

All One In Christ Jesus

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[0:00] Well, we're studying union with Christ. What two words in the Bible set forth that doctrine most plainly?

! Two words? In Him, in Christ, with Him, with Christ, hundreds of times.

I trust those words are jumping off the pages of your Bible as you're reading them, as you see. In Christ Jesus. Ah, this is what it's talking about. Our union with Christ. That we are in Him.

Even as we saw at the beginning. We are either in Adam, hanging on Adam's belt. Or we are in Christ, hanging on Christ's belt. And so we're to think of ourselves as in Christ.

This is to control our identity, our self-conscious identity. I am an in Christ man. I am one who is in Him. Just as in a marriage, once a man is married to a woman, he is never to think of himself independently anymore.

[1:02] He's not to think of life just from his perspective. But he is always to be thinking of one who is joined to his bride. So once we're married to Christ and joined to Him, we are to never again think of ourselves as separated from Him.

But as one with Him. Now this union with Christ has many benefits. I love that song, how vast the benefits divine which we in Christ possess.

It's because of our union with Christ that we have these many benefits. We've seen at least three so far. Can you remember some of the benefits that are ours for being in Christ?

Forgiveness. Forgiveness. Forgiveness. All right. There's our justification. Because we are in Him, all of His righteousness is ours.

And therefore, we're forgiven. There's no condemnation to us who are in Christ Jesus. What else is our benefit as being in Christ? Chuck? I'm guessing freedom.

[2:05] Okay. Excellent. Why are you guessing? Romans 6 says that we are free from our sins, aren't we? Because we're in Christ. Because when He died, we died.

If we're in Him, when He died on the cross, we too died. So His death to sin is our death to sin.

We're dead to sin's reign. It no longer holds the rule over us.

We're no longer its slaves. So, yes, union with Christ has this tremendous benefit for our sanctification that we are free from sin. It no longer holds us in its bondage.

And then last time, from John 15, what's another benefit of being in Christ? Our source of strength.

Okay. Our source of strength. We have all the resources that we need for life and godliness, for living the Christian life.

Because we are like a vine, a branch attached to the vine. There's this vital union between the branch and the vine. And from that union comes all the nutrients and sap that enables us to live the Christian life.

[3:15] Well, so far, those three benefits that we've looked at have been individual implications of being in Christ. But now, Edward Donnelly, whose book we're studying, *Life in Christ*, broadens our focus from individual implications to corporate or our togetherness in Christ.

Because the reality is, is that you're not the only one in Christ. Being joined to Christ joins you at once to a large family of other believers who are also in Christ.

Turn to 1 Peter, chapter 2. 1 Peter, chapter 2, verses 4 and 5.

Notice that the individual union with Christ has corporate implications or together implications, collective implications for us.

As you, as you, as an individual, as you come to him, that is to Christ. The living stone rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him.

[4:30] You, individual, also like living stones. There it's the plural you. You, plural, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood.

That offering spiritual sacrifice is acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. I suppose the you's throughout here are plural. I don't have the Greek in front of me, but that is probably the reality here. But the point is this, that as you come to Jesus Christ and are joined to him, by being joined to Christ, you're also joined to every other living stone in the building.

Because you are being built into this spiritual house to be a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices to God. Over to Ephesians 2, where we have a similar word picture for us of a spiritual priesthood, a spiritual house.

Now it's a building that we're considering. And you remember Ephesians 2 is talking about the great divide that there used to be between Gentile and Jew. And now that's been obliterated in Christ.

[5:44] And now we're being built together into this same house. Verse 19, Ephesians 2.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone, in him, there's our word, our two words, in him, by union with him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

And in him, you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his spirit. So there is Christ, the chief cornerstone.

And it's by being placed in him and being joined to him that we become a living stone in his temple. And by being in him, we're also now joined to all the other stones that are in him.

The same is true of the body of Christ. When you come, you place your faith in the Lord Jesus, you were baptized into one body, the scriptures say in 1 Corinthians 12, 13.

So you're just one member, maybe a finger, but you are attached to all the other members of the body of Christ. We are members of one body, Colossians 3, 15.

[7:21] So union with Christ brings us into vital union with all the other members in union with Christ. Now we want to consider then this idea of joint union with Christ.

This is something we share together. Now when we survey the landscape of churches, denominations, and even differences within denominations, we're struck with that level of difference.

And yet there is this one thing that we all share, every believer shares in common. We are in Christ. Christ. And that reality transcends and is more important than the many things that divide believer from believer.

