

Chapter 14

There Must Be Unity

“... how good ... [it is] for brethren to
dwell together in unity!”
– Psalm 133:1

THERE MUST BE UNITY

In Psalm 133:1, it says, “*Behold, how good*”, or beautiful and bountiful, “*and how pleasant*”, or enjoyable, “*it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*” In order to be the church that people need, as we've stressed throughout the series, it must be our purpose, it must be our determination, our intention, our objective to do the Lord's business, the Lord's way, for His Honor, and for His glory. That should be our aspiration, that should be our quest. In this quest there must be unity. I'm not just talking about unity in a business meeting and being pleasant with one another, either. The unity I'm talking about is a unity of objective to do the Lord's work, the Lord's way, which is far, far more important than whether we agree on what to do with the lawn, or what to do with this or that. That is why we can not allow people to become members who are not in unity with the objective of doing the Lord's work, the Lord's way, for His honor, and for His glory.

Unity of purpose is absolutely essential to the well being of a business, the well being of a home, and certainly to the well being of a church. It is absolutely essential to the effectiveness of a New Testament Baptist church. By this unity, we mean that there must be harmony, there must be accord, there must be uniformity in doing the Lord's work the Lord's way. It must be a joint effort. There must be a partnership, a solidarity among the members of Home Baptist Church concerning the objective, concerning what it is that we are here for.

In this message I want to cover that if we're going to be the church that people need, there must be a shared purpose, we must have the same purpose. I believe that there are times when a church can agree on how things ought to be done as far as maintenance or who to have for a revival or whatever and still not be in unity. There has to be a unity of purpose. There has to be a unity in what it is that we are working toward. We want to look at this unity.

The New Testament has much to say about unity, which is described in the New Testament. In Acts 4:32, the

writer is talking about the church, *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul:”* The unity that we're interested in is unity of purpose, we're all moving in the same direction spiritually. It is described as being of one heart, one soul. A multiplicity of people that are one. Certainly, a unity of heart includes, that we're compassionate to one another, have sympathy for one another, affections toward one another. But, it's much more than that. It is being of one heart, one soul, striving to reach one particular objective, doing the Lord's work, the Lord's way.

It is also described as being of the same mind. In Romans 12:16, Paul says, *“Be of the same mind one toward another.”* He describes this as being like minded later on in Romans 15:5 and 6, *“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth”*, a multiplicity of people having one mind, having one mouth, thinking the same way. I don't care if we differ on whether the grass should be 2 inches long or 3 inches long. I don't care. But, when it comes to the faith, when it comes to doing the Lord's business, the Lord's way, we need to be one mind, we need to all speak the same thing. One mind, one mouth, glorifying the Lord. In 2nd Corinthians 13:11, *“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect,”*, be mature, be sincere, *“be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace;”* and I believe being of one mind will result in living in peace, *“and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”* That is, be of one mind in the right thing and God will bless that. He always does.

Philippians 2:2, *“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded”*. The Bible also speaks of those in Philippians 3:15, who are otherwise minded. Those who are otherwise minded are the ones you have to look out for, the ones you have to watch. Again, I'm not talking about petty things that really don't matter. I'm talking about things that do matter, the things that we're here for, doing the Lord's work. Watch those who are otherwise minded.

Watch those who have a different objective. That's why you can not have members come in and set the terms, because we already have an objective. You're either on board with that objective or you're not. If you're not on board with that objective, you need to go somewhere where you can be on board with their objective or whatever your objective might be.

1st Peter 3:8. *“Finally, be ye all of one mind”*. There it is again, *one mind*, we're to think alike. I keep reminding you, we're talking about doing the Lord's work, the Lord's way. We're to be of one mind when it comes to spiritual things.

We see also this unity is described as being perfectly joined together in mind and in judgment. 1st Corinthians 1:10, says, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but”*, that is rather than there being divisions, *“that ye be perfectly”*, or absolutely, completely, entirely, and totally, *“joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”* A church is in great danger when they can not agree on disciplinary matters, doctrinal matters, in the direction that we ought to be going. That church is in trouble. That church is in danger of ceasing to be what people need if they already haven't. We must be perfectly joined together in mind and in judgment.

We should all be perfectly joined together in thinking. It is not our goal to please and entertain the ungodly, to get as many members as we can possibly get. Our goal is to be pure and to do the Lord's work, the Lord's way. We need to be perfectly joined together in that. We can vote to buy a refrigerator and some one may want to buy one size and some may want to buy the other. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about a unity that's far, far greater than that, far, far more important. The truth is we can disagree on the size of a refrigerator we should buy and still be the church that we ought to be. But, you can't disagree on the objective, you can't disagree on the purpose and continue to

be the church that people need. This unity is to be perfectly joined together.

