

Unity in the Midst of Diversity

How can we gather together in true and sincere unity? How can we gather together, as sinful, and selfish individuals, in true and sincere unity? I am not talking about a unity that denies our differences, or ignores difficulty, or compromises the truth of the Scriptures, but a genuine and earnest unity, a unity that preserves the truth of the Scriptures, and acts as a compelling testimony to the world around us. How are we to interact with those in the church who are insensitive? How are we to interact with those in the church who are insulting? How are we to interact with those in the church who know better than the rest of us? How are we to interact with our church leaders, but still recognize that church leaders are also sinful? How are we to honestly critique an imperfect church without grumbling, and without being divisive? How can we live together in unity despite our ethnic differences, despite our political differences, despite our medical differences? As Christians, how can we respond to strong differing opinions without descending to frustration, irritation, anger, gossip, and slander? How are we to live in true and genuine unity when we all come from very different backgrounds?

Our passage this morning is Ephesians 4:1-6, which answers each one of these questions.

Ephesians 4:1-6, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Here in this passage Paul introduces us to the lowly walk of our high and exalted position. The term *therefore*, in v1, marks a transition from the positional truth of this letter, to the practical truth of this letter. *Therefore*, marks the transition from principle to practice, from doctrine to duty. Ephesians chapters 1-3 is orthodoxy (right doctrine), and Ephesians chapters 4-6 is orthopraxy (right practice). Right doctrine leads to right practice. Right doctrine is essential to right living. Strong and unified churches do not come from programs, or from marketing campaigns, or from similar demographics, or from anything else that is external. Strong and unified churches come from truth –sound doctrine, doctrine that is being lived out through sanctified and holy lives.

In Ephesians 4:1, Paul is urging believers to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. In v1, there is a very helpful term that gives us great insight into the meaning of this appeal. The helpful term is *worthy*. How do you define the term worthy? This term means to be deserving, or to have value. It means to have a worth equal to one's position.

For example, a worthy opponent is an opponent whose gifts equal your own. A workman who is worthy of his hire is a workman whose service merits the wages that he receives. I find it helpful to think of this term as a scale in which the weight on the one side always equals the weight on the other. In the context of Ephesians 4, the weight of our practice must equal the weight of our doctrine. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones remarked,

“The Apostle is beseeching them and exhorting them always to give equal weight in their lives to doctrine and practice. They must not put all the weight on doctrine and none on practice; nor all the weight on practice and just a little, if any at all on doctrine. To do so produces imbalance and lopsidedness. The Ephesians must take great pains to see that the scales are perfectly balanced.”

What would be the result of scales that were tipped in favor of doctrine over practice? Doctrine without practice, doctrine without application, would be hypocrisy.

James 1:22, But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

What would be the result of scales that were tipped in favor of practice over doctrine? Practice without doctrine, application without doctrine, would be erroneous, it would be futility. Zeal for the LORD God is nothing, if it is not according to knowledge (Romans 10:2).

There must be an equal balance between your doctrine, what you believe, and the application of your doctrine, what you do. Paul is commanding believers to *walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called*. In other words, your daily actions must correspond to your high position as a child of God, as a joint heir with the LORD Jesus Christ. A worthy walk means that your practice will equal your position, being united with the LORD Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 4:2-6, Paul provides five characteristics, or five attitudes, that are worthy of the calling to which we have been called –humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, and an eagerness to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:1-2, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

1. Humility

The first attitude that should characterize those within the church, the first attitude that should characterize your life, is humility. What is humility? How do you define humility? The Greek translation of the word humility is a combination of two words, *low* and *to think*. Thus, humility literally means to think with lowliness. It refers to lowliness of mind, or to lowly thinking. There are several terms in the Scriptures that can be translated as humility, and most of them imply a bowing down, a stooping down, or a yielding to one another. The term entails a

mild and meek disposition, which are the attitudes that pertain to a servant or a slave. I think one of the best descriptions of humility is found in the book of Philippians.

