

Ephesians Series: What is Your Life Mission? #22
“The Sevens Keys to Unity”
Message Notes, May 21, 2023

Ephesians 4:4-6 (LB) ⁴ We are all parts of one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future (hope). ⁵ For us there is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ and we all have the same God and Father who is over us all and in us all, and living through every part of us.

- Unity is not derived from human effort, but rather is given by God.

Psalms 133 (LB) ¹ How wonderful it is, how pleasant, when brothers live in harmony! ² For harmony is as precious as the fragrant anointing oil that was poured over Aaron's head and ran down onto his beard and onto the border of his robe. ³ Harmony is as refreshing as the dew on Mount Hermon, on the mountains of Israel. And God has pronounced this eternal blessing on Jerusalem, even life forevermore.

Therefore:

Ephesians 4:3 (NIV) “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

- Keep *tēreō*: to guard, to attend to carefully, to take care of; God's love tells us to keep the unity already given to us by God's love
- Make every effort *spoudazō*: to exert one's self, endeavor, make a diligence effort to accomplish

Paul teaches about the seven keys to unity:


1. Body

- The body is intended to function as a unified being, each part interlocking, cooperating, and complementing each other, just as the Church, the Body of Christ, is intended to live under the direction of Christ as her head, with everyone cooperating with and helping each other.
- This is the true nature of human beings, and God has prepared the way for the restoration of humanity through the cross.


 Helping Presence: Father's sermon example “The Significance of the Left Hand”

2. Spirit

- *Pneuma* can also be translated as “breath.” In the physical realm, oxygen is the source of life and works in cooperation with the circulatory system as well as the respiratory system. Spiritual power (oxygen), on the hand, breathes life into our souls through the Holy Spirit, the life of God, and revitalizes us so that we can continue to walk in peace and courage, no matter what difficulties we may be facing.
- When we quietly listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, we are not only given wisdom and strength, but the One who is the source of eternal life, Life itself, which indwells us and fills us with absolute peace.

 Have you ever felt the presence of the Lord in prayer and experienced release from bondage in your heart?

3. Hope

- “We are all proceeding towards the same goal. This is the great secret of the unity of Christians. Our methods, our organization, even some of our beliefs may be different; but we are all striving towards the one goal of a world redeemed in Christ.” (Barclay)
-  Each of my family members has dealt with my father's death in different ways. While this is normal, it has also been unsettling. However, when I considered the fact that our ultimate goal is the same God, peace returned to my heart.

4. Lord

Philippians 2:11 “Jesus Christ is Lord”

- The word Lord *kyrios* is used in contrast to the word master, in relation to a servant or slave. The word is also the official title of the Roman emperor. In ancient Rome, it was strictly forbidden to worship anyone other than the emperor, so confessing Jesus Christ as Lord put one's life at risk.
- Because of their loyalty to Christ, the believers did not succumb to persecution. This loyalty was born of gratitude to Him, and it grows and strengthens as one's relationship with Him deepens.

Psalms 103:2 (NET) “Praise the Lord, O my soul. Do not forget all his kind deeds.”

5. Faith

- When the New Testament speaks of “faith,” it means neither doctrine nor creed, but rather complete trust in Jesus Christ accompanied by self-abandonment (deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow me).
- When he speaks about unity in faith, he is referring to Christians being joined together as one, overwhelmed by the love of Christ and willing to surrender everything to him.

 When was the last time you sincerely thanked God for his love?


6. Baptism

- Baptism is an external expression of what has happened within our hearts. It is also the entryway into the Church. As Roman soldiers had to swear an oath of eternal allegiance to the Roman emperor at their initiation into the army, so in the Lord's church we publicly confess our allegiance to Jesus Christ.
- Our faith is in God, and baptism is a sign of membership in Heaven and in the family of God.

 Have you ever felt the joy of being a citizen (family member) of the Kingdom of God?

7. God/Father

- By simultaneously referring to both God and Father at the same time, Paul is making it clear that our God is also our Father. God's “love” is forever hidden in him.
- The most important and unique characteristic of the God of Christianity (the Bible) is that He is called neither Lord (Master) nor Judge, but Father. The Christian view of God begins and ends with Love. He is above all things (sovereign), through all things (center), and in all things (co-eternal), and He guides us. His motivation is love.
- We are to remember that He is above all that is happening around us and within us, that He is in control, that He bears the brunt of our problems and fights for us, and that He is within us, sustaining us.

 God is deeply involved in all the problems that we experience, and He wants us to learn something meaningful through them.

Conclusion:

- Which of these seven keys resonates most with you right now? Why?
- What light does the fact that God knows your every situation and is deeply involved in every detail of each of them shed on the problems you are having?
- What hope can you find in the fact that God's love pervades your entire life?