Look at Galatians chapter 3 and verse 26. Remember the big issue here in Galatians. Do the Gentiles who have come to put their faith in Christ have to become Jews first before they can become Christians?

Do they have to become Jews first and submit to circumcision and all the other Old Testament ceremonial laws before they can become Christians? And Paul says, no, if you are in Christ, you stand on equal footing, whether you're Jew or Gentile.

[8:41] Notice how he puts it in verse 26 of Galatians 3. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

There's the phrase for this chapter, as Donnelly has entitled his chapter 4. All one in Christ Jesus. Being in Christ makes us all one.

What are some of the differences that he mentions here that are found in Christ? Verse 28, there are some differences noted. Male and female.

What were some of the social implications of those differences in the days of Greek first century? How was a female?

[9:47] I'm sorry? Okay, that's putting it lightly. Yes. Without the influence of the gospel, women were viewed as lesser beings than men.

Inferior in every way. That was the prevailing attitude. And so, if you were a woman, you were on a different level, you see, in society. And Paul says, that's not true in Christ.

That distinction that would place one is more important than another. It's obliterated. The ground is level at the cross, someone says. Well, it's level in Christ as well.

What else? What is another distinction? Slave and free. All right. How would that translate into our society, perhaps? Anyone? Go ahead. Management.

Okay. And workers. All right. Management and workers. Slave free has to do with social status.

[10:53] If someone was a free man, wow, he had all these privileges. If someone was a slave, he was a lesser status in society.

And so, we have different statuses, don't we? Maybe the symbol isn't slave or free. We're all free.

But we have different things that give us status in society.

Maybe our education. Maybe our economic condition. And all of that is obliterated if we're in Christ.

Not that we don't have distinctions, but it does not give us any footing with God.

It does not make us something special with God. Because I'm a man and not a woman. Because I am a free man and not a slave. And the most important of distinctions is what?

As he's making here. The argument in Galatians. Jews and Greeks. And what are some of the distinctions in our day? What is that distinction of Jew and Greek?

[11:57] How would that translate? Mike? Ethnic groups. Ethnic groups. Good. We could even say people who are raised in the Christian faith. Okay. Okay.

These are two different religions, aren't they? The Gentiles had their religions. The Jews. It was a very definitive religion. Where you could say the same thing about Christianity and Muslim.

That's right. Whether you grew up a Christian or whether you grew up a Muslim. It doesn't give you any footing with God. You're not therefore having brownie points with God. No.

If you're in Christ, your Muslim brother is on equal footing with you. And so he doesn't need to somehow, as the picture was then, he doesn't have to become something else before he becomes a Christian.

We all come to Christ from wherever we were in our pre-Christian state. So all these... Yes? Once he comes into Christ, he is our brother.

[13:03] I'm sorry. I didn't want to give the impression that a Muslim is of the same religion. Thank you for the correction. Is that what I said? Yes.

That guy was still in bed, I think, when I said that. Tim. Another thing that would be analogous would be baptism.

The Muslim doesn't have to be baptized to become a Christian. They become a Christian and then they become baptized. Okay. Good. So we don't jump through certain hoops. Okay, Mr. Muslim, before you can become a Christian, you have to be baptized.

You have to go through certain rituals. And then you can become a Christian. No, we come right to Christ. And so all these things that cause snobbishness and cause one to look down upon the other.

The free man to look down upon the slave. The man to look down upon the woman. The Jew to look down upon the Gentile. And the reverse as well. In every one of those cases, it wasn't a one-way prejudice.

[14:05] The woman was therefore prejudiced against the man and the slave against the free man. And the Gentile hated the Jew as much as the Jew hated the Gentile.

And so Paul says, oh, but once we're in Christ, we're all one. We're all one. This cliquishness, these old distinctions that used to mean so much to us are done away with.

There's a unity in Christ that surpasses our diversity. And that's not only true of this local church. It's true of the universal church. And this is what we need to stretch ourselves with and to think of this morning.

That we are all one in Christ Jesus. The universal church made up of true believers. Found in every nation.

They're not all Reformed Baptists, are they? But they're all one with us in Christ Jesus. And so we see these.

[15:11] Kinds of disunity and division in the body of Christ. We're divided up into different denominations, different beliefs, different practices. But such divisions, if we're not careful, can cause us to be cynical about this unity that Paul is speaking about.

Paul is saying we're all one in Christ Jesus. And then we see all these divisions and we say, what's the deal here? Where's the unity? Well, Donnelly feels that tension.

