

Sermon Notes by Pastor Jamie Tonge



That they may be one.

Reading - John 17: 20-26.

It is God's heart that the church is in unity. The two questions we must ask are "what did he mean by unity" and "what must we do to see it happen"?

The word unity is found only twice in the NT and only three times in the OT.

Eph 4:3, Eph 4:13

Jesus talks far more of us being one, the Greek word *hice* means to be one. Whereas the word unity *hen-ot-ace* means unanimity.

The word one, *hice*, is found 282 times in the NT.

1. What does it look like?

Unity in the church has more to do with being one in Christ than anything else.

Christ is one with the Father 17:21

See also John 14, 15 & 17

John 17:22-23, one with Him one with each other.

NT church unity was measured by its Christ likeness not the outward expression of types and forms of government, worship, or tradition.

See in Acts 2 for example see how many times the words, all, together, one place.

There united actions came out of there common experience of there relationship with Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

John 13:35, has every thing to do with relationship with God and each other as a first priority.

2. Being one is God's heart.

From Gen: to Rev: it is God's heart for the people of God to be one in heart and mind from the garden of Eden through the Old Testament in to the new this content theme runs like a river . The divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel were never His plan only man's sin and disobedience allowed this to happen.

The New Testament constantly shows the heart of God that He wants His people to be one in Him.

Rom: 12:4-5, 1 Cor: 10:17, 1 Cor: 12:12-20, Eph: 4:3-6, Eph: 4:25, Gal: 3:28, Col: 3:11-17, The Church is one body with many different parts.

3 Being one is the devil's worst nightmare.

To divide the Church is one of his greatest strategies, the more division the less effective the Church is.

Not physical division caused by persecution or even the differences in styles of worship, tradition or even to some degree doctrine.

In some ways these can be a blessing when they happen because of growth. Persecution will eventually bring growth to the Church.

It is the division of hearts and minds, of relationships the arguments over hurt pride. The bickering over minor issues and the breaking of fellowship and the break down of covenant living in Christ. These are the things that will destroy the work of the Church and render Her powerless.

The church must learn to deal with its disagreements in a Godly manner.
(see notes on confrontation)

Eph: 4:2-3, 1 Peter: 5:8; Eph: 6:11; 2 Cor: 2:10-11.

4 Being one is a struggle for the flesh.

Here are a few reasons why our self life may struggle with the concept of oneness in Christ.

The battle for control.

There is always the risk that the unity of us all working together will mean that I can't maintain control of what is happening around me, if we look at the early Church in [Acts: 2:42](#) and [Acts: 4:32](#) and we will see much of there life has been taken up by the lifestyle of the fellowship of the believers. This may not always be the case but it is a possibility.

The fear of losing my identity.

I will become just a number or a clone, but this is not God's heart for us. He knows your name and mine too. He loves his Church to be one but we are never lost as an individual in His sight and in His body.

The fear of faults doctrine.

Sadly there are those who, not always deliberately, come to fellowship with the mind set that they must make sure that the theology in the Church is correct and so they become the sentinels of pure doctrine and miss out because of a wrong focus and attitude. Instead of an open heart to receive from God, His word and the worship and fellowship of God's people, time is spent constantly checking to make sure the preacher is doctrinally sound. It is easy to fall in to and usually from a pure motive to be biblical in our teaching, yet it can cause such division as the focus has moved from bringing worship and receiving from God to monitoring others.

The struggle of diversity.

We mistake uniformity for unity, we fall into the trap that we are the only ones with all truth and our way of worship is the only way.

God will use all manner of different traditions and styles of worship, we express our worship from the heart that is more important than the style or tradition. God does not make clones He is too creative for that, our acts of worship should reflect that.

The New Testament church reflects this. The church in Jerusalem is different to the church in Antioch. One was a Jewish culture the other was gentile culture. Yet they maintained unity they did not allow their obvious differences to get in the way.

5 Being one the Jesus way.

Let's look at the followers of Jesus. There were the 12 who he called to be apostles.

Matthew: 10:2-4.

There were also other men and women **Luke: 8:1-3.**

By the time of **Acts: 1** there were some 120 +.

In the space of 3 years Jesus took this group and deposited in them his life, teaching and ministry filled them with the Holy Spirit and they were ready to win the world. There was no compromise with Him. He took their differences and they really were different. No-one would have believed that it was possible to get these people together they were so different yet he did if he could do it with them he could do it with us.

How?

(a) He loved them unconditionally

- Gave Himself to them and for them.
- Was totally honest with them.
- Trusted them
- Gave them the opportunity to succeed or fail.

(b) Jesus never

- Criticised them
- Belittled them
- Lied to them
- Left them
- Stopped them leaving
- Stopped believing in them
- He was never disillusioned with them

Jesus is the same with us to day let's get radical let's major on the major things that He did and minor on the things He minored on.