Philippians 2:3-4, Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

To act in humility, is to act without selfish ambition. Selfish ambition describes those who seek personal advantage and personal gain, regardless of the effect that their actions have on those around them. The picture is of a person who builds themselves up by tearing everyone else down. To act in humility, is to act without conceit. The Greek word translated conceit is based on the compound word *kenodoxia*, which appears only here in the New Testament. It is a formation of two words, the adjective *kenos* meaning empty, and the noun *doxa* meaning glory. The literal translation of *kenodoxia* is *empty glory*, or *vain glory* as it is translated in the King James Version. The conceited have a highly exaggerated view of themselves. The conceited have a highly exaggerated view of their own self worth, and their importance. The conceited have swelled heads, an over inflated sense of their self image. A person with such conceit is in constant pursuit of their own acclaim, their own approval, and applause of others. These two attitudes stand in stark opposition to humility, for it is humility that *counts others more significant than yourselves*, it is humility that, first and foremost, looks to the interests of others.

The greatest, and most profound example of humility is the Gospel, God the Father sending God the Son into the world to be the sacrifice and substitute for sinners.

Philippians 2:6, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,

The LORD Jesus Christ *was in* the form of God. The phrase *he was in* refers to the essence of what a person is at the very core of their being. It denotes the continuance of a previous state or existence. It describes that which is true of a person, which cannot be changed, cannot be altered, and cannot be removed. In other words, being in the form of God, is a clear declaration of the divinity of Christ. He was in the form of God, which means that Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ, at the very core of his being, is God. Jesus Christ is unalterably and unchangeably God. But, even though the LORD Jesus Christ eternally existed as God, during his incarnation he refused to hold onto his divine rights and privileges, and he abandoned his exalted position.

Philippians 2:6-7, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

The LORD Jesus Christ gave up his glory, he gave up the full manifestation of his glory. All throughout his ministry, there were glimpses of his glory, in his miracles, in his words, and certainly in his transfiguration before Peter, James, and John, but the full blinding brilliance of

the glory of God was temporarily given up and laid aside. The LORD Jesus Christ showed great humility in his incarnation. But he was even further humbled by taking the form of a servant, and dying as a substitute for his people.

Philippians 2:6-8, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The LORD Jesus Christ came into this world, to do the Father's will. He came to serve the needs of his people, in the name of his Father, and his ultimate act of service was when he died on the cross to save sinners. Jesus Christ, existing in the form of God, abandoning his sovereign position, emptying himself, took the form of a servant, was born in the likeness of man, and humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. This, was and is, the supreme act of both love and humility. And this is the example that we are to follow. In the footsteps of Christ, we are to walk in humility, and put other people's needs before our own. To act in humility is to not think too highly of yourself, but to regard others as more important, and to live in the light of this truth.

1 Peter 5:5b-6, Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

The phrase *clothe yourselves* is used to describe the atmosphere of humility which should characterize those who belong to the LORD Jesus Christ. This phrase, *clothe yourselves*, literally means to tie something on yourself with a knot or a bow. It was a term that was used to describe a slave putting on an apron in order to perform their duties. This term often referred to the apron itself, something that set slaves apart from free men. The apron was a constant and visual reminder of their status as a slave. The idea behind this phrase is that all believers, regardless of age, race, class, gender, intelligence, vaccination status, must put on humility as you would put on an apron. The attitude of humility must be tied on. It must be fastened with a knot or bow. It must be permanently fixed to our lives, so much so that it is easily recognizable in our lives. So that we are distinguished as slaves belonging to the LORD Jesus Christ. The LORD God desires every one of us to be adorned with the grace of humility. In short, we must die to self. In our lives, and in our relationship with others, we must put others needs before our own needs.

One of my favorite quotes, by an unknown author, describes what this selflessness should look like in our everyday lives, he writes:

When you are forgotten or neglected or purposely set at naught, and you sting and hurt with the insult or the oversight, but your heart is happy, being counted worthy to suffer for Christ-that is dying to self. When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, or even defend yourself, but take all in patient loving silence-that is dying

to self. When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, or any annoyance, when you can stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility, and endure it as Jesus endured it-that is dying to self. When you are content with any food, any offering, any raiment, any climate, any society, any attitude, any interruption by the will of God-that is dying to self. When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, or to record your own good works, or itch after commendation, when you can truly love to be unknown-that is dying to self. When you see your brother prosper and have his needs met and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy nor question God, while your own needs are far greater and in desperate circumstances-that is dying to self. When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself, can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart-that is dying to self.