And so he sets before us six ways that this oneness that we share can be seen. The first is we were all one in Christ before creation. We were all one in Christ.

All right. When we say that, let's let's view every believer all around the world with all their differences. If they're in Christ, we're one with them.

Well, we were all one in Christ before creation. Ephesians one in verse four. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world.

[16:18] He chose us. All right. He didn't just choose you and me individually. That's true. But what Paul is saying is he chose us. He chose us together.

There's this collective term. And when was it that you were chosen? To be Christ. Well, before the creation of the world. When was I chosen before the creation of the world?

Speaking of this Trinitarian covenant, the father chose a people to be his and he gave them to his son. And his son came and died for those people and took their liabilities, their sins to the cross and paid the full price for them.

And then the Holy Spirit was sent to to quicken those people during their lifetime so that they would trust in the savior. He chose us.

The father chose us in Christ before the creation of the world. Jesus speaks to his father. The night of his betrayal. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me, to be where I am, that they might see my glory.

[17:22] Those you have given me. It speaks of that giving that was done before the creation of the world. Son, here is your bride. Now you go and purchase them with your blood. God. So we see that we're not viewed just as a bunch of individuals, but as a body, a corporate identity here.

We he chose us in him. We say of those that we share a lot with, we go way back. Well, that can be said of all in the body of Christ.

We go way back before creation. We were all chosen together to be in Christ. Secondly, we were all one in Christ at Calvary.

That great event is the very foundation of our belonging to Christ. How is it that we can be in Christ? It's only because Christ died for our sins that this union is possible.

Who did he die for? He died for his people. He died for his elect. He died for those that the father gave him. Yes, he died for the individual believer.

[18:32] Galatians 2.20. It's a glorious thing that Paul never got over. That the son of God loved me and gave himself for me. An individual.

But more often than not, the reference in this references in scripture. Is the plural is to the people of God viewed in their oneness, their collectiveness.

Viewed as a group. Remember the message that the angel brought to Joseph concerning the baby to be born to the Virgin Mary. Matthew 1.21. He will save who?

His people. That's a collective term, isn't it? He will save his people from their sins. John 10.15. I lay down my life for the sheep.

The sheep. Collective term. Ephesians 5.25. Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it.

[19:30] The church. There's that collective term. And so we were viewed together in the mind of Christ when he hung on the cross, dying for us. We were all one in Christ at Calvary.

As Jesus paid the debt that we owed. And then we're all one in Christ in the method of salvation.

One of the joys of the ministry is sitting and listening to the testimonies and reading the testimonies of those who are wanting to be baptized or join the church.

And what we find is that every testimony is unique. There are things true about this testimony that aren't true about this one. When meeting other Christians, it's a wonderful thing to ask their testimony.

So how was it that you came to be in Christ? And we hear their testimony and how they started out. And they started in different circumstances.

Some with Christian parents. Some with not. Some knowing the gospel from early on. Others completely oblivious to the gospel. And yet, here they are all in Christ.

[20:41] Well, this point is pointing out that we're all one in Christ in the method of salvation.

There's no two testimonies exactly alike. But however differently we were brought to Christ, there's a profound underlying unity to all of our stories.

At one point in our life, we all came to the realization that we were sinners before a holy God. And we didn't have what it took to fix the problem that only Christ could bring me to God.

And I trusted in Him. And I repented of my sin. And so did you. So did every one of you who are believers today. We have this commonality about the method of salvation.

We're all clothed in the same righteousness. We're all indwelt by the same Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4, 4-6. There is one body, one spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all who's over all and through all and in all. So in spite of all of our differences, we were all saved in exactly the same way.

[21:55] We were, we are all one in Christ Jesus. And then we're all one in Christ in the fourth place in our relationship to the scriptures.

This is one that struck me with some freshness as Donnelly opened it up. Isn't it something that there's only one book for all Christians?

Sometimes publishers try to muddle that reality and they'll publish the student Bible. And the single woman's Bible.

And the pastor's Bible. And the busy businessman's Bible. And it really muddles the reality. It's just a marketing ploy. But the reality is, is that there's just one Bible for all Christians.

Worldwide. That's, that's pretty unique, isn't it? Isn't that something that unites us? That we all are governed by the same word.

[22:59] This authoritative word from heaven. Doesn't matter our age. Doesn't matter our nationality. Our job. We all share the same book.

And apart from a few places where God has a specific word for elders or deacons. Or a specific word for wives and husbands and children and parents.

A far greater portion of the whole Bible is such that no one can walk away saying, Well, that was for him. Or that was for her. But it wasn't for me. No, we all come to the same book.

