not be corrected. What is our relationship with the world? God has called us out of this world.

He has given us to Christ. He has called us out of this world. Brothers and sisters, we do not belong to this world.

We do not belong to this system. We do not belong to this unity. We are out of this world.

But physically, we are still in the world. It is true that in this physical body we are still in the world. We still have to eat, we still have to drink, we still have to do things, we still have to work.

We are in the world. The Father has called us out of the world. We are still in the world and yet we are not of the world.

Physically we are here. Spiritually we are somewhere else. We are in that another world.

We are not of the world as He is not of the world. Brothers and sisters, we are not of the world as He is not of the world. Just as He is not of the world.

How was He not of the world? He is in the world. He came into this world. He lived upon this earth for thirty-three years.

He was a normal person. He ate, He drank, He rested, He worked, He walked around, He met people, He had relationships. He was not a person who fled into the mountain to be a monk.

He was in the world and yet we know He was not of the world. Wherever He was, whatever He did, whatever He said, He brought with Him a heavenly atmosphere. He belonged to another world.

He was not of the world. That's the reason why people cannot understand Him. He was so different, holy, uncommon, not like the rest of the world.

And dear brothers and sisters, this is what the Lord said, We are not of the world as He is not of the world. He does not take us out of the world right away. He leaves us in the world but we are not of the world just as He is not of the world.

And because of that, He was sent us into the world to be a witness and testimony for Him. Just like He was sent by the Father into the world to bear witness to His Father. And these are our relationships with the world.

Brothers and sisters, one reason why we find the oneness among God's people is not manifested, it is because our relationship with the world is not correct. If we still love the world, if we still act like the people of the world, how can we manifest that oneness of the Body of Christ? All we can do probably is try to outwardly maintain a kind of organization, to institutionalize something, systematize something, to put up a kind of front as if we are one, and yet we know, everyone knows that this is not true. There is one verse in 2 Corinthians chapter 6 said, Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.

Now, of course, it means do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. But I think the principle can be applied to believers. If believers act like unbelievers, if believers live in the world like the worldly people, if believers act like the men of the world, how can we be yoked together? We can only be yoked together with Christ and yoked together with one another if our relationship with the world is what the Lord ordains it to be.

There is much of the world in us. And that's the reason why the oneness of the believers cannot be manifested. Oh, how we need to ask the Lord to open our eyes, to see how much of the world is still in us.

How much we still belong to this world. And this is something that stands in the way of the unity of the believers. If the Lord can get the world out of you and you out of the world, then dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we are one.

And that oneness can be manifested gloriously. That the world may see what true unity really is. To come into the unity of believers, we have to deal with this matter of the world.

The world has to be dealt with. As Paul says, so far as the world is concerned, I'm crucified. So far as I'm concerned, the world is crucified.

And it is only under that kind of attitude you'll find it is possible for God's people to be really one. This is the negative side of it. Now we move to the positive side of it.

And there you'll find, how can we be one? In verse 11, the Lord Jesus said, I'm no longer in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to Thee, Holy Father. Keep them in Thy name, which Thou has given me, that they may be one as we. Keep them in Thy name, which Thou has given me, that they may be one as we.

How can we be one? We can be one if we are kept by the name that God has given to Christ. You notice the Lord Jesus doesn't say, keep them in My name. He said, keep them in Thy name, that Thou has given me.

Now, what is the name that God has given to Christ? I think it is very simple. It is the name of the Father. Even though in the Old Testament time, you'll find there are such expressions as God said to the children of Israel in Jeremiah 31, I will be a father to you.

Or in Malachi, you'll find God said, if I be a father, where is mine honor? But you know, in the Old Testament time, even though the fatherhood of God was known, but the fatherhood of God was more in the sense of He was the Creator of mankind. Or He was the Protector, the Guardian of those who belong to Him. He was never taken in a personal way.

People in the Old Testament time never knew God as a personal Father. Why? Because He is not. Only our Lord Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father.

In other words, Father in the intimate personal sense is only real to our Lord Jesus and nobody else. He is the only begotten of the Father. This is the name that God has given to His Son.

In other words, only His Son has the right to call Him Alpha Father. And this name He has given to us. And by this name we are kept.

You remember after our Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, He told the woman to tell His disciples go to the bridegroom. Tell them that I send to my Father and your Father. My God and your God.

