

Jesus Desire For the Church To Be One

by Todd Atkinson

This sermon emphasizes the authority of Jesus Christ over creation, using the example of Jesus calming the storm to reveal Himself as the author of creation. It calls for unity within the church amidst political polarization, highlighting the importance of prioritizing Christ's church and unity above all else. The sermon reflects on the life of J.I. Packer as a unifier of the church and encourages confession, repentance, and building up the church through love and unity.

Scripture: Mark 4:39, John 17:21, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:3, 1 John 1:9, Colossians 3:13, Hebrews 10:24, 1 Peter 3:8, Philippians 2:2, Romans 15:5

Topics: "Authority of Christ", "Unity in the Church"

Description

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Transcript

I am completely fascinated by the Lord's dealings with his people. When I think back to the New Testament, of all the places that God could have taught his people, that he was above the cosmos, that he is greater even than his own creation, where did God teach his people that Jesus Christ, his son, had complete authority over creation? In a boat, on a storm, when creation was threatening to swallow them up. That's the moment that Jesus chose to reveal himself as the author of creation.

And he always does things like that. And at this moment, in time, he's doing the exact same thing. At a time of human history that is threatening to isolate the church and separate the church, isolate people from one another, at a time of incredible political pulling, polarization, of all the moments where Jesus is saying, I want my church to be one, to be one, to be careful of that polarization.

Leave your politics at the door and come in as a child of God. I'm not saying it doesn't matter, I'm saying that it cannot separate the church and polarize us. I too have politics.

They're not greater than Christ's church. And they're not greater than our unity. They're not greater to me than you are.

They're not greater to me than the dwelling place of God. The house of commons isn't more important to me than the dwelling place of God. So we come into here and our sense of priority, our sense of proportion comes back into place.

So we pull together, not apart. We find our union, not our polarizations. This summer, a great statesman of the Christian faith went home to glory.

He was someone who had been very influential in the journey of Via, and that is J.I. Packer. He was one of the first theologians we read in something called the Leadership Academy that we ran 100 years ago. 93 years of age, a great unifier of the church, a great theologian in the church.

And as I read one of his obituaries, someone who knew him well said he was prone to make fun of himself. He said, but never of others. How could people who walked with a man for 93 years hear him kind of make fun of his own weaknesses regularly? But they never heard him make fun of another person.

They never heard him run anybody down. No wonder he was a Christian statesman. He loved God's church.

He loved her unity. Even that, he used the doctrine to unify her, not divide her. He used his great theological strength to bring her together.

I was very challenged by that, reading that. Spire, let's bring these thoughts to the Lord's table. Let the Lord speak to us, meet with us.

So hear him extend to you his kind invitation to this holy meal. It's called the table of unity. Remember the final words we say most of the church year.

Remember the language of we break this bread because we are one body. We break one bread. It's called the table of unity.

Beautiful. And so you who do truly and earnestly repent of your sins and are willing to be reconciled and at peace with your neighbors and intend to lead the new life, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near now with faith and make your humble confession to almighty God. Please take a moment for private confession.

And in this time of confession, let's come in ourselves. Let's build up his church with every day and every moment, every word, never to break her down, to always help her become more glorious, to do everything that adds to her oneness. Let's put some disciplines around our thoughts, our words.

And this morning, particularly on our comments on social media, the world are watching how we engage. They see words that are jagged, antagonistic. And so our purpose on this earth is to show a better way, to show a better way.

Lord, search our hearts. We lay them bare before you. Together, let's humbly can make our confession.

And at a certain point, I'm going to just leave a pause in a way we don't normally. So you can insert in there where I have been judgmental, where I have not given people the benefit of the doubt, where I have not created unity. You add your bit in there, including where I have done disagreement in worldly ways.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbor as ourselves.

I'm going to give you, you can fill in the blank there. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent for the sake of your son, Jesus Christ. Have mercy on us and forgive us that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your name.

Amen. Almighty God, our heavenly father, who in his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all those who sincerely repent and with true faith turn to him, have mercy upon you. Pardon and deliver you from all your sins.

Confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. You will receive from Christ the full absolution of your sins. Then together we proclaim Amen.

Only as a friend I have lived in the goodness of God. So my life you have been faithful. That I am.

Your goodness is I give you. Your goodness is running out. Your goodness is running out.

So my life you have been so good. Good. Beautiful seeing you in worship.

Seeing you direct your affections to him. Beautiful seeing your open heartedness. It's a great, great congregation.

The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts to him. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Holy and gracious father in your infinite love you made us for yourself and when we had sinned against you and become subject to evil and death. You and your mercy sent your only son into the world for our salvation by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. He became flesh and dwelt among us in obedience to your will.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross and offered himself once for all that by his suffering and death we might be saved. By his resurrection he broke the bonds of death trampling hell and satan under his feet. As our great high priest he ascended to your right hand in glory that we might come with confidence before the throne of grace.

On the night that he was betrayed our Lord Jesus Christ had bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and he gave it to his disciples saying take this is my body which is given for you do this in remembrance of me. Likewise after supper Jesus took the cup when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying drink this all of you for this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it do this in remembrance of me.

As you hear those words in remembrance of me then remember him. One of the great secrets of the Christian life is this where do you put your focus? Is it on sin or is it on the Savior? Is it on the problems of the world or is it on the one who holds the world in his hands? So remember him turn your attention fully turn your internal and external turn your focus on me and put your focus on Jesus. The Lord's table disciples us in put your focus on Jesus and everything else will begin to look different.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption oh father in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and we offer you these gifts of bread and wine. Sanctify them by your word and holy spirit to be for your people the

body and the blood of your son Jesus Christ. Sanctify us also every word every thought and every action that we may worthily receive this holy sacrament and be made one body with him so that he may dwell in us and we in him in the fullness of time put all things in subjection under your Christ and bring us with all your saints into the fullness of your heavenly kingdom where we shall see our Lord face to face all this we ask through your son Jesus Christ by him and with him and in him in the unity of the holy spirit all honor and glory is yours almighty father now and forever.

Hallelujah Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed once for all upon the cross so we exalt the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ we pray that his broken body would heal all fractures in the body of Christ and that his shed blood would cleanse us of all our frailties and weaknesses and sins that we would be perfect and whole before him and before one another.

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