We're all one in Christ in our relationship to the scriptures. Same command. Same promises. Same revelation from God. And then fifthly and lastly, I've cut out one.

So we're down to five points. We're all one in Christ in glory. In glory. You know there won't be any distinctions of denomination.

[24:03] I don't believe in heaven. So I'd be proud to say we'll all be Reformed Baptists. But the point is, we'll all distinctions will drop, won't they?

We will share that unity in Christ in glory. And so we've come full circle. Where did we begin with our oneness? Yes. He chose us in Christ before the creation of the world.

From eternity past, we were together in the mind of God as he chose us as a unit. Right through all of history, our personal history to eternity future.

Where are we found? We're found together in heaven. And I looked and there before me was this great multitude that no one could number. From every tribe, nation, language, and people.

There's all the diversity. But they're all together now. Standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried in a loud voice.

[25:06] Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb. And they're found together. None of this idea that you have a separate place for the Jews.

One people of God. And Gentiles. And other people of God. And they go on through all eternity apart. No, there's none of that in the Bible. We're one body. One flock. With one shepherd.

We're viewed as one bride of Christ. We're this one city. This new Jerusalem. Come down out of heaven. It's our togetherness. We share one final destiny.

So, here is significant unity, then, that we all share in Christ. We were chosen by the same Father. Born out of the same womb.

Purchased by the same blood. And dwelt by the same Spirit. Governed by the same book. Destined for the same place. Now, those realities are true of all who are in Christ Jesus.

[26:05] And they're far more significant than the things that divide us. So, what's the application of all this? What difference should it make? If I have this biblical view of myself as being attached to Christ, and therefore I'm attached to everyone else who's attached to Christ.

Well, what would you think of a guy who takes one part of his body, say his hand, and takes a knife, and starts cutting and hacking other parts of his body?

They call them cutters. And there's something desperately wrong with such a person, isn't there?

That with one part of his body, he would destroy other parts of his own body.

And that's what we do when we take our tongues and use it as a sword and speak evil of one another. It is one part of the body destroying another part of the same body.

We need to see it that way. Ephesians 4 and verse 25 is a verse that comes to us with that kind of application. Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

[27:23] Don't defraud and deceive your brothers and sisters, because we're all members of the same body. And so it's like one part of your body harming another part of the same body.

This union that we each have with Christ is so intimate that Jesus Christ views as done unto him whatever we do to any other member of his body.

Isn't that true? Isn't that what happened on the road to Damascus? Paul, Saul of Tarsus, was out doing what? Persecuting Christians. And when he meets with the Lord Jesus, the head of the body, the Lord Jesus says to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

Who are you, Lord? I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Saul, you can't touch one of my members without touching me. So intimate is the union between the member and the head that whenever you touch one of my members, you touch me.

Now that has tremendous implications for the way we treat each other. Do you know Jesus takes it as done personally unto him whatever you do to your brother.

[28:40] Do you speak evil of him? Jesus takes it as speaking evil of him. Do you do kindness to a brother or sister? He takes it as done personally to him.

Matthew 25. Come, you are blessed by my father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. Because when I was hungry, you fed me.

And when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. Lord, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you and thirsty and give you something to drink? And then the king will say unto them, In so much as you have done it to the least of these, my brethren, you've done it unto me.

There's this vital union between everyone in the body with the head. So that you can't do anything to the rest of the other members in the body without doing the same to Christ.

So there are tremendous applications to us as to our union with Christ and its social implications with each other.

[29:41] If we realize this union with Christ together with all the members of the body, it will cause us to lovingly care for one another, to have equal concern for each other.

1 Corinthians 12.25 Equal concern for each member of the body. I mean, it's my body. And whether it's this finger that hurts or that toe that hurts, I'm concerned about it because it's my body.

It's part of me. And that's how we should react toward any member in the body. Are they hurting?

Then I'm hurting. I want to relieve that hurt. Have equal concern for all the members in the body.

So after church, we all run to the people we find that easy to talk to. And there stands a brother in Christ all by himself. He's often alone by himself.

I want to go talk to him and bring him into the fellowship. You see, I'm concerned when any one part of the body is suffering. Equal concern for all the parts.

[30:51] What difference should our union with Christ make in the body of Christ? Well, he, Donnelly brings out several points now concerning the application of this.

He says, number one, the limitation. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And we must remember this in the midst of all the inner and interfaith movements for unity in our day.

