

Unity through Cooperation

John 17:20-22

Yet not for these only do I pray, but for those also who through their word are to believe in me, that all may be one, even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory that thou has given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one.

(The purpose of this sermon is to discuss three points: (1) unity in the Christian community has been a difficult goal to reach; (2) unity is not just a desirable goal, it is a necessary goal; (3) we can learn about the need for unity from nature, from the universe, and from our own physical body. Upon hearing this sermon, the congregation should (a) know that unity is important; and (b) know that unity can be achieved if we look at the world from God's point of view, not just our own.)

Introduction

(Share some experiences about unity problems. For instance, how you overcame a difficulty in relating to a brother or a sister and found a new level of unity and cooperation which brought about development and prosperity.)

I. Nature displays great beauty of unity and harmony

“O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth” (Psalms 96:1).

- A. The ecological balance shows that unity and harmonious cooperation is so important in nature. All parts are connected in a harmonious whole.
 - 1. Animals and plants exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide.
 - 2. Solar systems exist in harmonious relationships, forming galaxies.
- B. The human body displays wonderful unity amidst great diversity, centering on the mind.

II. Unity in the Body of Christ

- A. Unity has been a major concern in Christian History. “There is one body and one Spirit, even as you were called in one hope of your calling” (Ephesians 4:4).

1. Different doctrines and interpretations have divided Christianity.
 2. Denominations have fragmented into many subgroups.
 3. Disunity, strife, mutual condemnation, and persecution have plagued Christian churches.
- B. Within each denomination, also, unity is difficult. For example, someone working with poor people may find it difficult to understand the value of someone working to develop an education program.

III. Only love can bring about unity and cooperation

“Behold, how good it is, and how pleasant, where brethren dwell together in unity!” (Psalms 133:1)

- A. When we see different parts forming a greater whole, we can see the value of each part.

“For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body, many as they are, form one body, so also it is with Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12)

For example, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wanted to unite all races, not just the black race.

- B. If we stress common goals, rather than individual goals, we can find a basis for unity and cooperation.

“Love bears with all things, believe all things, hope all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7).

- C. If we appreciate the value of other brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, as they perform various functions, we can more readily love them and cooperate with them.

Conclusion

Christians can be united when they realize that each part of the Body of Christ performs an important function, crating a harmonious whole, AS the various parts cooperate with one another centering on a common purpose and a common goal, they fulfill Christ’s prayer: “that they may be one, even as we are one.”