It is also described as living in peace. In 2nd Corinthians 13:11, 1st Thessalonians 5:13, say live in peace with one another. It is also described as a unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. In Ephesians 4:3. "*Endeavouring*", that speaks of earnest and industrious effort, "*to keep*", to keep is to guard, it implies that you already have it. Paul here, is talking to a church that's not experiencing division, he's talking to a church that has unity. He says you need to endeavor, you need to be earnest to guard the unity that you have. If you're thinking the same thing, you're of the same mind, you're all moving in the same direction spiritually, you all have the same goal of doing God's work, God's way, for His honor, and for His glory. You need to guard that unity. You must not let anything come in that would weaken that unity in any way. "So and so wants to join the church but they don't believe in singing the songs that we sing." You better beware. "They don't believe what we preach." You better beware. It's not worth it. "Well they have a large family, it would really add to our membership." It's not worth it. They are joining us, and we already know what direction we're going and they must be in unity. They must be in unity with our objective, which again is to do God's work.

Paul says to this church who had unity that they needed to work very hard to guard it. We need to work hard to guard the unity we have. If you let down, you will soon allow people in that are not in unity. You need to guard against that. You need to watch. Romans 16, says you watch those who cause divisions. You'd better watch them, and if they continue to do so, you had better do something about it, because you must keep, you must keep unity.

Paul says, you endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit. It is the unity that the Holy Spirit has produced. God the Holy Spirit is our teacher and He teaches us the same things and He causes us to be in agreement. You endeavor

and you work very earnestly to keep that unity that the Spirit of God has produced. This is in the bond of peace. We're talking about a relationship we have with one another. We have a tie, a link. God has added us to the same body. That means that those whom God has added, God has linked us together. We must guard to keep that unity. The bond of peace speaks of friendship, fellowship, partnership, association, and attachment to one another. It's the Holy Spirit that has produced all of this. This is more than being kind to one another. Certainly, it's all included, but it's much more important than that. It's much more important than whether or not we should send \$1,000 or \$1,200 to a missionary. This unity of objective is something far more important than that. We can not be the church that people need if you have a membership that's moving in all different directions. It's not possible. We must all be moving in the same direction. I don't have a problem with people voting against matters that are not spiritual. They don't believe that we should spend "x" amount of dollars on such and such; I don't have a problem with them voting against that; you can vote against it. However, once the church has decided, I do have a problem if they continue and take on a crusade about it; now we've got a problem.

I do have a problem when people vote against spiritual things; when it is a spiritual matter moving in a direction toward Christ. I have a real problem with what most people do today when they would really vote against something, they abstain. In other words, "I'm against it but I don't have the backbone to tell you." You're either for it or against it, and when it comes to spiritual matters, we need to be moving in the same direction.

We see also this unity is described as one body and the whole body. This is very important. 1st Corinthians 12:12, "*For as the body*", the human body, "*is one, and hath many members*", I have 2 arms, I have 2 legs, 2 eyes, 2 ears, but I'm one body, you cut this body in half, it ceases to be one body, for as the physical body is one and hath many

THERE MUST BE UNITY

members, *“and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ”*, or so also is the body of Christ, *“For by one Spirit are we”*, that is the body, the local body of Christ, *“all baptized into one body”*, it not 2 bodies, it's one body, one body with the same objective. Verse 20, *“But now are they many members, yet but one body.”* One body. Ephesians 4:4, *“There is one body”*, it's talking about the local congregation, *“and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;”* Verse 16, *“From whom the whole body”*. We're to operate as one body, as a whole. That which is whole is complete. We are to operate as a complete body. That is everybody that is in that body, is on the same page, moving in the same direction at least wanting to go in the same direction. There are not 5 or 6 different spiritual objectives. There is one and that is to do the Lord's work, the Lord's way, for His honor, and for His glory.

So we're one body. “One” speaks of the unit, speaks of a combining. We're to be a whole body. That means we're to be intact, unbroken. Someone gets angry because another person has been disciplined and removed from the membership of church. Someone gets angry because of a truth that has been preached and they stay out of the church. You're now no longer operating as a whole body. You've got a problem, and it is a problem that must be addressed. One body, a whole body. Home Baptist Church is to be one body. Home Baptist Church is to be a whole body. It applies to all things, but we're talking about the most important thing of all, spiritual matters.

