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## **LIFE-STUDY OF EPHESIANS MESSAGE THIRTY-SIX**

### **KEEPING THE ONENESS OF THE SPIRIT**

To walk worthily of God's calling, to have the proper Body life, we need firstly to care for the matter of oneness. We must keep the oneness of the Spirit. This is crucial and vital to the Body of Christ.

Oneness, strictly speaking, differs from unity. Unity is formed by many people uniting together, whereas oneness is the one entity of the Spirit within the believers making them all one. Some Christians may have a certain kind of unity, but we in the Lord's recovery appreciate oneness much more than unity. In the Lord's recovery, we are not united—that is, we have not formed a certain kind of union—but we are one. Our oneness is a Person, even the Lord Jesus Himself realized as the life-giving Spirit. Today the Lord is the life-giving Spirit within us, and this Spirit is our oneness. Therefore, our oneness is not an objective Person far away in the heavens; it is a subjective Person indwelling us as our life.

This oneness is similar to the electricity in many lights that makes them all one in the shining. Although there may be dozens of lights in a large room, they are one in the electricity that flows within them. In themselves, the lights are not one; neither are they united to form one entity. The unique electricity in the lights is their oneness. This electricity does not unite the lights; it is the oneness within them. In themselves, the lights are individual and separate, but in the electricity they have

oneness. It is the same in principle with the believers in Christ. The Spirit indwelling us is our oneness.

In 4:3 this oneness is called "the oneness of the Spirit." The oneness of the Spirit is actually the Spirit Himself. In the illustration of the electricity and the lights, the oneness of the electricity is the electricity itself. There is not another element, apart from the electricity, that is the oneness of the electricity. The oneness of the electricity is simply the electricity itself. In the same principle, the oneness of the Spirit is not something apart from the Spirit. On the contrary, it is the Spirit Himself. The oneness within us and among us is the very life-giving Spirit. Therefore, to keep the oneness is to keep the life-giving Spirit.

Many Christians talk about unity or oneness but neglect the Spirit. This indicates that they make oneness something separate from the Spirit. The more talk certain believers have had about unity, the more divided they have become. Some can even argue with one another in a fleshly way over the matter of unity. There is no need for us to talk so much about oneness. Oneness is like a dove. If we do not talk about it, the dove is present with us. But if we talk about it, it flies away. When we talk a great deal about oneness, we are in danger of losing it. We do not keep the oneness by talking about it; we keep it by staying in the life-giving Spirit. As long as we love the Lord and embrace Him, we keep the oneness; for, as we have strongly emphasized, oneness is the Person of Christ as the life-giving Spirit.

Keeping the oneness of the Spirit implies that we already have the Spirit. If we did not have Him, how could we keep Him? However, most Christians live apart from the Spirit most of the time. Any action taken apart from the life-giving Spirit is divisive. When we are one with the Spirit, living according to Him and doing all things in Him, we keep the oneness without making any conscious effort to do so. But whenever we act apart from the Spirit, we are divisive and lose the oneness. Therefore, instead of charging you to talk about oneness, I would encourage you to take care of the life-giving Spirit, who is the Lord Himself as life within you.

### **LOWLINESS, MEEKNESS, AND LONG-SUFFERING**

Verse 2 says, "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love." To have lowliness is to remain in a low estate, and to have meekness is to not fight for ourselves. We should have these two virtues in dealing with ourselves. Long-suffering is to endure mistreatment. We should have this virtue in dealing with others. By these virtues we bear one another; that is, we do not forsake the troublesome ones but bear them in love. This is the expression of life.

### **A TRANSFORMED HUMANITY**

In order to have the virtues spoken of in verse 2, we need a transformed humanity. In our natural humanity there is no lowliness, meekness, nor long-suffering. But these virtues are to be found in our transformed humanity, that is, in the humanity of Jesus. In Matthew 11:29 the Lord Jesus said that He was meek and lowly in heart. Meekness and lowliness are characteristics of the humanity of Jesus. Any meekness or lowliness that we may seem to have in

ourselves is a pretense and cannot survive any real testing. Praise the Lord that the humanity of Jesus in His resurrection life can be ours today! The more we are transformed, the more of the humanity of Jesus we have. By having the humanity of the resurrected Christ, we spontaneously have the virtues required to keep the oneness of the Spirit.

### **TRANSFORMATION AND ONENESS**

Keeping the oneness of the Spirit requires transformation. For this reason, we should not expect a new believer to be able to keep the oneness of the Spirit. It is useless to charge the new ones to keep the oneness, because keeping the oneness of the Spirit requires transformation. If you have not been transformed, you will not have the lowliness nor the meekness necessary to keep the oneness. The more we have been transformed, the more we spontaneously inherit lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering. All these virtues are our heritage by transformation.

The oneness of the Spirit cannot be kept by babyish or childish Christians. It can be kept only by the transformed ones. Those who are natural and fleshly cannot be meek, lowly, or long-suffering. They cannot keep the oneness, because nothing in their natural being can ever enable them to keep it. Therefore, I wish to emphasize the fact once again that 4:2 implies the need of transformation. We have problems with oneness because we are so natural, so fleshly, and so much in ourselves. But if we have been transformed, we keep the oneness spontaneously because in our transformed humanity we have lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering.

### **THE UNITING BOND OF PEACE**

Verse 3 speaks of keeping the oneness of the Spirit “in the uniting bond of peace.” Christ has abolished on the cross all the differences due to ordinances. In so doing, He has made peace for His Body. This peace should bind all believers together and thus become the uniting bond.

The uniting bond of peace is actually the working of the cross. By our experience we know that whenever we go to the cross, there are no differences between us and others. However, as soon as we come down from the cross, differences appear. This is true not only in the church life but also in our family life. Often the love between a husband and wife is buried beneath the differences that emerge when they come down from the cross. The only way to get rid of the differences is to go to the cross. When we go to the cross and remain there, the differences disappear, and we have peace. As we remain on the cross, this peace becomes the uniting bond in which we keep the oneness of the Spirit. Therefore, in order to keep the oneness of the Spirit we need both transformation and the cross.

Ephesians 4:2 indicates the need of transformation, and 4:3 indicates the need of the cross. We need to be transformed in order to have lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering; and we need to be crossed out in order to have the uniting bond of peace. Then we shall keep the oneness of the Spirit.

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***Burdens for Church Prayers***

- Pray for the blending and one accord among the saints.
- Pray for the English-speaking testimony and gospel preaching on West Valley College campus.
- May the Lord raise up many brothers to bear the testimony together.

- Pray for the burden to raise up next generation for building up of the body of Christ.
- Pray for YP that they will be companions with one another to pursue the Lord together.
- For GOW training: Vital groups be raised up, attending prayer meeting, prophesying on Lord’s day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth.

***Announcement***

- Morning Revival: 2012 Memorial Day Conference Message #3.
- Gospel of John Reading Schedule: S.11:23-40, M.11:41-57, T.12:1-11, W.12:12-24, Th.12:25-36, F. 12:37-50, S.13:1-11.
- Tuesday (8/7) prayer meeting at Campbell meeting hall.
- Young people blending next Saturday (8/11) in Fremont: 3pm outdoor activities at 1100 Stevenson Bl. (one north entrance of Central Park) 6pm: dinner provided and 7pm meeting at Address: 37167 Fremont Blvd.
- Labor Day conference, at Burlingame Hyatt. The dates are Friday (8/31) and Saturday (9/1) nights. The link is: <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/NorCalLD2012>