



Sunday, July 14, 2013

The Church and Our Unity

Speaker: Joe Boot **Scripture:** Psalm 133; John 17

Sermon Notes:

1. Psalm 133 is a Psalm of praise and of exhortation to unity and brotherly love.
2. Blended families lead to problems, and David may have written this Psalm to encourage his own sons to unity.
3. Unity is required of us because we are united by Christ (1 Cor. 3:3-11).
4. We are to look and see how good unity is: it is agreeable to God; it conforms earth and heaven; it is for our honour and comfort.
5. It is a pleasant thing to have the fragrant oil of unity among us. The unity among God's priestly people is sacred and precious.
6. The holy love and unity of God's people is like dew in the morning: dew refreshes the earth, cools the heat of our passions, and represents God's blessing of life.
7. God's covenant blessing of life is attached to living in unity.
8. Hatred, discord, and disunity are among the works of the flesh that are condemned in Galatians 5:19-26.
9. Our culture seeks a false unity under state-enforced equality; envy is seen as a virtue leading to class warfare.
10. The kind of unity that God commands is not the worldly notion of equal outcomes. Nor is unity total peace where there are no disagreements. Biblical peace includes potential for conflict or disagreement.
11. Biblical unity tolerates diversity within godly limits. The church is a diverse place composed of every tribe and tongue.
12. We can have great unity while not attaining perfect agreement.
13. Unity is not the same as peace. We may have peace based on bullying or a stand-off silence where there is actually disunity.

14. Some Christians cannot tolerate faults in other people, so they move on regularly to find a purer fellowship.
15. Those who are adept at identifying faults in others are often blind to their own glaring faults.
16. Where others are more skillful or gifted, we should be joyful in their accomplishments and not succumb to envy.
17. We must not mistake our Christian freedom as an excuse not to bear one another's burdens for the sake of unity.
18. It is costly to gather and maintain relationships, but it is a necessary part of our lives together under Christ.
19. Christians have fled the city to get away from social problems. However, we need to get involved, to give of ourselves, and to minister to the needs around us.
20. It is good and pleasant to live in a congregation where God's Spirit is at work moving believers to mutual service, support, responsibility, forbearance, patience, and burden bearing.
21. We need simple encouragement in our lives to keep going.
22. The Holy Spirit works among believers bringing unity, and reviving and extending His work in community so that we live together in faith, obedience and truth. Unity yokes us together for life.

Application Questions:

1. What is biblical unity? Why is it so desirable?
2. How do oil and dew in Psalm 113 instruct us in biblical unity?
3. Contrast biblical unity with mere peace.
4. How can unity be maintained in the midst of disagreement?
5. Do we take joy and delight in God's gifting of others, or do we struggle with envy within the church?
6. What are some practical ways we can pursue unity this week?
7. Do we intentionally encourage and build up the body of Christ?
8. What do we learn from John 17 about God's purposes for unity among His people?