This unity is also described as being tempered, framed, and joined together. Again, notice 1st Corinthians 12:24, he's comparing a physical body to the church as a body, and he says, *“For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered”*, that is, God has harmonized and God has proportioned, *“the body together”*. When God adds to a church, He does so in a way that produces harmony. I don't believe the Lord is going to add anybody that is going to take

away. He adds those who are truly an addition. There is a harmony, there is a proportioning. The Lord knows what we need. Believe it or not, the Lord knows what kind of church members you need and when God adds, He proportions together just what we need. This is the unity that we're talking about. God hath tempered or mingled, harmonized, and proportioned the body together. That word together speaks of unity.

In Ephesians 2:21, *"In whom all the building fitly"*, harmoniously, *"framed"*, which means bound and welded, *"together"*. This is how God adds. We are fitly framed, bounded and welded together, and when this happens, it *"groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:"*. Paul puts it this way in Ephesians 4:16, *"From whom the whole body fitly joined"*, when it's fitly joined, it's organized. God doesn't create a mess. God does everything in order, and if a church is in a mess, that's not God's doing, it is *"fitly"*, framed, bound and welded together, *"fitly joined"*, or organized, *"together and compacted"*, that is pressed firmly together. God wanted a His church in Mount Morris, Michigan, and God has added to that church. What He has done, He has brought people from various backgrounds, people from various parts of the country, and He has organized them together and we're to keep that unity.

He has compacted, pressed them firmly together. Why did he do that? So that we could decide what size refrigerator we need? No, I don't think so. He did that so his work would be done in His way in Mount Morris, Michigan. Each one that God has added, He's compacted them together. Now it is our responsibility to endeavor to keep and to guard that unity. We can not allow anything to weaken that unity. We can not allow an individual, a family, or anything to threaten that unity of purpose, that objective.

Paul talks about this unity as being in one spirit, one mind striving together. Philippians 1:27, says *"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of*

your affairs, that ye stand fast”, that you stand firm, that you stand unmovable. “Well I think we ought to buy red carpet and I'm not moving from that.” That's not what he's talking about. “I think we ought to have pork at the conference rather than whatever else and I'm not moving.” That's not what he's talking about. He's talking about spiritual things. He's talking about unity of doctrine, purpose, and objective, *that ye stand fast*. That ye do so in one spirit, one attitude, and one frame of mind. We are here to do God's business, God's way, for His honor, and for His glory, and we're going to stand fast in that, and we are of one attitude and one frame of mind. When somebody comes along and says, “Oh I don't think we ought to do it that way.” The whole church stands fast and says, “This is the way we're doing it, and if you don't like it, you can go somewhere else.”

We're stand in one attitude, one frame of mind, with one judgment, striving together. That speaks of an effort. Striving together, not separately, striving together for the faith of the gospel, for the truth of the gospel. We must guard that unity. There are all kinds of wolves and every now and then, a wolf will creep in. Every now and then a false teacher might creep in, but they'll manifest themselves, they always do. And when they do, you must take action. You must. “Oh that's unkind, we need to teach them.” You need to take action, because it is our duty to guard this unity.

The “wolves” all work the same way. I've never seen them work differently. They have the knack, the ability, the talent of finding the weakest member in the church. I'm talking spiritually. They'll pull them to the side and they'll begin to pay them compliments and, oh they'll begin to build them up. Then they'll begin to tell them, “You're not appreciated, you're not appreciated by this church.” Then they'll begin to tell them what they think, and they've got them. Then they'll go to the next one and as soon as you see that happening, the church needs to stand fast and put a stop to it, because it will spread. In every church, there are sheep, there are mature sheep and immature sheep. We have a

responsibility to protect the immature sheep. We have a responsibility to watch over them and to protect them from the wolves. This is all part of guarding this unity.

There must be a joint effort, a joint cooperation, an effort of partnership, an effort of working in tandem, working side by side, shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand, toward that one goal, doing the Lord's work, the Lords' way, for His honor and glory. Yes we may disagree on what color the hymn books should be, we may disagree on what color the pews should be, what color the carpet should be, what kind of piano we should buy, what kind of organ we should buy, what kind of pulpit we should have, but you can not disagree on the objective and truth.

Hopefully, when you disagree, somebody doesn't go, "I want blue. I want green." Hopefully people realize, "You know, we all have the same objective, and that is to do God's work God's way, and I don't care if the hymn books are red or blue." It doesn't matter because it has nothing to do with doing the Lord's work. We need to realize that when we have differences of opinion on some things, we need to realize, "You know what, that really isn't all that important, and I need and I realize that this brother over here or this sister over here, though they may think it should be done a different way, I think we should buy something else, a different model, we're still working toward that same objective, and we're not going to let anything weaken that unity."

