



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Ephesians 4:1-6

“Unity of One Body” -- TRANSCRIPT

We’re turning to Ephesians chapter 4, and our subject, as we continue our exposition of this marvelous little epistle, is the unity of the one body.

The Apostle in one sense has been in the clouds, but he now descends to the kitchen, or to the office. He’s been in the heavenlies, but now he comes to the First National Bank, or Wyatt’s, or Mockingbird Lane. In other words, he’s been expounding doctrine and the greatness of the church, the exalted position of the believer in Christ. And now he turns to the enforcement of this great truth in the lives of believers.

It’s not uncommon for Paul to speak of doctrine and then to turn to the more ethical sides of the Christian faith. We see that in the Epistle to the Romans. Well, like that, here in Ephesians chapter 4 the Apostle writes,

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

So we turn now from doxology to discipline. The discipline of daily live, or as some of the theologians have spoken of it, from the credenda of the things to be believed to the agenda of the things to be done.

Many years ago I read a commentary by Ruth Paxson, a woman who had a very great skill in the exposition of the word of God, and Mrs. Paxson spoke of Ephesians chapter 1 through chapter 3 as how God sees us in Christ. And then in chapters 4 through 6, how the world should see Christ in us. Well that’s a good insight I think. The Apostle says, “I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation to which ye are called.” So the Apostle is calling upon his readers to walk in the light of the truth that they say that they have proclaimed.

There’s an old story about St. Francis of Assisi, who one morning said to the disciples that he was responsible for training, let’s go down into the village from the monastery and preach. And, according to this ancient story, St. Francis went out with a group of young men, they walked down from the monastery into the village, they walked through the streets of the village, they made contact with a number of people, primarily about the things of ordinary life. They walked up and down the few streets of the village, finally walked out of the village. Walked to the next little community and then finally made their way back to the monastery when one of the young men said, “But, sir, you said we were going down to the village and preach.” And he is reported to have said, “That’s exactly what we did. We went down to preach. My sons, it is of no use that we walk anywhere to preach unless we preach as walk.” He was trying to make the point that in our daily life, we preach.

Well, the Apostle, then, wants us to live worthy of this magnificent high calling about which he’s been writing in chapters 1 through 3. The “one body truth” is to result in a life of submission to the head and to the members.

Well, with that as an introduction let us turn to the exhortation to walk worthy of the one body in chapter 4 verse 1 through verse 3. Now you’ll notice that the Apostle is not giving us simply teaching. It is teaching, but it’s earnest teaching, it’s earnest entreaty: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation to which ye are called.”

Now let’s look first at the description of himself; he says “the prisoner of the Lord.” In the Greek text, it is not “of” but “in,” so he speaks of himself as the prisoner in the Lord. In other words, it is his relationship of vital communion to the Lord Jesus Christ that lends authority to what he is saying. He’s a prisoner alright, but he’s a prisoner in the Lord. So what he says is to be regarded as coming from someone who is in vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the ancient church fathers said, “He glories in his chains more than a king in his diadem.” Paul had reason in the chains in which he found himself, because he was in those chains because of his testimony for Jesus Christ. A man has a perfect right to glory in the marks that mark him out as one who belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, if it is because of his relationship to the Lord. But of course if he suffers merely because he has been out of the will of God or has done something foolish, and as a Christian at the same time, then he has no right to glory in the things that have happened to him. Peter tells us that we ought to suffer as Christians in our suffering. So, the Apostle speaks of himself as a prisoner in the Lord.

His exhortation is to walk worthy of the calling. Now one of the reasons why we ought to walk worthy of our calling as Christians is that the honor of the head of the body is at stake. Whenever a Christian acts in such a way that the Lord is displeased, and others discover that, then the head of the body, well, his honor is besmirched by the activity of his disciples. If someone were to say, I am in—the sense in which this could be said—well I’m a kind of follower of Dr. Johnson, I like him, I listen to his teaching, I respond to it (I don’t like that kind of person incidentally who only listens to me), but

nevertheless, let’s say, I have followed him, I have been converted by him, I like his teachings, I go over there where he teaches, and then he goes out and lives in such a way that he is living contrary to the Scriptures, well, that kind of living is a reproach, not only to the Lord, but to the one who is his teacher. So, Paul says, “I...beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”