Oh, brothers and sisters, the only begotten Son shared His Father with many sons. He is now the firstborn among many brethren. And as we believe in Him, the Holy Spirit there witnessing our spirit, that we are children of God and we cry out Alpha Father.

You cry out Alpha Father. I cry out Alpha Father. And it is this name that keeps us one.

You have the same Father as I have. We belong to the same family. One day some children were playing and suddenly a man walked by.

And when that man passed by, one of the children cried Alpha, Alpha. And you know the children like to imitate. So every, all the children began to cry Alpha, Alpha.

And this child turned to the other children and said No! He is my Father not yours. Dear brothers and sisters, the world has no right to call God their Alpha Father. The fatherhood of God is only real with those who believe in the Lord Jesus.

It is the name of the Father that joins us together into one. And then secondly you find in verse 22 And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them that they may be one as we are one. The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them.

That they may be one as we are one. Now what is this glory that God has given to Him? You know our Lord Jesus had a glory that He shared with His Father in eternity the past. The glory of the Godhead that He had with His Father, it was not something given to Him.

He had that even before time began. But our Lord Jesus had another glory. And that glory is a glory that the Father has given to Him.

He had one that was His. By right in eternity because He is God. And He had another one that was given to Him by the Father.

And what is the glory that God has given to Him? We have already mentioned it is the glory that He has fulfilled the will of the Father. He has finished the work. He has satisfied the Father.

And that is the glory. And on the basis of that, He has authority to give life to those who believe in Him. So the glory here we may say is the life that He gives to us on the basis of His finished work on the cross.

Brothers and sisters, our unity is based on life. It is His life in you and His life in me. You have the same life as I have.

We share the same life. And because we share the same life, we are one. Not only we can call our God our Father, we belong to the same family, but we share the same life.

Therefore, we are one. Our oneness is not based upon any teaching, any doctrine, any creed, any form, any organization. Our oneness is based upon life.

If you have the life of Christ in you, and I have the life of Christ in me, we are one in life. No matter how different we are otherwise, oh, if only we can stand on this ground of life, the life of Christ, that makes us one. And if we allow that life to live through us, then we will be perfected into one.

What will be the result of such oneness? First, that the world may know that Thou hast sent me. Oh, brothers and sisters, what a testimony that will be. You know, even though the world seems to be a united front against God, but we know it is a heterogeneous union.

You find in the world all kinds of discriminations, all kinds of differences, all kinds of turmoil, all kinds of conflicts. Oneness is divine, is heavenly. Oneness is something the world never knows, and the world cannot have.

You put two people together, and you will find they cannot be one. Because no two flesh can really agree. But when God's people are really one, the world will know that God has sent Christ into this world.

In other words, this is something that no one can accomplish. People will try to put people together by force, but that's not oneness. But here you'll find God's people are joined together as one in the Spirit.

The world has never seen such things before. Like in the first century, people were said, look at these people, how they love one another. Brothers and sisters, how can it be unless God has sent His Son into this world? So it is a testimony to the world how important it is that there is such a testimony today.

Oh, that we may be one, and the world may know that God has sent Christ into this world. Secondly, and that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Not only by being one we can give a good testimony to the world concerning Christ, but if we are one, we will be testified too by God that He has loved us as He has loved Christ.

The Lord Jesus in John chapter 15 said, As I have kept my Father's commandment and abide in His love, keep my commandment and abide in my love. Oh, if we can be one, that shows the Father has loved us. And because the Father has loved us, we will be one.

And it is a cycle. You'll find that we are one, and the Father loves us, and because the Father loves us, we are more one. It is just the love of the Father will be upon us as the love of the Father is upon our Lord Jesus.

So, dear brothers and sisters, this is the prayer of our Lord Jesus. Oh, He pray that we may be one. He has made it possible for us to be one.

And if we are not one, there is no reason, no excuse. May the Lord help us. Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank Thee that our Lord Jesus has accomplished the work that Thou hast sent Him.

And on the basis of the finished work of Christ, Thou hast given that oneness to us. We praise and thank Thee that Thou hast given us the name that we can call The Upper Father. We praise and thank Thee that Thou hast given us glory, even Thy life in us.

And Lord, if we are not one, oh, how do we hurt Thee? How do we disgrace Thy name? We ask Thee, O Lord, forgive us. Take away everything in us that make us divide and separate. We pray that Thou will keep us one in Thee that the Father may be glorified.

We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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