This unity is described as being of one accord. Philippians 2:2, says, "*Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*" That speaks of agreement, speaks of concurrence, compatibility, being of one accord. The goal is not to appease the ungodly, to make them feel comfortable, to make them feel non-threatened. The goal is doing the Lord's work, that's the goal. And we must be of one accord, if we're going to continue to be the church that people need, we must be of one accord in these things that matter.

THERE MUST BE UNITY

Philippians 3:16 describes this unity as walking by the same rule. Our rule of faith and practice is the word of God and we must all walk by the same rule. “Yes I know what the Bible says, but...”. We must walk by the same rule, the word of God.

Let's look at the characteristics of this unity. We're told in our text in Psalm 133:1, it is good. That is, it's an excellent thing. It's a very acceptable thing, to be in unity concerning the Lord's work. It's the right thing. It's a good thing, it's an admirable thing. It's said that it's good and pleasant, that is, that it's enjoyable.

After 5 years, when I went to Faith in Streamwood, the first couple of years there, every single message preached was challenged by someone. Every single week. It didn't matter what I preached, someone wanted to argue. Someone wanted to challenge. I learned very, very quickly that before I preach, I'm going to know what I'm talking about. I'm going to be able to confront all of their objections. You know what, when you don't have that unity, it's not very enjoyable. It's not an enjoyable thing to come to church when there is division over doctrine. For the most part, I love preaching, I enjoy preaching. But back then, I couldn't hardly stand it. I dreaded it because I knew that afterward there was going to be an argument, there was going to be a challenge. But with unity, when we're all on the same page, spiritually, that's enjoyable. It's a very satisfying thing. It's a very pleasing thing.

You know I've learned through the years that I can disagree with somebody over money or what color the hymn books should be, but as long as we're in unity of purpose, that's really what matters. You can overlook a lot of things by just realizing, “You know what, we're on the same page. We're moving in the same direction.” I believe that for the most part that is true of Home Baptist Church. We have the same objective. I'll be honest, there are some I'm not so sure about. But for the most part, we have the same objective spiritually. We must guard that unity.

THERE MUST BE UNITY

He also says in Psalm 133:2, that this unity, “... *is like the precious ointment ...*”. He's talking about oil. The nature of this oil is to heal that which is wounded. Unity has the ability to heal that which is wounded. Somebody can say something that hurts your feelings, but when you realize, “You know what, we're on the same page, we're striving for the same things, in the long run.” That has a healing effect. It heals wounds. People who get their feelings hurt and then don't darken the door of the church for 6 months, I seriously question their objective. I believe their objective is themselves and not doing the Lord's work, the Lord's way.

Also the nature of oil is to soften that which is hard. I tell you what, it's pretty hard to have hardness of heart toward a brother or sister in Christ when you're moving in the same direction, when you have the same objective. It's pretty hard.

This unity is for the good of the people of God. Jeremiah 32:39, “*And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever*”, then notice what it says, “*for the good of them*”, for their own good, “*and of their children after them.*” You know what happens to children that grow up in a church where there's constant fighting over spiritual matters? They either leave the church or they become just like that. God help us. Unity is for the good of the people.

Unlike division within the church, unity gives liberty to the preaching of the word. When there is division of doctrine, when there is division of spiritual objective, people are not going to learn as much as they could. Remember Paul said to the church of Corinth, I wanted to speak to you about spiritual things, but you're not able to handle it because of the divisions. And when a pastor has to address all the issues that's going on all of the time, it really takes away from the teaching of the word of God, and it becomes destructive. But unity, unlike division, enables people to properly hear the preaching of the word, which is to their own spiritual benefit. Ephesians 4:12 and 13, say that this

THERE MUST BE UNITY

unity is edifying to the church. If we're going to be the church that people need, there must be unity.

There must be a unity of burden. We must have the same burden, and that is to please God, to do everything for His honor and His glory. There must be a unity of purpose. When there is a unity of burden when there is a unity of purpose, there will also be a unity of priority. We have the same priority to honor and glorify the Lord.

And there's a unity that makes us ready to do whatever it is that God would have us to do. It's a unity of devotion, and it's a unity of steadfastness. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit. This is absolutely necessary if we are going to continue to be the church that people need. Every now and then something will come up to manifest a wrong heart in someone. Every now and then trouble will creep in. And in all those times, what is most important is that the church stands for the truth, that you just stand together no matter how difficult it is, no matter how trying it might be, no matter how many people leave. This is where we stand. People need to know that. Everybody that desires to be a member of Home Baptist Church needs to know this is where we stand, and if you're going to join with us, this is where you stand also. There must be unity, there must be agreement. God help us to continue to be the church that people need.