The LORD God is calling each one of us to put on the apron of humility and selflessness, and serve one another in love. The LORD God is calling each one of us to clothe ourselves with humility, and to strive to put others before ourselves. In life, we must live with an *others-centered* mentality, rather than a self-centered mentality. And the only way to live in this way, the only way to serve others in humility and selflessness, is to follow the example set by the LORD Jesus Christ (Philippians 2).

2. Gentleness

The second attitude that should characterize those within the church, the second attitude that should characterize your life is gentleness.

Ephesians 4:1-2, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

I want you to notice something about this passage. These five attitudes are progressive. They build upon one another; one attitude produces the other. You cannot have gentleness without humility. Gentleness is a by-product of humility. It is humility that produces gentleness.

Gentleness is the translation of the Greek word, *praotes*, meaning to have a mild, kind, and humble disposition. This word was commonly used to describe wild animals that had been tamed, especially of horses that had been broken and trained. Which is stronger, a wild horse or a broken horse? Which is faster, a wild horse or a broken horse? Broken horses still have all their strength. Broken horses still have all their spirit, the difference is that a broken horse is under the control of his master. Gentleness is power under control. It is a mild, quiet, gentle, and pleasant spirit. It is a soothing, non-vengeful, non-retaliating, non-vindictive, non-bitter, non-reacting, non-defensive, non-self-assertive spirit that is in subjection to the will of the Master, the LORD Jesus Christ. Gentleness goes right along with self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Husbands and wives who are not gentle with their spouses lack self-control. Children who are not gentle with their siblings lack self-control. People who get angry at every irritation, people who get annoyed at every inconvenience, people who lash out at those who differ from them know nothing of true gentleness or self-control.

Proverbs 16:32, Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

A good indicator of gentleness is the ability to control your anger. Do you exercise self-control amidst conflict? Are you able to rule over your own spirit? Or, do you lose your temper? Do you brood over the conflict? Do you brood when circumstances do not go your way? Gentleness is far more effective than being harsh. The truth, when presented in a harsh and unloving manner, will often make men cling to their sins, and cling to their self-righteousness, even more tightly. The truth when presented with a harsh and unloving tone will often have the exact opposite effect of that which is actually desired. Presenting the truth in gentleness, presenting the truth in love, is far more effective, and it is far more fruitful.

Proverbs 15:1, A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Jonathan Edwards comments, "It is the duty of God's people to be steadfast and vigorous in their opposition to the designs and ways of such as are endeavoring to overthrow the kingdom of Christ and the interest of religion...If therefore we see any of the followers of Christ, in the midst of the most violent, unreasonable and wicked opposition, of God's and his own enemies, maintaining, under all this temptation, the humility and quietness and gentleness of a lamb, and the harmlessness and love and sweetness of a dove, we may well judge that here is a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

In the midst of disagreements, disunity, and discord, you must be gentle, and you must be humble.

3. Patience

Where there is all humility, there will be gentleness, and where there is gentleness, there will be patience. The third attitude that should characterize those within the church, the third attitude that should characterize your life is patience.

Ephesians 4:1-2, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

What does it mean to be patient? Patience means that you are long-suffering. It means that you are long tempered. It means that you are even tempered. A patient person bears any

provocation, annoyance, misfortune, or pain, without complaint, without irritation, and without the loss of temper. A patient person is tolerant and has a very long fuse. A patient person endures negative circumstances and never succumbs to them. A patient person, amidst trials and great difficulty, is able to stay the course, regardless of its twists and turns. The word patience can also be translated as endurance or long-suffering. It does not matter how bad things may get, patience, endurance, and long-suffering will never give into negative circumstances. What do I mean by that? Can you think of any biblical examples of men who were patient amidst great difficulty and trials?

A great example is Abraham. And what was it that Abraham was patiently waiting for? He was waiting for God's promise. The LORD God had promised Abraham an heir.

Genesis 12:2-3, And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3, I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Abraham is a great illustration of a man who endured negative circumstances and never ever lost his patience. Think about his situation. The LORD God says to him, you are going to have as many descendants as the sand of the sea, coming from your loins, and yet Abraham never had any children, the heir of his house of Eliezer of Damascus, his wife was barren, and he was over 90 years old. But Abraham believed the promise of God and he waited with patience.

Romans 4:18-22, In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." 19, He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. 20, No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22, That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."

