

# (One Body in Christ) 6. Power Through Unity

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of unity among Christians, highlighting how it gives us power and authority to overcome Satan and exercise the Lord's authority in prayer.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 30:27, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Matthew 16:18, Matthew 18:18-20, Acts 1:14, Acts 2:44, Acts 12:5-11, Ephesians 4:3, Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14

**Topics:** "Unity in the Body of Christ", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the power of unity within the Body of Christ, illustrating that two or more believers working together can achieve far more than individuals acting alone. He warns against the dangers of isolation and division, which are tactics used by Satan to weaken the Church. Poonen clarifies that true unity is not an organizational construct but a spiritual bond under Christ's headship, forged by the Holy Spirit. He encourages believers to strive for harmony and to recognize their collective authority in spiritual warfare, as demonstrated in the early Church. Ultimately, he calls for a return to understanding and living out the truth of being one Body in Christ to effectively combat the forces of darkness.

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## Transcript

Two can accomplish more than twice as much as one, for the results can be much better. If one falls, the other pulls him up; but if a man falls when he is alone, he's in trouble.....And one standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer; three is even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken"

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 - TLB).

You may remember the story from Aesop's fables, where an old farmer taught an object lesson on unity to his three children, who were constantly quarrelling among themselves. Taking a number of weak sticks, he showed them how the sticks could quite easily be broken individually, but when tied together in a bundle were almost impossible to break.

Even the children of this world realise that there is strength in unity and fellowship.

"The locusts", the Bible says, "though small are unusually wise, for though they have no leader, they stay together in swarms (Proverbs 30:27 - TLB). Therein lies their safety and their power.

In the Church of Jesus Christ, we need to relearn this lesson.

Right at the outset, however, let me clarify that I am not referring to an organisational unity of Christians or of churches, formed by man, at the cost of compromise and of sacrifice of God's truth - such as in the modern day ecumenical movement. That type of unity is a farce and a counterfeit of the unity that Christ prayed for in His High-Priestly prayer (recorded in John 17).

The unity that the New Testament speaks of, is the unity of the members of Christ's Body with one another, under the Headship of Christ - an organic unity and not an organisational one. It excludes those who are outside of the Body of Christ, even if they have the label 'Christian'. There can be no union between the living and the dead. Those made alive in Christ through the new birth can find their spiritual unity only with others who have been similarly regenerated by God. Christian unity is forged by the Holy Spirit Who alone makes us members of Christ's Body. The Bible exhorts us to "strive earnestly to guard the harmony and oneness produced by the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3 - Amplified). Any unity formed by man is worthless.

### Satan's Strategy

Satan is a cunning foe and he realises that he cannot overcome a united Christian fellowship that lives under the authority of Christ and His Word. His strategy for warfare, is therefore, to begin by sowing discord, suspicion and misunderstanding among the members of a fellowship, so that he can paralyze them individually.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan approached Eve when she was alone, possibly because he knew that he had much less chance of success when Adam and Eve were together.

Jesus said that the powers of Hell would not be able to overcome His Church (Matthew 16:18). It is the Church, the Body of Christ, that is promised victory in the battle against Satan. A believer standing in isolation from other believers may find himself defeated.

Satan attacked Christ constantly during Christ's life on earth, but was unable to prevail. Finally at the Cross, Satan's authority and power were overthrown by Christ (Hebrews 2:14; Colossians 2:15).

Today, Satan cannot attack the Risen Christ. His attacks are therefore directed at Christ's spiritual Body, the Church. Victory over Satan is possible only as we stand against him, as a Body under the Headship of our Lord.

In a fellowship of Christians, even if one member is not fulfilling his function, the power of the Body is, to that extent, weakened. Satan knowing this, seeks continually to isolate individual members of a group, or to divide the group (or church) into cliques. Either way, he succeeds in his aim.

This is why we must constantly guard against the subtle wiles of Satan, lest he weaken the links between us and any other member of the Body of Christ.

### The Authority of the Body

The earlier chapters of Paul's letter to the Ephesian Christians, disclose the 'mystery' of the Body of Christ. Towards the end of the letter, there is a description of the spiritual warfare that the Church is engaged in and of the armour of God necessary to overcome in the battle.

