

## I. Introduction

- A. We are The Body of Christ, brought together by The One Spirit of God.
- The definition of **unity** is the state of being one; oneness; a whole or totality as combining all its parts into one; the state or fact of being united or combined into one, as of the parts of a whole; oneness of mind, feeling, etc., as among a number of persons; concord, harmony, or agreement.
- B. United we stand and we win In Christ...
- We are a team of believers In Jesus Christ and we come together like other teams when they huddle (gather) together and get the strategies from the Word of God to go out and win against the enemy. We come together to hear the Word of God and we work the Word in our lives, giving us the ability to go out and overcome obstacles; allow the light of Jesus to shine through us, and win souls for the Kingdom of God. Some churches may not be meeting in one room yet, but still connect by the internet or phone lines to connect so we are always ready to execute the plan and win. We don't do this alone, but in unity. We know in the end, with Jesus Christ, we win.
  - As we look around today at the church, does it look like we are winning? Are we really connecting and being obedient to the Word of God? Standing firmly together?
- C. But a house divided cannot stand!
- Unfortunately, there are many things that divide us: denominations, age, race, gender, status, special interests, moral beliefs, political parties, state by state, nations, religious beliefs, music preference, and even food.
  - (1) "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:" Matthew 12:25 (KJV)
  - (2) "I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose". 1 Corinthians 1:10 (NLT)
- D. Questions to ask ourselves: Am I allowing anything to pull me away or separate me from the unity of the body of Christ? Am I causing division in the church? Is there more I can do to bring more unity?

## II. Unity Is A Response To The Word Of God

- A. Too often believers are separated because of minor differences in doctrine. But here in Ephesians 4 Paul shows those areas where Christians must agree to attain true unity. When believers have this unity of spirit, petty differences should never be allowed to dissolve that unity.
- "Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all. However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly

world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love". Ephesians 4:1-16 NLT

- "God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love—like Christ in everything. We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love." Ephesians 4:15-16 (TMB)
- B. Let's review what the Bible says about love.
- "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance". 1 Corin. 13:4-7 (NLT)
  - "Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8 (NLT)
- C. We don't just do things together, but we must love one another while being together. The first commandment:
- "Jesus replied, 'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind 'A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.'" Matthew 22:37-40 (NLT)
- D. It's time to do a heart check, examine ourselves, and see if there is a need for a reset? And ask: Am I loving as I should? Am I loving God with all my heart soul and mind and am I really loving my neighbor as myself? Am I being fruitful, walking in the Spirit in love, peace, kindness, patience, meekness, self-control? Or in the flesh in selfishness? Am I speaking blessings and life or curses and death over myself and others? How can I share more love to my brothers and sisters in Christ?

### **III. The Use Of Spiritual Gifts**

- A. "Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of

us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. <sup>1</sup>It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have” 1Corinthians 12:1-11

#### **IV. One Body With Many Parts**

- A. “The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,” that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, “I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,” would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.” In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it. Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts. But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all.” 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 (NLT)
- B. The Amplified version of verse 31 says: “But earnestly desire and strive for the greater gifts [if acquiring them is going to be your goal]. And yet I will show you a still more excellent way [one of the choicest graces and the highest of them all: unselfish love].”

#### **V. Live As Citizens Of Heaven Representing Christ At All Times**

- A. “Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing

together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News."

Philippians 1:27

- In this scripture Paul tells the Philippians to live as citizens of heaven, know who they are in Christ. Remember, wherever we are, we are representing The Body of Christ, in our homes, in our jobs, in school, in the grocery stores, in the restaurants, at the mall, walking at the park, in meetings for our children, on the phone with our friends, and on social media.
- Jesus gave us instructions... "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
  - (1) "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT)

## VI. Conclusion

A. Let's ask ourselves: Am I really representing JESUS at all times? Am I allowing HIS light to shine through me? The answer should be Yes!

B. Let's make a few declarations:

### I declare that—

- I am a new creature in Christ and His love and light shines through me!
  - I am victorious in Christ Jesus
  - I am asking Holy Spirit for more of Him and less of me
  - I am loving everyone around me
  - I am working together in harmony in the Body of Christ
  - I am walking in obedience to the call of my life
  - I am the righteousness of God
  - I am about my Father's business
  - I am a Kingdom Builder leading people to Christ
  - My character cultivates unity and not division
  - The words of my mouth and meditation of my heart is acceptable in the sight of God.
  - I will pray and think before I speak
  - I will encourage and not tear down.
  - I will lovingly solve conflicts
- C. I close tonight with these words from 2 Corinthians 13:11, 14 NLT: "Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."