Now he speaks of calling in the previous chapters. In chapter 1 verse 18 he said, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know that which is the hope of your calling.” And then in chapter 1 verse 4 through verse 6, speaking of their divine election and predestination, well that’s their calling. They have been divinely elected. They have been predestinated to be like the Lord Jesus Christ, and furthermore, he says, we have been made accepted in the beloved one. What a magnificent thing God has done for us. He has chosen us in ages past. He has chosen us not only to be saved, but to be like Christ, predestinated us toward that goal, and then he has made us accepted in the beloved by virtue of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, he’s brought us to faith in him so that we have a righteousness that is acceptable to God. We are accepted in the beloved one, the Lord Jesus Christ. So we are to walk worthy of that. Walk worthy: that’s our calling.

Furthermore in chapter 2 verse 11 through verse 22 he has spoken at length of the unity that exists between the head and the body, and how in this age Jew and Gentile have been brought into that one body, so that there is one new man. Now that suggests unity and it also suggests submission on the part of the individuals to the head of the body, the Lord Jesus Christ. So you can see the exhortation, then, is to walk in unity and in submission to the head.

What are the details of it? Well, the Apostle spells them out. It’s not simply a nebulous “walk worthy of the calling to which you are called,” but now he tells us how we are to walk worthy, and first of all, with lowliness and meekness. These works are

related. In the Greek text they are associated together, one preposition has brought them into a relationship, one to another: “with lowliness and meekness.”

Lowliness has to do with a low estimate of ourselves in the proper sense. Now that’s not the low estimate of ourselves when we ought not to have that. The Apostle will speak to that point in Romans 12. He will say, “We ought not to think of ourselves other than we really are.” But lowliness of mind is a proper attitude. And if you have any difficulty with lowliness of mind, I suggest you read chapter 2 verse 1 through verse 3 again and remember what you were:

“And you hath he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our manner of life in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

It’s easy to remember our lowliness if we just take a look at what we were, and we’ve not been delivered completely, yet. The work of sanctification is still proceeding. Confucius say, “Man who small potato get in stew,” [laughter] and most of us are pretty small potatoes, and therefore we don’t have any reason to be proud.

Lowliness and meekness. Meekness is of course one of those works that is often misunderstood by us. We think of a meek man as being a Casper Milquetoast – you young people won’t probably know anything about that – but in the old days, on the funny pages, there was a Casper Milquetoast, and he was the meekest of all men in that sense. He just was a character who was dominated by everybody with whom he came in contact.

Meekness in the Bible doesn’t mean that. Meekness doesn’t mean to be dominated. Meekness was used of beasts that were now tamed. In other words, an animal that was wild, like a horse, and finally was tamed, brought under control, was said to be meek. In fact, that term is used around the race tracks, occasionally, of horses that are particularly good. For example, when a horse wins a race, it’s not uncommon for the jockey or the trainer to say that that horse is a meek horse, meaning that that horse is one that is under control. So, lowliness of mind and meekness means gentleness with steel, not spinelessness, so that the Apostle is not talking about being a spineless person, he’s talking about being a strong person, but controlled by the Lord.

Lowliness and meekness. The Lord Jesus is of course the perfect illustration. He’s the one who said “I am meek and lowly of heart,” but no one could ever accuse him of being a Casper Milquetoast, of being a spineless person. No one could ever possibly go into the Temple area where the moneychangers were there, Jewish moneychangers, and chase them out of the Temple area with some cords, and be accused of being a spineless individual. There was no one who was more courageous, more strong, more steely when the time came for it to be so, than the Lord Jesus Christ. So, with lowliness and meekness of mind – God-controlled-ness, not self-control-ness.

He says, also, with longsuffering. This is the spirit of no retaliation. Not fight fire with fire. That’s, of course, the way we’d often like to respond, fight fire with fire. The great Greek virtue was *megalozukia*, which was an expression that Aristotle defined as the refusal to tolerate any insult or injury. The refusal to tolerate any insult or injury. Well that’s not what is meant by longsuffering. This is the spirit of no relation, not fight fire with fire. The Greeks loved other things, but they were not spiritual things.

The Apostle goes on and says, “Forebearing one another in love.” Forebearing. That Greek word means to restrain one’s self, to hold one’s self within. The Apostle then says forebearing one another in love. No peevish, crotchety Christians. Have you ever seen one of them? We have one in Believer’s Chapel. But, other churches have many of

them [laughter]. Peevish, crotchety Christians. Forebearing one another in love. Holding one’s self in. Longsuffering. Forebearing.