Since the general theme of Ephesians is the Church as the Body of Christ, it would seem to imply that the warfare described at the end of the letter is something that the Body as a whole is engaged in - and not just the individual members on their own. We need one another in this battle.

Earlier in the same letter, we are told that Christ has been exalted far above all, as the Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:20-23). It is one thing to know that Christ has been exalted, and quite another to know that He has been thus exalted as the Head of His Body the Church. Paul's prayer for the Ephesian Christians was that they might have spiritual vision of this latter truth, which has far-reaching implications for the Church here on earth.

For if Christ has been exalted far above all as the Head of the Church, it implies that the Church has a share in the exercise of Christ's authority. Consider an illustration from the human body. It would not be possible for my head to sit on a throne without my body sitting on the same throne also. So too with Christ and His Body.

The authority that Christ has is something that He desires to give to His Church. Why is the Church then so powerless today? Surely it must be because it hasn't recognised and taken its place as the Body under Christ's Headship.

Christ's authority is exercised through His Body, not just through isolated individuals. The human body functions in obedience to the head, because it is a co-ordinated organism and not merely a miscellaneous assortment of limbs and organs. So too in the spiritual Body, where there is a coordinated Christian team, there Christ's authority can be exercised.

Do you see now why Satan hates the truth of "the Body" and why he will do everything in his power to keep us blind to it? And if we do grasp the intellectual truth of the matter, Satan will try to blind us to its practical application.

### Symphony in the Body

Jesus made many promises in relation to individual believers praying to God. But in Matthew 18:18, 19, we have a promise made to a section of Christ's Body praying in unison:

Whatever you bind on earth", Jesus said, "is bound in Heaven, and whatever you free on earth will be freed in Heaven. I also tell you this - if two of you agree down here on earth concerning anything you ask for, my Father in Heaven will do it for you" (TLB).

The word translated "agree" in verse 19, is the Greek word *sumphoneo*, from which our English word "symphony" is derived. Jesus was referring in these verses to a unity among even two of His children that would be like a musical symphony. This implies more than just saying "Amen" at the end of another's prayer. Symphony implies a deep harmony of spirit between those who are praying together. When the fellowship of even a small group of Christians is like the symphony produced by a well-conducted orchestra, then (Jesus said) their prayers will have such authority that anything they asked for would be granted. Such a group of Christians would have authority to bind Satan's power and to liberate Satan's captives.

The reason why such a fellowship could exercise such authority was explained by Jesus: "For", He said, "wherever two or three are gathered together into My Name, there I AM in the midst of them" (verse 20 - AMP). Christ the Head is present with all His authority in the midst of such a fellowship, and therefore the

powers of Hell can never stand against it.

One reason why the Church described in The Acts of the Apostles knew the reality of this authority was because they had this harmony in their fellowship.

All of these (the 11 apostles) with their minds in full agreement devoted themselves steadfastly to prayer....

And all who believed were united and together....and day after day they regularly assembled in the temple with united purpose....

And they (the apostles and other believers)....lifted their voices together with one united mind to God...(Acts 1:14; 2:44, 46; 4:24 - AMP).

Because they were integrated into one spiritual Body under the authority of Christ, they could exercise the Lord's authority in prayer. They were not highly educated, they had no social influence and no financial backing, yet they turned the then-known world upside down for Christ.

When Peter was locked up in prison, all of Herod's forces could not stand against the power of that early Church on its knees before God (Acts 12:5-11). Satan's kingdom was shaken to its foundations by that Church as it went forth as one Body, registering the victory and authority of Christ in human lives all over the Roman Empire (See Acts 19:11-20 for one example of this).

Today Satan ridicules the efforts of a disunited Church trying to oust him from his strongholds by gimmicks, gadgets, conferences, theological knowledge, eloquence and trained choirs.

None of these are of any avail against Satan. The Church needs to know again the reality of being one Body united under the Headship of Christ.

A fellowship of Christians properly related to each other, growing in love for one another and living in obedience to Christ and His Word is the greatest threat to the kingdom of the Devil on earth. Satan dreads nothing else as much as that.

Let us make it our prayer that the Lord will help us to live each day in the light of the glorious truth of the Body. As more and more Christians throughout the world begin to understand and to live by this truth, we shall assuredly see the Church, though small in number, restored to her pristine glory, an instrument in God's Hands to rout the forces of darkness and a channel of blessing to a needy world.

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