

Unity (Part 1)

- A Study of Ephesians 4:1-6

1

The Beauty of Unity

- ▶ The Persons of the Godhead.
cf. Deuteronomy 6:4; John 10:30
- ▶ The majestic universe. Jeremiah 31:35-36
- ▶ The Old and New Testaments.
- ▶ Domestic unity is "good" and "pleasant."
Psalms 133:1
- ▶ Religious "oneness" is the antidote against becoming unbelievers. John 17:20-21

2

Ugliness of Division

- ▶ Jerusalem was troubled with Judaizers.
Acts 11:2; 15:1ff
- ▶ Corinth. 1 Corinthians 1:10ff
- ▶ Philippi had Euodia and Syntyche. Philippians 4:2-3
- ▶ Ephesus had Hymenaeus and Alexander.
1 Timothy 1:19-20 ... and Hymenaeus and Philetus. 2 Timothy 2:17-18
- ▶ Letter to Gaius mentions Diotrephes. 3 John 9

3

- ▶ Ephesians 4:1-6, *"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (There is) one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."*

4

Paul's credibility. (verse 1a)

"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord"
Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; Philippians 1:13; Philemon 9,13;
2 Timothy 1:8

- ▶ He is both a prisoner **"of Christ" (3:1) and a prisoner "in the Lord" (4:1).**
- ▶ The apostle was a prisoner **literally on many occasions during his ministry (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23), and specifically when he penned this epistle (cf. 6:20).**
- ▶ But in a richer sense he had become the prisoner **"of Jesus in that he had surrendered his self-interests to the bondage of his Lord (Philemon 10,13) for whom he gladly suffered.**
- ▶ Also, his relationship **"in" the Lord placed his sufferings in an altogether different dimension. There is no virtue in hardship when one is estranged from the Savior.**

5

The charge to walk worthily of one's calling. (verse 1b)

"beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called"

- ▶ The **"calling" is God's invitation.** Acts 2:39; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; Philippians 3:14
- ▶ Those who respond to the message, and submit in obedience, are designated as the **"called" (Thayer)**
- ▶ The term **"walk" (peripateo - "to walk around")** refers to the entire "sphere" of one's existence. (8 times in Ephesians)

6

The charge to walk worthily of one's calling. (verse 1b)

"beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called"

"Worthily" is an adverb that suggests a comparison between two objects that correspond with one another in some fashion – in this instance, both in kind and in quality.

7

The disposition necessary for oneness in Christ. (verses 2–3)

"with all lowliness"

"Lowliness" (*tapeinophrosune*). Low of mind. ("humbleminded" – 1 Peter 3:8)

- ▶ Paul, describes himself. Acts 20:1
 - And his life supported the claim.
- ▶ "Lowliness of mind" cf. Philippians 2:3, 5ff; cf. Romans 12:3; Matthew 18:1–4; 20:20ff
- ▶ **What an insurmountable challenge this is for the people of God!**

8

The disposition necessary for oneness in Christ. (verses 2–3)

"with all meekness"

- ▶ "Meekness" (*praytes*—a noun, found eleven times in the New Testament) denotes a "calm and soothing disposition."
- ▶ It is used of "mildness" and "humaneness," in contrast to the "harsh" attitude. 1 Timothy 6:11
- ▶ It is the opposite of "roughness" and "severity."
- ▶ In the Greek Old Testament, *praytes* conveys the idea of "submission to the divine will." Psalms 132:1
- ▶ Moses was described as the "meekest" man of the earth. Numbers 12:3
- ▶ *Praytes* involves radical submission to God and modesty in dealings with other people. Galatians 6:1; Titus 3:2; James 1:21; 1 Peter 3:15
- ▶ **Just think of how this could solve church problems.**

9

The disposition necessary for oneness in Christ. (verses 2–3)

"with longsuffering"

- ▶ "Longsuffering" *makrothymia*—(found fourteen times in the New Testament) is a term that hints of taking a "long" time to come to "anger."
- ▶ Used of God who demonstrates this virtue in his dealings with sinful humanity. Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9
- ▶ Used to describe man. Acts 26:3; James 5:7b
- ▶ It is one of the virtues of the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22), and is a requirement for every Christian. Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:14
- ▶ **Needed in Ephesus ... Ephesians 4:31–32; cf. Hebrews 10:36**

10

The disposition necessary for oneness in Christ. (verses 2–3)

"forbearing one another in love"

- ▶ "Forbearing" *anechomai* "to hold oneself up against, i.e. (figuratively) put up with" (Strong)
- ▶ Mark 9:19 in the exasperated question of Jesus, "How long am I to bear with you?"
- ▶ "In love" (*agape* – 116 times in the New Testament).
- ▶ **Agape is not "heart" love; it is "head" love. It is a premeditated principle by which one lives as he attempts to operate in the noblest interest of others.**
- ▶ It is extremely difficult to act with agape towards those we do not particularly like—who may, in fact, be somewhat repulsive. 1 John 4:10–11
- ▶ Nonetheless, by the command to "love," we are challenged to persistently act in the genuine welfare of others.

11