

Seven in One: The Unity of Ephesians 4:4-6

I have said many times- both publicly and privately, that “You can read the ‘Platform of Unity’ from Ephesians 4:4-5 seven times a day and will not develop unity unless you incorporate the attitudes and activities of vv.1,2,3.” It’s still true. “Unity,” though dependent upon the *right information*, does not magically appear from it unless the *right attitudes, desires, and activities* are engaged along with it.

Therefore, unless we (as a congregation) are willing to:

- “Walk in a manner worthy of the calling”- truly live the high and noble calling of the gospel, cf. 2Thess.2:14; and
- Develop true *humility*- which is the ability to “regard one another as more important than himself” and to “look out for the interests of others” more than your own (cf. Phil.2:3b-4); and
- Practice *gentleness*- which is, surely in substance if not perfectly in definition, *treating others with kindness and compassion the way you would want to be treated*- especially when found to be in error, cf. Gal.6:1; Col.3:12; 2Tim.2:25; and
- Show *forbearance*- which is to *bear/suffer with* or *endure* bad treatment from others, cf. 1Cor.4:12 where *anechomai* is translated as *endure* (persecution). It is *putting up with* or *tolerating* bad behavior and/or poor treatment for their ultimate good, cf. Luke 9:41 > Col.3:13.
- Do all these *with love*- in other words, we *set the right example for one another; consider one another and one another’s interests more important than our own; treat one another with gentle and kind compassion; and put up with one another* because we *love one another and Him!*

In these ways we prove our *diligence to preserve the unity and peace* Christ placed within His kingdom. In the absence of them, we will not, and cannot, be “united.”

How did Christ put this *unity and peace* within His kingdom?

Please note vv.4-6. In properly understanding and applying the Scriptures, one of the most important questions we can ask is “Why?” God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, 1Cor.14:33. So the Book makes sense, if we understand it correctly.

Perhaps the *unity and peace* could be better understood from this *Platform of Unity* if we could see the connection between, or inter-related aspects of, them. For instance:

Why is there “one body”? Clearly the context demands that we understand this to be the church, cf. 1:22-23. But why is there just one church? The church, which is made up of each individual saved person in it, is the product of *one seed*- the word of God, Jas.1:18,21; Luke 8:11. There are not *many gospels*, Gal.1:6-8; 1Cor.3:11. Since there is but one *true* gospel, it can only produce one *true* church.

OK, so why is there only “one Spirit”? The Spirit (of God) is the part of the Trinity which revealed the gospel, Eph.3:3-5. Since the Spirit is revealing *the mind of God*, cf. 1Cor.2:9-13, can God’s mind be duplicitous (split, divided) and He still be God? If there is to be one Gospel and one Church as the product of it, can there be several Spirits revealing differing gospels and multiple churches? Not if we are true to God’s word revealed by the one Spirit!

Why is there then just “one hope”? If *one Spirit* revealed *one gospel* to produce *one body/church*, how many hopes (destinies) would you expect? There are many people in the religious world today who teach/hold multiple destiny theories- a perfected earth, heaven proper for 144,000 etc. etc. But again, if God wanted there to be *one gospel* message for all people, and there is but one- cf. John 14:6;

Rom.1:16-17; Acts 10:34-43; and if that *one gospel* produced only *one body/church*, then why would those within it possibly *hope* for multiple destinies? (see Eph.1:18)

Why is there but “one Lord”? The term “lord” comes from the Greek *kurios*- which means “he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he had power of deciding; master, lord...” The reality is that we can only have one *lord*, as Jesus stated in Matt.6:24; and for the reason given therein. Aside from the reality of there being only one God and one Jesus Christ, we can only be truly obedient and therefore pleasing to *one master* at a time. If we are to be Christ’s, we cannot be our own, or anyone else’s, cf. Gal.2:20; 6:14. This is why the confession of Rom.10:9 is not actually a confession of the *deity* of Christ, but of our commitment to His singular *Lordship* over us. There were many who believed in His *deity*, but were not willing to confess His *singular Lordship* over their lives, cf. John 12:42. There can only be *one Lord!*

Why is there only “one faith”? What is “faith”? Objectively, it is *the faith* of the gospel. Subjectively, it is *my faith*- my practice of the gospel. We have already noted that *one Spirit* revealed *one gospel* which produced *one hope* and *one Lord*. So, objectively, *one faith* would be the *one gospel*. But I think here it refers more to the subjective aspect of faith. There is but *one way* to live in Christ- by the precepts of the one Gospel of Jesus Christ. Throughout our world of different ethnicities, cultures, and customs, the *one thing* that unites all Christians is their *common devotion* to living according to the *one gospel*. That is why their lives are remarkably similar in belief and practice (obviously, if they are serving the *one Lord/Master*), Rom.1:16-17.

Why is there only “one baptism”? There were other baptisms- *of John, with the Holy Spirit*, but by the early 60’s A.D., the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle to write to the Ephesians that there was but “*one baptism*”- the baptism of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. This baptism was/is both the *burial in water* that puts to death the old man of sin, and the process through which one is *born again* to a new life in Christ, cf. Rom.6:3-4 and John 3:3-5. Again, if there is to be only *one practice of faith* under the *one Lordship* of Jesus Christ, why would there be *multiple entrances*? Put another way, if there is but *one gospel/seed*, how can there be multiple *births*, cf. Jas.1:18,21?

Why is there only “one God and Father of all who is over all and through all in all”? I should think such would be self-evident by now. But just in case it is not quite obvious yet, in the analogy of *one gospel/seed* produces *one body/church*, you cannot have *multiple fathers!* Furthermore:

- Multiple gods cannot produce *unity* in religion or the practice of it.
- Jehovah is *One Source/Father (pater)* of us all, 2:18; 3:14; Isa.45:5, 14b, 22.
- Jehovah is *over all*- He possesses all authority over mankind by *right of creation*. He created all, He controls all, and He sustains all, Acts 17:24-31.
- Jehovah is *in all*, Jer.14:9; John 17:20-26.
- Therefore, we could never be united as “one,” save for the *oneness* of God!

Conclusion: What do I hope you get from these things? Two primary points-

1. That true unity is dependent not only on the right *information*, but the right *application* of it, vv.1-3.
2. That the *information* (platform) of unity all fits together seamlessly and makes sense when it is correctly understood. The “platform” is not a disconnected or disjointed collection of platitudes, but an interwoven progression of unity that begins with, and necessarily ends with, the *one God of the Universe!* Therefore, those who are truly His will be “one”!