**“Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace” (SR: Ephesians 4:1-6)**

Bumper stickers that read TOLERANCE and COEXIST tell us a little something about people. Humans tend to be uncomfortable and hesitant to be in opposition to one another; of course, there are those occasional bellicose and belligerent people who seek out conflict, but as a whole, people like peace.

The Bible speaks a great deal on this topic of peace and harmony. It is important to note however two prerequisites for that peace. God speaks in the prophet Isaiah concerning one of those: “There is no peace for the wicked” (48:22; 57:21). The prophet Jeremiah speaks concerning that other aspect of true peace: “They heal the brokenness of the daughter of My people superficially, Saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ But there is no peace” (6:14; 8:11). Without God, there is no harmony, no satisfaction, no peace. But for the Christian, the Holy Spirit grants security, unity, and amity. But how exactly is that accomplished? That will be the topic of this series of lessons, but before we proceed, we first must establish the proper definition and the full extent of Paul’s statement concerning such peace in Ephesians 4; i.e. what exactly is the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”?

**I. Definitions**

A. *Unity* (*ejnovthV*)

 1. This unity is objective and is firmly based in the faith once for all delivered (2Tim. 3:16f; Jude 3). Unity is never found/maintained accidentally.

 2. This unity is not a tolerance of sinful behavior, but it is characterized by a loving disposition that exhorts brethren to repent when sin enters in.

 3. This unity is not the heretical teaching of “unity in diversity.” Nevertheless, differences in personality, expectation, talents, and personal judgment on unspecified areas are openly acknowledged (Eph. 4:7-16).

B. *Spirit* (*pneuvmatoV*)

 1. The term can be properly translated as wind, breath, the human spirit, or the divine Holy Spirit. The first two are readily dismissed in light of the context and the 3rd practically speaking cannot produce objective unity. The 4th must therefore be what is under discussion.

 2. The Spirit is the primary agent thru which this bond is solidified although the other members of the Godhead are involved as well (John 17:20f).

C. *Bond* (*suvndesmos*) *of peace* (*eijrhvnh*) – compare *bond of perfection* in Col. 3:14

 1. This type of bond is not loose like a slipknot, which slides and adjusts at the beck and will of the tier. This bond is more along the lines of atomic fusion and describes an unbreakable linkage of two items.

 2. The bond itself produces harmonious arrangement between two parties formerly alienated from each other.

 3. Believers are bound regardless of socioeconomic position, education, experience, or ethnic distinctions. All are one before God because all have sinned and all need reconciliation (Gal. 3:28f; Eph. 2:11-19).

**II. True Unity Comes from the Holy Spirit**

A. The God of the Bible by definition is a united being. The doctrine of the trinity is as clear as anything ever could be (Matt. 5:16f; 28:19; Titus 3:4-6). Thus three personalities comprise the Godhead.

B. Nowhere in the Bible do these three work in opposition. Could you imagine if they did? It would be in the same vein as Hinduism, Greek/Roman mythology.

 C. The unity of God is described in this context as the one God, one Lord, one Spirit.

 D. Other factors in our unity include: one faith, one baptism, one hope, and one body.

 E. The unity of the Godhead, the unity of our method of entrance into the one body, and unity of our hope as substantiated by the objective faith of the gospel fuse us through the power and agency of the Holy Spirit.

**III. Practical Applications – Ephesians 1-3 is doctrinal; Ephesians 4-6 is practical\***

A. We choose whether to walk in a manner worthy or unworthy of God’s calling (cf. Rom. 16:2; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:10; 1Thess. 2:12)

 1. Paul *implores* the Ephesian brethren to walk a certain way. He had spent at least three years teaching them with tears and the constant onslaught of the adversary. How fearful would it be for them to prove themselves unworthy of the calling of God? His whole goal was to present them perfect before God! (Col. 1:28)

2. Thankfully, Revelation 2:1-7 shows they proved themselves worthy of this calling by rejecting factious teaching. The question is: will we?

 B. We have been given the calling of unity and peace.

 1. We possess the instrument of free will. God calls us to unity and peace, but we are not forced to it. The ramifications of this freedom are easily seen in the division of this world (e.g. Christendom, Islam, etc.)

 2. Christians, as the light, salt, and leaven of God, must actively seek harmony. This can only be done by appealing to the objective source of unity given to us in the Scriptures (John 17:17).

 C. In order to fulfill this calling, diligent effort is mandated.

 1. We are required to maintain a certain disposition as laid out by Paul in Ephesians 4:2f. Only then can we preserve that bond.

 2. Moreover, the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace requires humility, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, and love. When we possess these virtues, we glorify God as members of His church (Eph. 3:21).

**Conclusion:**

While the world hunts for unity in fleeting superficial modalities, Christians have the security of the Spirit. Christians take part in a unity that is deep, meaningful, and lasting. That unity provides an unbreakable bond of peace that will withstand emotions, conflicts, personal disagreements, and congregational dissonance.

 Are you looking for peace? This world WILL NOT and CANNOT provide it! There is no peace for the wicked! Yet, God has provided access to that peace through the atoning blood of His Son. If you wish to study this further or if you want to make a profession of faith by obeying His commands toward salvation, we’d love to assist you in that endeavor. Whatever your need, please arise and come forward as we sing the song of invitation.