

For Christians, being the body of Christ is both symbol and reality. If there is no reality, then the meaning of the symbol is also lost. The function as Christ's body on earth presupposes a unity, not only in belief and purpose, but in our relationships, a unity "in spirit and in truth."

But what is the nature of this unity? And to maintain it, what do we do when unity breaks down?

As Jesus prepared to leave His disciples, to carry on His work, with great love and concern, He prayed for them. Scan John 17 which is His prayer. Read especially verses 11 and 20-23. What did Jesus pray for?

Read Psalm 133:1; Acts 4:32; I Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:32; Philippians 2:1&2; I Peter 3:8.

What is the focus of all these verses?

Read Matthew 18:19-20

The Holy Spirit brings us into unity with each other. This unity among believers not only reflects the new life the Spirit of Christ gives us, but has a powerful purpose. What is Jesus saying in these verses? What implications do these verses have for my life? What implications do these verses have for our life together as a church?

But Jesus knew us very well. He knew that "being one" with each other wouldn't always be easy. He knew how easily we can hurt each other's feelings, how tempting it is to want things "our own way," how quickly a thoughtless word or action can build barriers between us.

Read Matthew 5:23-24

What is the context for these verses? (vv 21,23) What should I do if there is some hurt or anger or barrier between me and someone else? This has to be done before I can do what? Why is this so important? (See John 4:20 and Matthew 6:14)

Food for thought

Do I experience the oneness Scripture speaks about with the Christians I am with most often?

December 4, 2016

Jim Edwards



Sermon Notes