

11 min - Unity_They May Be One

I would like to take a moment to talk to you about the unity of the body of Christ.

I submit to you that unity in the body of Christ is important for a number of reasons.

What I am going to focus on today is, unity in the body of Christ among the saints as it relates to the words of Jesus, "that they may be one, as we are", (John 17:1). How is God and Jesus one. How are we the saints expected to be one. How are Adam and Eve one. To varying degrees all three are one in the same way.

According to Webster unity is "the quality or state of being made one", continuity without deviation or without change in purpose or action.

According to the Bible:

- Jesus and God are one in that Jesus is the image of an invisible God, the exact likeness or a perfect copy (Colossians 1:15).
- Jesus and God are one in that for in Jesus dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.
 - Godhead is defined as God's personality and Deity (Strong's concordance).
 - Oneness also refers to God's power in "All power is given unto Jesus in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18).
 - Oneness also refers to God's glory in "That all men should honour Jesus, even as they honour the Father" (John 5:23).
 - Oneness is also referred to in "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Jesus's statement that all power is given unto me, is in perfect agreement with the Athanasian Creed which says:

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not Three Almighties but One Almighty.

The Bible's statement that in Jesus dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and the Strong's Concordance definition of Godhead as being God's personality and Deity are in perfect agreement with the Athanasian Creed which says: The deity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory and coeternal in majesty.

The Bible's statement to honor the Son as you honor the Father and its statement that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" is also in perfect agreement with the Nicene Creed which says: "He is to come with the same body and with the glory of the Father"

These examples of the oneness of God and Jesus represent the upper extremes of oneness, perfect harmony, continuity without deviation, without change in purpose, without change in action, the exact likeness, a perfect copy, same in personality and Deity, or equal in power and glory.

The concept of oneness implies that God and Jesus are one despite their differences or separateness, whatever they might be. This may be a little hard to see. Nevertheless, John 1:1 says "In the beginning was the word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. "With God implies separateness" and "was God" implies oneness. This is in perfect agreement with the

Athanasian Creed which says: For each person -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -- is distinct, but the deity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory and coeternal in majesty.

Now let us look at another level of oneness or sameness according to the definition of person. This concept acts as a transitional concept between the oneness of Jesus and God and the oneness or sameness among the saints. A person is defined as separate entities. Yet, there is a less popular, but equally valid definition of person. This definition defines person not based on their differences, but is defined based on their relationships or things that they have in common. This relationship definition is found in the concept of the first person and the second person, the plaintiff and the defendant. The plaintiff consists of several individuals without change in purpose or action, all defined as one person. For example the board of executives. It is this concept of person that is used by the Athanasian Creed. One God consisting of three individuals or three persons.

The point being, the phrase "that they might be one as we are one" uses this concept of oneness. This oneness is defined based on what we have in common, despite our differences. The idea is that, what we have in common is so significant that our differences really do not matter.

This concept of oneness is further expressed in sameness. How can two things that are different be the same or equal. Their sameness is based on what they have in common, despite their differences. For example synonyms or two words that are pronounced differently but mean the same thing.

The same concept is imbedded in equality. No two things are exactly equal. Nevertheless a perfect copy is about as close as you will get. The The Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal in that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. Among these rights are, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Their equality in these areas is what defines them as being equal. God and Jesus are equal in a lot more areas than this as we have seen. Jesus is at the very least a perfect copy.

It is the concept of one person consisting of several individuals that the Athanasian Creed uses to define one God consisting of several individuals or one God in three persons. This is a perfectly valid definition of person and a perfectly valid definition of God, equal in power and glory and various other non-physical attributes. Their common attributes far outweigh the common attributes of the board of executives, of a corporation. We have to move past rebellion before we can get to faith.

In summary it is this oneness or sameness concept that Jesus is addressing when he says "I pray that they might be one". It is this denominationalism that he is attacking. It is this focus on difference, rather than giving due consideration to what we have in common that is being attacked. Ask yourself, is there any other denomination other than your own, that you consider yourself one with? If so then why? If not then why?