Now, we give each other plenty of opportunities to practice these virtues, don’t we? And so, one of the things the Apostle would have us do is remember these things. This is part of being sanctified. It’s part of growing up. I used to have a friend who said that every day he would read one verse of Scripture (he was a graduate of the seminary but was not engaged in ministry any longer). He had lots of troubles in his family with his children, several children who died of a strange disease, one right after the other. He used to say that every morning he would get up and read one verse, and then he would say, “Lord, enable me to carry out this one verse today in my daily life.” Well, these are not bad verses, here, “with all lowliness and meekness with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love,” and then, “endeavoring to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace.” That word endeavoring means to give diligence.

Now I want you to notice carefully how the Apostle has written this. He does not say, “endeavoring to make the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” but “endeavoring *to keep* the unity in the bond of peace.” So that he is not saying that we are responsible to make the unity, we are responsible to keep the unity. The unity has already been made. The unity that exists in Christ is something made by the foundation laid on the blood of Christ and then the activity of the Holy Spirit, who has through the baptism of the Spirit, united us with one another and with the Lord Jesus Christ. So that unity has already been made. We’re exhorted to keep it. That is, to not do things that are contrary to the spirit of the unity, these things that he is talking about: be longsuffering, forbearing one another, and so on. Endeavoring while giving diligence to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

One gains the impression, too, by the use of this expression, “endeavoring” or “giving diligence,” that [that] is not an easy thing to do. That it is something that we should constantly have upon our minds: diligence. In fact, it is something that is

impossible apart from the enablement of the Holy Spirit. So, relying upon the Holy Spirit, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

With this, a natural question would arise, “Well what is this unity, Paul, about which you are talking? I know you are talking about the unity of Jew and Gentile in one body, but explain again what you mean. So the Apostle, here, points to the nature here of this unity in verse 4 through verse 6 and says that this unity consists of seven related things. Now let’s look at them in the remainder of our moments together.

First of all, he says, there is one body. One body. Now, this one body is the church of Jesus Christ. Take a look back at chapter 1 verse 23. The Apostle has said “and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.” The one body is the church. Look at chapter 2 verse 16: “And that he might reconcile both [that is, Jew and Gentile] in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” So the one body is the church which is composed of Jews and Gentiles. And then chapter 3 verse 6 – see how often this thought has been on the Apostle’s mind – “that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and partakers of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel.” So, there is one body means there is one church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the Apostle, of course, might conceivably be speaking of the local body as well as the universal body of Christ. In other words, these are two alternatives that we must think about. Is he talking about the local church, composed of individuals who meet in a particular locale? What is a local church, incidentally? Well, a local church is simply a body of professing believers in Jesus Christ who meet regularly in one locale for the observance of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and the hearing of the ministry of the Word of God under the supervision of elders with their helpers, the deacons. That’s a simple definition of what a local church is.

Now, the universal church is that body of individuals, all believers, who are bound together in a unity and from the first individual brought into that body by the baptism of

the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to the conclusion of the church’s earthly ministry.

What is Paul talking about here?

Well, I think that he must be speaking of the invisible organism, that is, that body of believers from the Day of Pentecost to the end of the church’s existence upon the earth, because how can he say there is one body? If he is talking about a local church, then there are many bodies in that sense. So, there is one body, is more likely, I think a reference to the invisible organism of the church. It is conceivable that he might be speaking of all the local bodies being looked at as a unity of the church, on earth – that’s possible – but I think it’s more likely that the other is in the Apostle’s mind. There is one body. Once church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now that is a very important thing for us to remember. It means that when a person is a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, resting on the finished work of Christ, who knows the principles of grace, even though he may be very young in the faith and may have a lot of confused ideas floating around in his mind, still, he’s to be regarded as a fellow member of the body of Christ, and regarded with love and affection, and submission, and concern and consideration, as those who are more mature.