All the pressures to try to get us to unite with other groups. We are to remember the limitation of our unity. It is only in Christ Jesus that we are one. There's no unity outside of Jesus Christ.

He's the foundation of our unity. So we're only one with those who are hooked to his belt by faith.

We're only one with those branches who are attached to the vine.

Others who are still in Adam may claim to be one with us. They may have joined our church. They may have gone through all sorts of religious rituals. But they're not really one with us.

[31:59] Because it's impossible for those not joined to the head to be part of the true body of Christ. Now, this was the failure of the ecumenical movement of the last century.

It never dealt with the critical issue of who is a Christian. Who is a Christian? What are the marks of the person who is in Christ?

Well, it was just assumed that all who professed to be in Christ were indeed in Christ. It was taken for granted. But we can't. We can't take that. The Bible doesn't take it for granted.

The Bible spells out for us what a person in Christ looks like. If any man be in Christ, he's a new creature. The old is gone. The new has come. And so on. Remember the World Council of Churches?

How many of you know that organization by name? You've heard of the World Council of Churches. Okay. Some of the younger ones, perhaps not. That was real big back in the last century.

[33:01] 50s, 60s. Constantly in the news. Interviewing leaders of this great movement. And of the World Council of Churches. They were going to gather all the churches into one.

It was a huge matter. But it fizzled into an insignificant little group today. That was not the unity for which Christ prayed.

That we would all be one. As he and the Father are one. Because it ignored this great limitation of unity. It must be in Christ Jesus.

So that limitation might mean that we are sometimes viewed as holier than thou. As we are isolationists or separatists. Since we can't worship and witness together with all the other churches in town.

What's the matter? Are you too good for us? Or what's up? Well, there is only unity with those who are in Christ Jesus. And you're not in Christ Jesus when you don't have the gospel.

[34:08] The saving gospel of Christ. When fundamental issues of who God is. And how a man is savingly joined to Christ are not there.

Now we may join on some moral and social efforts together. With those who are even from religions or no religions. For some moral issues we might be able to find ourselves standing in a picket line. Behind beside someone that we can never worship with. Because they don't worship the same God. Or they don't have the same gospel. They have another gospel as Paul says in Galatians 1. And so we must remember the limitation of our unity.

Our unity is only with those who are in Christ Jesus. If you have any further questions on that.

Martin Lloyd-Jones has a tremendous booklet on that issue.

What is an evangelical? Everyone claims to be an evangelical. What is a true Christian? It needs to be defined. Because they alone are the ones that we have this unity with. But then he speaks of the comprehensiveness.

[35:12] There's not only the limitation. But there's this broad comprehensiveness about this test. There is unity only in Christ. But also there is unity always in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1-2. To the church of God in Corinth. Together with all those everywhere who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their Lord and ours.

Don't you just love the breadth of that statement? Writing to you. One church in Corinth. Together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus.

Their Lord and ours. It's the same faithfulness to Jesus Christ that keeps us from uniting with others who do not belong to him. That also requires us to recognize as brothers and sisters.

All those who are truly his. The very same test that limits our unity. Also stretches our unity. Are they in Christ? Then they're my brother. It doesn't matter whatever distinctions there are between them and us.

[36:16] They may not all have the same doctrines. Exactly. They may not all have exactly the same styles of worship. The color or length of hair. The version of the Bible.

The views on the education of their children. On baptism or church government. But if they're in Christ. They're my brother. They're my sister. We're in the same family. And so Jesus brings together all sorts of people.

In Christ Jesus. Here there is no Greek or Jew. Circumcised or uncircumcised. Barbarian, Scythian, slave or free. But Christ is all.

And is in all. Glorious unity. Simon the zealot. And Matthew the tax collector. Were on opposite sides of the political spectrum in Israel. But in Christ.

They were brothers. An email from Keith Underhill. A day after New Year's Day. This year.

Speaking of the chaos in Kenya. He says it was the worst I've witnessed in the 40 years I've been here.

[37:15] Something we never dreamed would happen. In Kenya. Though it has happened in so many other African countries. The violence. The bloodshed. And he explains that most of the violence has been between two tribes.

Represented by the current re-elected president who is a kikuyu. And by the opposition candidate who is a luo. Now thankfully in the last week or two.

There's been a resolution or some kind of coming together of these two. So that they've moved beyond that. But this was right in the heat of this. You had kikuyus and luos killing each other.

All across Kenya. And then Keith says. Amidst all this wickedness. We must not ignore what the Lord has done. Sunday after the evening service.

Two young men are returning many miles to their respective homes in Nairobi. From opposing sides of the mayhem.