In the midst of great difficulty, Abraham persevered. No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, even in the midst of hopeless circumstances, a barren wife and old age. What happened to Abraham?

Hebrews 6:15, And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise.

The LORD God gave Abraham and Sarah a son, Isaac, and it was Isaac who was the fulfillment of the promise, to make him a great nation.

Patience is the ability to persevere even in the most difficult of circumstances. It is the ability to not lose hope, to not lose your composure, to not lose your head. Patience should be manifest in your circumstances, and it should also be manifest in your dealings with other people. Oftentimes the problems that we encounter in life are not only circumstantial, but they are the result of sinful people around us. Patience is used in the Scriptures to speak of both patience in circumstances, and patience with people. Are you patient with other people? Are you patient with people who are less informed than you? Are you patient with people who have differing views than you? Are you patient with people who sin against you, or sin against those whom you love? How about when they offend you? How about when they wrongfully speak out against you? Are you patient?

1 Thessalonians 5:14, And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

Who are the idle? And what does it mean to admonish them? The idle are the wayward. This word was used in a military sense, it carries the idea of a soldier who was out of line, a soldier who had broken rank, or who was guilty of disorderly conduct. The idle are the insubordinate, those who disobey orders. The term eventually referred to anyone who failed to do their duty. It referred to anybody who failed to follow through with their responsibilities.

The idle are to be admonished. To admonish means to come alongside someone and to warn them. The term implies putting sense into someone's head, so that they are made aware of the consequences and the danger of the direction that they are heading. Think about a speeding car that is driving at night towards a bridge that is out. The driver may not know what is ahead of him. He may not know that the bridge is out. He may not know that he is in serious danger. This driver needs to be admonished, he needs to be warned, not in a condescending or critical way, but in a manner that urgently alerts him of impending danger that lies ahead, if he continues his course. Do not let the idle continue to follow their course. Rather, admonish the idle.

What about fainthearted, and what does it mean to encourage the fainthearted? The fainthearted are literally, the "small souled." This term describes those who cannot seem to rise above their problems. All of the issues and the difficulties of life are too much for them. All of the issues and the difficulties of life are more than they can bear. The fainthearted are the beaten down, the crushed; they are at the end of their ropes.

To encourage the fainthearted means to speak to, by coming close to their side. If you know someone that is fearful, or worried, or sad; if you know someone who is depressed or in despair and cannot seem to keep their head above water, you have got to come alongside them and speak truth to them. You have got to develop a caring relationship with them. You have got to come alongside them and console, comfort, strengthen, reassure, cheer up, and refresh them. The fainthearted need to be reminded of the hope of our calling. They need to be reminded of the providential hand of God, that the LORD God is over all things. They need to be reminded

of their great worth in the eyes of our Father God, who redeemed them by the blood of his precious Son. The fainthearted need to be reminded of the goodness and faithfulness of God.

Also, we are to help the weak. To whom does the weak describe? Not the physically weak, but to those who are weak in faith.

Matthew Henry remarks, “Some are not well able to perform their work, nor bear up under their burdens; we should therefore support them, help their infirmities, and lift at one end of the burden, and so help to bear it. It is the grace of God, indeed, that must strengthen and support such; but we should tell them of that grace, and endeavour to minister of that grace to them.

There are some who have tremendous burdens, and we are to help them, we are to lift at one end of the burden, we are to come alongside them, hold onto them, and firmly support them.

Romans 15:1-2, We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2, Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

We must admonish the idle, we must encourage the fainthearted, we must help the weak, and we must be patient with them all. To whom are we to be patient? With them all. To whom does the all refer? To those who try our patience –the idle, the fainthearted, and the weak. How patient are we to be with the idle, the fainthearted, and the weak? As patient as the LORD God is with you. How patient is the LORD God with you?

Psalm 103:8-14, The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. 9 He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. 10 He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. 13 As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. 14 For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

Where there is humility, there will be gentleness, where there is gentleness, there will be patience, and where there is patience there will be forbearance –bearing with one another in love.

4. Forbearing Love

Ephesians 4:1-2, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

The fourth attitude that should characterize those within the church, the fourth attitude that should characterize your life is forbearance. Forbearing love is a product of patience, which is a product of gentleness, which is a product of humility. But what is forbearing love? To forbear means to suppress with silence. It carries the idea of throwing a blanket over something. To exhibit forbearing love for one another is to throw a blanket over their harsh words, their offenses, their sins.