That means that an Arminian is to be treated as a brother. He’s got a lot of confused ideas floating around in his mind. As Dr. Clark used to say, “He has a Charlie-horse between his ears”—but nevertheless, [laughter] but nevertheless he is a brother, and we remember that we all, all of us, probably, were at one time that way and maybe some of us still are that way. But we should remember to treat them as brothers. And likewise, if there is a Roman Catholic who has truly come to faith in Christ, then we should treat them as a brother in Christ. It’s possible for a Roman Catholic to be saved in spite of the doctrines of the Church. There are many people who are converted in particular churches, and they are converted, often, in spite of what is said from the pulpit. God has wonderful ways of bringing people to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will seek out his elect, and he will save them. And sometimes he will save them in strange

places that people might say, “My, the wonderful grace of God.” So, we need to remember there is one body, and in Believer’s Chapel treat all believers as members of that one body.

Now that doesn’t mean we should be simple-minded and be carried away with the false doctrine of others. We should speak with salt, words seasoned with salt. Speak truth. Don’t veer from the truth in order to be friends. But we should have the openness of the one body of Christ. That’s the first of the unities.

The Apostle says there is one Spirit. Well, there’s hardly any question about what that means. It’s possible, conceivable, that the Apostle might have been speaking in the way in which Luther spoke of the term ‘spirit’ when he said to Zwingli, with reference to their debate over the Lord’s Supper, “Your people are of a different spirit from our people.” What Luther meant by that was you have different ideas about the Lord’s Supper than we have, and that Marburg colloquy brought them out, and he said that in the spirit of you are different than us.

Now conceivably, the expression “there is one Spirit” might refer to the same spirit or disposition that is characteristic of Christians. They do have a different disposition, they do have a different spirit. You put a Christian with a group of non-Christians, and if you walk in, being a Christian, it won’t be long before you discover, well, there’s something different about him, and you’ll recognize his disposition, his nature. That’s the way it ought to be.

But it’s unlikely the Apostle is speaking of that when he says there is one Spirit. It’s much more likely that he’s talking about the one Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. All possess this one Spirit. There is one Spirit; we all possess that one Spirit. We’ve been baptized by that one Spirit into the Body of Christ. Furthermore, remember what Paul said in Romans 8:9, “He that hath not the spirit of Christ is not his.” What he said in Galatians 4 is, “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying ‘Abba, Father’.” So the possession of the Holy Spirit, as we’ve been

saying over and over these past few months, is the true test of whether a person is a Christian or not. That’s the final test: do you have the Holy Spirit? He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his. There is one Spirit. That’s the one Spirit that we all possess, having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Incidentally, disunity is a sin against this unity that has come through the common possession of the Holy Spirit. And that common possession of the Holy Spirit has its inevitable results. You can see it among the Christians. That’s why Christians like to be with Christians. They like that spirit that’s there. Now, many of the Christians aren’t sanctified yet, so we have to be longsuffering. Please be longsuffering with me, and I’ll try to be with you [laughter]. We need to be longsuffering with one another, but the reason we enjoy the ministry of the word and enjoy other Christians is because we possess the same spirit. That’s why the Apostle John will say that those that are born again, inevitably, will love the brethren, because there is a commonness about them.

Many years ago, I called on a family that had begun to attend the Chapel. They are no longer in the community. And they were newcomers from the state of Minnesota, and they were members of a particular denomination, the Evangelical Free denomination. And we called on them, or I called on them, and asked them how did they happen to come into contact with Believer’s Chapel, because, so far as I knew, they did not have any particular relationship with anybody in the Chapel and had just moved to the City of Dallas.

And they said, well, they had as Christians, just sought out Christians, because they had discovered that Christians tended to gather together, and they were expressing simply the idea that when they got here one of the first things they tried to do as a family was to find other Christians, because in finding other Christians they knew they would get in touch with the whole body of believers in the community. Well, that’s probably, exactly in harmony with this. There is one Spirit. Those Christians possess that one Spirit, and in possessing that one Spirit, they have a commonness of relationship to one another.

I’ve always liked that text in Luke chapter 18 and verse 30. The Lord Jesus is speaking, and he said, “Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house or parents or brethren or wife or children for the Kingdom of God’s sake who shall not receive manifold more in this present time and the age to come life everlasting.” There is no individual, having been converted, and having had to leave the close relationship with members of his family, who is not in the family of God obtained manifold in this present time and in the life to come, well, everlasting life. There is one Spirit. We all possess that Spirit. Disunity is sin against him.

