

The Call to Unity in a Divided Culture

Xenos Summer Institute 2019

We live in a time of significant cultural divide. These fractures can be measured and experienced politically, ethnically, regionally, in class distinctions, in families, in neighborhoods, and in the church. Scripture makes it clear that followers of Christ are to be different—we are called to diligently preserve the unity we have in Christ. This workshop will focus on both the motivations and the means of to fight for true unity in the Church.

Introduction

We live in a divided culture

- Political
- Ethnic
- Class
- Regional
- Fractured on almost every front

These division creep into all of life

- Families and relationships
- Neighbors, coworkers and classmates
- The Church
- Our Home Groups

Unity and Love would be challenging in easier times

Fighting for unity

How can we find unity in such a landscape?

The early church faced similar problems

How were they able to unite?

Ephesians 4:1-6

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Vs. 1

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

Vs. 3

³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

Why fight for unity?

Our calling

If there is a “worthy” way of living then there is an “unworthy” way of living

Consistent vs. inconsistent

Honoring vs. dishonoring

Grateful vs. ungrateful

One Body

One Spirit

One Hope

One Lord

One Faith

One Baptism

One God and Father

Why Fight for Unity?

- One Body – radical inclusion
- One Spirit – indwelt and sealed
- One Hope – common salvation and future
- One Lord – the same king
- One Faith – common trust
- One Baptism – equal standing
- One God – guided and cared for by same father

How do we fight for unity?

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Be diligent

Humility

Gentleness

Patience, tolerant love

Colossians 3:12-15

² So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴ Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

How do we fight for unity?

- Diligence – Energetic, focused, consistent work
- Humility – know where we stand
- Gentleness – people are valuable and precious
- Patience – long fuse and overlooking “quirks”
- Love – desiring the good for and desire to be in union with the person