Proverbs 10:12, Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.

1 Peter 4:8, Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

What does it mean that love will cover a multitude of sins? The Greek word for covers literally means to cause something to be hidden, or veiled, and hence it is not visible, it is covered up. One of the most common ways that the word “cover” or “covered” is used in the Scripture is in reference to the LORD God covering our sins.

Psalms 32:1, Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Jeremiah 31:34, For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The LORD God covers our sin by forgiving it. The LORD God covers our sin by choosing to remember it no more. The LORD God covers our sin by choosing not to hold our sins against us. He covers our sin by removing it as far as the east is from the west. He covers our sin by cleansing us with the precious blood of the LORD Jesus Christ. When does the LORD God do this? When does the LORD God cover our sin? Our sin is covered after he has convicted us, after our sin has been addressed, after we confess and repent of our sin. To cover sin with love does not mean that sin is not dealt with, nor does it mean that sin is ignored and allowed to continue, nor does it mean that a blind eye is turned to it. It does not mean that church discipline is invalidated.

If sin must be dealt with biblically, if sin must be lovingly confronted and addressed, then how are we to cover it with love? What does this mean? To cover sin with love means that love will not take it into consideration. It means that love will not bring it up. Love will not share sins that have already been dealt with biblically.

Proverbs 17:9, Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

Someone who does not lovingly conceal a sin repeats it to other people. This passage is talking about bringing up issues from the past. This verse is not telling us to ignore sin in the present, but to not gossip about sin that has already been dealt with. Without the covering of love, close friends will be separated, friendships will be destroyed, and strife and dissension will prevail in this church, to the perverse delight of the Adversary. In the church, in the body of

Christ, when all the confrontation is done, when all the exhortation is done, when the proper steps of restoration are complete, then we cover the sin, then we bury it, and we remember it no more. Our Father God loves us with a patient and forbearing love, and thus, we must imitate our Father God, and have a patient and forbearing love for one another.

We have been called to live with all humility, and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, being eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

5: Diligence

Ephesians 4:1-3, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The fifth attitude that should characterize those within the church, the fifth attitude that should characterize your life is diligence –being eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The term *eager* means that we are to spare no effort, we are to hasten, we are to pursue. This term is also a present participle, which means it is a call for continuous action. On this particular term, one commentator remarked, “It is hardly possible to render exactly the urgency contained in the underlying Greek verb. Not only haste and passion, but a full effort of the whole man is meant, involving his will, sentiment, reason, physical strength, and total attitude. This excludes passivity, quietism, or wait-and-see attitude. Yours is the initiative! Do it now! Mean it! You are to do it!”

Are you eager to maintain our unity? Are you diligent to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? Do you impart maximum effort to maintain our unity? Do you make haste to maintain our unity? Are you zealous to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?

The unity of our church should be the constant concern of every one of you. Every one of your interactions with the people in this church should be to this end –being eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The unity of the Spirit, is a unity that the LORD God has created. It was achieved for us by the LORD Jesus Christ. You and I cannot create this unity, but we can maintain it. We maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace when we walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling –all humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, and eagerness (diligence) to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

As a church family, we are not always going to agree on every issue. At some point you are going to have a disagreement with someone in the church. It may be on a theological issue, like the end times, church polity, or election. It may be on politics, immigration, social justice, COVID-19, or vaccinations. As a church family, we may disagree on a whole lot of issues.

However, that which unites us is exceedingly far greater, and far more glorious, than that which divides us.

Ephesians 4:4-6, There is one body and one Spirit –just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call –5, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

There is one body, one Spirit, and one hope that belongs to our call –we all share the same identity (we are in Christ). There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism –we all share the same testimony. There is one God and Father of all –we all share the same Father, we all share the same family. And this is the basis of our unity –one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and one Father who is over all and through all and in all. It is our inner unity, these things that we commonly share, that will result in our outward unity, as we walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling –with all humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, and eagerness to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Do not let the division of the world infiltrate our church. Do not let the division of the world quench and suppress our unity. The LORD Jesus Christ prayed that we would one, even as he is one with the Father. He went to great and glorious lengths, upon the cross, to ensure our unity. Be diligent, make haste, impart maximum effort, to maintain it.
