

WHO WE ARE: ONE LORD, ONE FAITH

1. THE CHURCH IS AT THE CENTER OF GOD’S PLAN.

Ephesians 2:19-21 (NIV) ¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

Ephesians 3:10-11 (NIV) ¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When we put this together, the church is:

- To be made up of like-minded people, sons and daughters of the King—fellow citizens.
- To be built on the foundation of the Apostles’ teaching with Christ as the cornerstone.
- To unite Christians to be God’s church.

2. THE CHURCH IS CALLED TO BE UNIFIED.

Ephesians 4:1-3 (NIV) ¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

- Humility is the only way we can be gentle, patient and bear with one another—be relational.
- We are to *keep* the unity. When we are in Christ, we have the Holy Spirit in us, we have the fruit of the Spirit available to us. For what purpose? So we can be a unified Church through our relationships! This applies to all of us to help our church stay unified. Thus we have 101 & 301.
- We are committed to align theologically, relationally, philosophically, and organizationally in order to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Romans 15:5-6 (ESV) ⁵May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- The purpose of unity in the Church is to bring glory to God!

3. WE ARE TO BE UNIFIED IN THE ESSENTIALS OF THE CHURCH.

Essential: absolutely necessary; extremely important¹

IN ESSENTIALS, UNITY; IN NON-ESSENTIALS, LIBERTY; IN ALL THINGS, CHARITY.²

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NIV) ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

ESSENTIAL: ONE LORD One King and Messiah: Jesus, who brought His Kingdom to earth.

Mark 1:14-15 (NIV) ¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Ephesians 2:1-5 (NIV) ¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

John 14:6 (NIV) I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

ESSENTIAL: ONE FAITH Not just right beliefs but right behavior/actions. Live balanced lives of faith. Remember Ephesians 4:1.

- Content of our faith: doctrine, right thinking, what we believe.

Jude 1:3 (NIV) Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people.

- Contend: focus on the competition and oppose what is contrary to the faith.
- A sincere faith leads to conviction, and conviction leads to behavior that reflects your faith.
- If you are not connected into relational environments, your faith cannot grow and mature!

James 2:21-22 (NIV) ²¹Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV) And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

APPLICATION:

1. How important is my faith in the way I live day-to-day?
2. Is there anyone whom I am not in unity with, and I need to go and make things right?
3. Is my general attitude toward the church universally one of criticism or support?
4. What steps do I need to take to reinforce the unity of the church?

¹Definitions taken from Google Dictionary.

²Quote often attributed to Augustine, but may have been written by Rupertus Meldenius.

All Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright 1978, 1984 by New York International Bible Society. Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.