The third thing the Apostle writes about here in Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 4 is “even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.” So, all Christians have the same aspirations. They have the same expectations. Monzoni, in defining the Christian church, spoke of them as the “camp of those that hope.” Hope is one of the characteristics of the Christian. He hopes. His whole life is pointed toward the future. Our hopes: hope of eternal life, hope of heaven, hope of eternal communion with the saints, hope of the communion with the Trinity, hope for the ages of eternity, hope of eternal life. There is one hope; that’s the only hope that really counts.

Another person defines the church the society for the abolition of sin and death [laughter]. I think we ought to arrange that in one of these acronyms so that we can speak of it as something along that line. But that’s what the church is. It is the society for the abolition of sin and death, because we have one hope that characterizes us.

We know of passages in the Bible that speak of our hope as the “blessed hope of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” and all of those other hopes. That’s what Paul has in mind when he says there is one hope. One body, one Spirit, one hope, and now one Lord in the fifth verse.

What’s suggested by that term “Lord”? Well, we could, if we wanted to, say that he’s one Lord because he’s part of the Trinity. He’s the second person of the Trinity; he’s Lord, because of his possession of a relationship within the Godhead. But I think in the

light of what has been set forth here – one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord – and then, as he goes on to speak in the next verse, that he’s likely thinking of one Lord as the God-man. In other words, his special relationship to the body, for which he died, and over which he is the head. So, one body suggests a head, and that is the Lord, but it’s the Lord in his mediatorial lordship. He’s the God-man. So, I think the relationship is to his mediatorial responsibility as Lord.

What does Lord suggest? One Lord? Well, that he owns us, first of all. We belong to him. He’s the head. We’re members of the body, and he is the one who controls us.

It suggests authority also. There is one Lord, and this one Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ, he has authority. There are not two Lords. I mentioned this to some of the elders the other night. I got a letter of fifteen pages, single-spaced, from a Roman Catholic in Buffalo who has been listening to the broadcast there. And in this particular letter, most interesting letter – it’s very rambling – he said that the Lord has told him a number of things. One of the things was that he was to say the Rosary, I believe, another thing was that he was to, let me see, I think he also said he was supposed to...well, I’ve forgotten some of the details. He had about six things.

And one of the things that stood out was that God had told him to listen to radio broadcasts. That seemed strange to put it in context of saying the Rosary and listening to radio broadcasts which included Protestant radio broadcasts. So, he’s been listening to ours. He’s not converted yet, but he’s a man who has served in Intelligence in World War II. He’s not an unintelligent man. And, the fifteen pages were a rambling disquisition on politics, religion, preachers, radio ministry, and almost anything else. There was no word referring to the Dallas Cowboys in it, so far as I could find. [Laughter] I have only read it once. I’ll try to read it again.

But in the course of it, he went on to explain why the Lord Jesus Christ was sinless, in his opinion. He did not say this to try to instruct me. He just said it. And naturally, he said, psychologists and others have pointed out to us that our environment

determines the kind of life that we live. And if Mary had not been born immaculately, that is preserved from sin in her birth, then the Lord Jesus Christ would have been brought up in a family in which there was sin and, undoubtedly, he would have sinned. So, according to his theology – he doesn’t realize I’m going to remind him of this – he is saying that our Lord’s sinlessness is really a gift of Mary, rather than something that pertains to his own inherent personality.

And then at the conclusion he said that God had told him that he was to conceive of Mary as being a cold redemtrix or something very simil– I’m not sure he used that precise word – but something very similar to that.

We do not have two Lords. The Lord Jesus Christ’s sinlessness is not the product of Mary’s careful nurturing of him as a child – though she did. She was a godly woman. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons the Lord Jesus Christ in his humanity was what he was was because Mary was not what this man said. For Mary said, “My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.” She recognized her need of a savior. And because she recognized her need of a savior, and was submissive to the Lord God, she was, in her own motherhood, one who taught our Lord as an infant, what she knew about submission to the God of heaven. So in that sense, she was useful in the work of bringing up our Lord, as far as his human nature was concerned. One Lord, not two. Not Mary and Christ, but the Lord Jesus Christ. There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, the Apostle says. No presbytery, no bishop, no conference, no denomination – only the Lord Jesus Christ is Lord. So that’s the fourth of the unities.

