

2021 Capstone Quarter

Building the Church

Week 3: Unity

Readings: Ephesians 4:1-6; Colossians 2:1-4, 16-19; Philippians 2:1-4

Introduction: "Spirit" events and traditions-- attempting to create unity out of variety

- I. Of the same (one) mind: Philippians 2:1-4
 - A. Prerequisites and nature of unity
 1. Qualities that precede unity? Encouragement in Christ (we have been called together to stand side-by-side in his service), comfort/consolation from ἀγάπης love, κοινωνία fellowship with the Spirit, visceral affection and compassion
 2. What kind of unity? **Mindset**, but not merely intellectual; one's judgment, one's priorities, one's partisanship are all encompassed here
 - B. Overflow of unity
 1. Naturally eliminates selfish ambition and "vainglory" (empty conceit)
 2. Shift of interests from self to others (equality)
- II. Knit together (cloth and bones): Colossians 2:1-4, 16-19
 - A. The fascination of knitting: making a whole cloth out of thread (2:1-4)
 1. Encouragement from being "knit together in love" (note: *much* harder to achieve when not face-to-face)
 2. Understanding and knowledge of God's "mystery," Jesus Christ, more richly through unity? (Protection, at least, from false "mysteries")
 - B. Healing brokenness: bones knit together (2:16-19)
 1. Psalm 139:13, "knitted together" terminology for the connections of the body
 2. False teachers are *not* connected to Jesus (the head of the body), "from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows" (conversely, if you *are* connected, you can't fall into false teaching because of the understanding/knowledge referenced earlier)
- III. Maintain the unity of the Spirit: Ephesians 4:1-6
 - A. Walk worthy
 1. Unity depends on multiple qualities, like humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, love, and **eager intentionality**
 2. Notice it isn't "make unity," but rather "maintain unity"-- it isn't ours, but the Holy Spirit's, and we are entrusted with maintenance, which means constant familiarity
 - B. One
 1. In case we're tempted to forget that unity means oneness, Paul gives a string of ones: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God & Father
 2. Full-circle back to "spirit" events: keep the commonality in focus in order to maintain the Spirit's oneness in the Church (where the Church is, there is naturally unity-- it's only where we fail to be the Church that we fail at unity)

Conclusion/preview: unity does not mean being identical; next week, continuing Ephesians 4 with "But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift." Different roles, same aim!