

“Christ’s Call to Unity”

John 17:11-26

Introduction

We need God to command a blessing to the church and through the church into the world. Our world is waiting for us to bring them unified truth, in love, for the glory of God.

Believers in Christ Jesus are called to bring God’s kingdom to earth through our unity. Instead, it appears as if we are living in a day of great divide. We cannot expect the structures of society to work when we, the structure of His own people, refuse to work in alignment with His standard. Just as the three persons of the Triune God work with a singular purpose, we should also work toward the same biblical goal.

To determine what the standard of unity should be, we must intentionally be sanctified by the Holy Spirit through God’s Word. His Word teaches us how to live and stand on common ground. Divine revelation is the absolute standard by which reality should be measured, and God has given us a precept or a principle on every matter.

While there are legitimate divisions surrounding topics such as sin and false doctrine, sometimes believers tend to focus more on the illegitimate divide around race, history, culture, etc. For example, we can become more concerned about membership than fellowship. The Bible says, “let God be true and every man a liar” (Rom 3:4). We are brothers and sisters in Christ first, and we cannot accept anything as truth if it contradicts God’s Word. Learning the truth and living by the truth are crucial: when people lose truth, they live in bondage.

The root of our disunity can often be tied to our lack of love – the kind of godly love that decides, in advance, to seek compassionately, righteously and responsibly the well-being of another. Obeying Christ’s call to unity starts with the decision to love others and to do so with empathy. When on display, love is like a welcoming meal which meets a need in a way that communicates care, honor and understanding through the lens of truth.

Getting Started

1. What actions have you seen in recent weeks where one person or group of people intentionally shared love with another despite the difficult social circumstances and unrest?
2. What challenging situations are you aware of from recent weeks that could have been averted with a loving response?

Let’s Get Personal

1. To love others well, we must do so from a standard of unity and truth. This standard comes from God’s Word. What does it look like for you to sanctify yourself with truth (cf. John 17:17)?
2. Have you ever had a belief system that was contrary to what the Word of God teaches? What did you believe? How did you conform your belief system to God’s Word?
3. Discuss the nuances or subtle differences between compassion, sympathy and empathy. What does it look like, in this day and age, to love others well with those emotional considerations?

Take the Next Step

1. People need to see a visible and verbal declaration of God’s glory, and we can do that as believers in His Son, Jesus Christ. Considering the troubles we face in our country, how can you bring a vision of Christ into your world or share His truth with others?

2. Dr. Evans described love on display as “a welcoming meal.” Why is it important that people feel welcomed – especially those who are different than you and not from your typical circles of influence? What does it look like to make people feel welcomed and loved?
3. Want to go deeper? Take a look at the following passages: Matthew 27:46; Exodus 21:16; Romans 3:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; Leviticus 23:22; John 3:16; 13:35; 1 Peter 3:7-10; 1 Corinthians 7:5; and Psalm 133.

Renew Your Mind

*“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”
John 17:17*