The fifth is one faith. Now, we’ve talked a lot about faith. I don’t have to ring the changes on that. The Apostle is talking about, I think, not the objective nature of faith but also the subjective exercise of faith. The New Testament speaks of the word faith in both senses. It speaks of “The Faith” as that which is to be believed. It speaks of “faith” as that by which we trust in the saving work of the Lord God. One has to do with vital

truth, truth that we must believe: the *credenda*. And then the other speaks of vital trust, living reliance upon the Faith that is to be believed. The Apostle speaks of one faith.

One baptism. A great deal of controversy has raged over this. One baptism. Does he mean water baptism, or does he mean the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Now, if he meant one water baptism, one might ask the question, “Well, why didn’t he say anything about the Lord’s Supper? Why didn’t he say there is one baptism and one bread?” In 1 Corinthians that’s what he says. In verse 17 he says there is one bread. Why didn’t he say “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one bread”? But he doesn’t.

The context has to do with supernatural things. Immaterial things. So, my being as dogmatic as I customarily am, I think this is more likely to be baptism of the Holy Spirit: the one activity of the Holy Spirit that has brought us into unity with one another and with our Lord. I don’t like to de-emphasize water baptism. That’s very important. Every believer who believes in Christ ought to be baptized in water. There’s a Methodist preacher who commented that John Bunyan was a great and strict baptist but he got Christian to the holy city without once baptizing him. That’s true. Baptism does not save. But baptism is to be the experience of the believing Christian.

Finally, the Apostle says, one God and Father. Now, of course, God is God of all men by creation. He could be called Father of all men by creation. But Paul, I don’t think, is speaking about that. He’s saying that he is Father, one God and Father, by regeneration. Father is important, incidentally: One God *and* Father. Because, as we’ve often said, there is only one God and that God is Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any God who is not the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is not the true God. You’re speaking about someone different. One God and Father – this is the kind of text that the Unitarians have to blink at as they read the Bible, because if it’s one God and Father – if he’s Father, he must have a Son. And so, the Son is the second person of the Trinity, which they don’t like to recognize at all as being equal with the Father in power and glory. So, one God and Father.

Notice, he’s above all; he’s sovereign. He’s through all; that is, through all who’ve been bound together in one body. He’s the pervasive support of us. One of the commentators says “the impelling power.” He is above all, he is through all, and he’s in all. He indwells us with his wonderful presence, being the spring and source of blessing through the Holy Spirit. What a magnificent treatment the Apostle has given us of the unity that exists in the Lord Jesus Christ.

May I just mention one thing? In chapter 2 verse 11 through verse 22 the Apostle concluded by saying, in verse 22, after he had said that we are a holy temple in the Lord, “In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” So, this is the realization of the relationship of the one body, produced by the Spirit, an habitation of God through the Spirit – it’s an expression of unity – we are builded together, and of course, the idea of submission is there because we are indwelt, we are inhabited by God the Father. Christ’s body is not in heaven, but he’s left a body on earth to show him forth. That’s the reason the church is called the body of Christ. The Spirit would love to duplicate the Lord Jesus Christ as much as is able in those who are named by him.

May I close with just this simple little story? In St. Peter’s church, in Cologne, in Germany, there are two pictures of the crucifixion of the Apostle Peter. That’s tradition, of course, we don’t know that that’s fact.

These two pictures stand side by side in that cathedral. The existence of the two pictures is explained in this way. In the beginning of the 19th Century, when Napoleon came through, he took the original of the crucifixion of Peter back to France with him, robbing the cathedral of one of its treasures. And so while the first picture was away from the city, the artist was asked to paint a duplicate. And he painted the duplicate. So far as I remember, he painted it from memory. And then, it was restored to the church, after Napoleon’s loss of power. And the two pictures were compared. And those who’ve

looked at them say there is so little difference between them that you cannot tell which is the original and which is the copy.

Well, that is what the Holy Spirit would like to do in the life of believers. He would like to form us to be like Christ. Not only does he like to do that, but he will accomplish it, for that is what we are foreordained to be: “like unto him in all of his glory.” In the meantime, he is beginning the work now, and that work of sanctification is going on. And as we respond to the work of the Holy Spirit within us, we come to be more like him. And that way, well, we represent him. We become a true representation of the body of Christ. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these remarkable words given by the Apostle Paul. We pray that unity and submission may characterize the saints, in their relationship to the triune God and also in relationship to one another.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.