

Evotional

Date: 18th November 2007 (pm).
Speaker: Neil Durling.
Message title: “Unity.”



Bible passage: Ephesians 4:1-16:

The passage is too long for this page.

The message in brief:

In Christian history the unity of the Trinity has sometimes been called “the dance of God”. In this passage Paul looks at the church’s unity. It is also a transition point in the book from theology (thoughts about God) to morality (our action). Paul writes so many things: Everything is one under God (4-6), everything comes from Jesus who came down to earth to make it happen (7-10), and we all have different ministries that build us up and unite us. These ministries also remind us that our unity isn’t shown in uniformity, rather, it is shown in the midst of diversity (11-16).

In the first three verses we see the following thoughts about unity:

A: Church unity is crucial (1):

Paul urges them to live a life worthy (lit. “bringing up the other beam of the scales”) of the calling they have received (1). Their calling is not attained by human effort, but they need to find a balance between what they profess and their practice.

B: Church unity is cultivated by us (2):

Paul asks them to be completely humble and gentle; “be patient, bearing with one another in love”. He reminds them of four qualities that help cultivate church unity:

- *Humility:* The opposite of high mindedness.
- *Gentleness:* This is a controlled strength; you could “crush” the other person but choose not to.
- *Patience:* This is one of God’s characteristics shown in his reluctance to avenge wrongs (Rom. 12:10, 18).
- *Forbearance:* This means that we bear with one another (lit. “hold him up”). We put up with faults and idiosyncrasies.

Even so, living in unity is hard; just take a look at the disciples and early church! That’s why verse three is so important...

C: Church unity comes from the Holy Spirit (3):

Paul tells them to make every effort (a resolute determination to overcome) to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Unity isn’t something we have to create from nothing. It comes from the Holy Spirit who is the agent of unity for those in Christ (2:13-18). That unity comes through the “bond of peace” which is our salvation (Rom. 14:17, 15:13).

When does disunity come? When we don’t rely on the Spirit and cultivate the qualities God is hoping for.

Let’s be a people who seek unity where disunity is possible because it is crucial for a healthy church.

Question:

Am I disunited from anyone at BGBC? If the answer is “yes” what should/can I do to bring unity?

A prayer:

Father God,

Thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit who enables us to live in unity as Christians.

Amen.