[38:15] One is a Luo. One is a Kikuyu. But it is irrelevant. As they are in Christ. And they are fellowshiping and encouraging one another.

The gospel is powerful. And we must never forget it. End quote. And my heart rejoiced. Isn't that a glorious thing?

To see two warring tribes. And here they are. There's one Luo here. And a Kikuyu here. And they don't stay apart. They're coming together.

And they're encouraging each other. And praying with each other. And fellowshiping with each other. And then they leave the church building. And one goes to his Luo neighborhood. And the other to his Kikuyu.

With all the hatred and strife around. Christ by his gospel. Is demonstrating the glorious power of the gospel. To bring down the middle walls of partition.

[39:13] As it's said in Ephesians 2. And what peace plans in the Middle East. Have not been able to do. For decades. Bringing together into unity.

Those on opposite sides of the conflict. To where people. Not just put up with each other. But love each other. That the gospel is doing. All around the world.

So our union. With each other. Because we're united to Christ. Should keep us from this Elijah complex. And I think it's.

Yes. It even can. Creep into Reformed Baptist circles. We were so small. In the overall scheme of things. Just a. A few churches. Most of us smaller churches. And we can get Elijah's complex.

Where he thought that he was the only one left. That was true to God. It's the I complex. The we complex. It's the us them. Complex.

[40:11] We're the only true Christians left. And God says. Oh you're wrong. I have 7,000. Who have not bowed the knee to Baal. And they may not be in your denomination.

They may not be in your local church. But I have them. And they're mine. And therefore they're yours. Your brothers. Your sisters. When you meet other Christians at work.

And in your neighborhood. From different churches. Can you fellowship with Christ. With them over Christ. If they're true Christians. You have. You have tremendous ground for fellowship. They're in Christ.

Remember the testimonies that we talked about. All the differences. But there are great similarities. We've spoken of five similarities that we all have. And so we must love and accept them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Whatever the difference is that there may be between us. We can pray with each other.

[41:09] We call upon the same Lord. Who is Lord of all. And who richly blesses all. Who call upon him. Romans 10. 12. So we each tend by our own personalities perhaps.

To lean too much to the one side of being too exclusive. Or the other side of being too inclusive. We need to know ourselves. And seek to correct any lopsidedness.

In this matter. Yes there is diversity. Unity in Christ is not uniformity. Unity in Christ does not mean cookie cutter sameness.

In the body of Christ. There's rather great diversity and variety within our unity in Christ. And that mark of diversity is often the difference between a healthy church and a cult.

In a cult no one has a mind of their own. It's been given over to the leader. And they swallow everything that he says as gospel truth.

[42:09] And so there's a perfect uniformity. There's no differences in the body. We all agree. We're all in lockstep together. Behind this strong, usually a strong personality of a leader.

Members tend to be more like robots. There's something programmed about their answers. Where have I heard that? Oh yes, I heard him say that before.

Everything that he says, you just mimic. Don't confuse that for unity. Uniformity of that sort is not unity. When we all drive the same cars.

We all have the same form of education for our children. We all have the same dress. We all eat the same foods. We have the same views on nearly everything under the sun. Even on issues where scriptures do not speak.

But in the church there's this unity. But there's diversity. And we don't work out the principles of... Yes, we all have the same book. But you have insights into it that I don't have.

[43 : 09] And this leads you to certain practices perhaps that are a little different from my practices. And that's alright. There is diversity in the body of Christ.

And that is not cookie cutter sameness. There's diversity of gifts. And 1 Corinthians 12 points that out. That we need each other. Not just in spite of our differences, but because of our differences. Where would the hearing be if we were all an eye? So our diversity strengthens us. That's a proper appreciation of our brothers and sisters. Contribution to our own health in the body.

No one can say of another member, I don't need you. No one can say of themselves, I'm not needed here. They don't need me. Well, there's a challenge. Oh.

The challenge is Christ wants our unity to be visible. He wants the world to be able to see this unity. So that they might know that God sent the Son. Such a supernatural reality to our unity that only the supernatural Son of God could create it.

[44 : 20] And the means, how do we maintain this unity? Well, he speaks of the wheels of a spoke, of a bicycle tire. The spokes. We're the spokes. Christ is the hub. And the closer each one of us comes to Christ, the hub.

The closer and the more intimate our union with each other. So let's abide in Christ. Let's develop our unity with Christ. And as we do so, we'll find ourselves growing in our unity with each other. Well, our time's gone. We're dismissed. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.