



Sermon – May 19, 2019
Chris Osborne

Verses Covered

Ephesians 4:2 – 6
John 17:20 - 21

So Ephesians 4 addresses an issue for us in this room. It certainly drives in our country. Our country is hopelessly divided. I mean we are completely partisan. We are mad at each other. Everybody's upset with something. But that cannot be in the church. Now I want you to listen. The Lord's prayer is not Matthew 5. Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. That's not the Lord's prayer. That's the model prayer. But the Lord's prayer is in John 17. It's the prayer He prayed right after Judas has left to betray Him. They finish everything, they're headed toward Gethsemane. I want you to listen to one part of this. Listen to what he says because He prays for the disciples there, Himself, and then He prays for us in this room. And here's what He prays.

²⁰I don't ask for these only, but also for those who believe in Me through their word; ²¹that they might all be one; just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that these might be one in Us, that the world might believe that You have sent Me.

So the very clear statement in our Lord's prayer is that if there's not unity inside the church that the world would look at us and not believe. Which is critical with where we are today. If we're no different than the world, if we have the same kind of disunity and partisan activity and fighting that the world possesses, then we do not speak to them about who our Lord is. There has to be a distinction in us. Now let me share a couple things here before we get started in the text. There is a church wide unity whether we meet in the same place or not. We are in this church unified with certain churches in Africa. When we were there in Uganda and we went into the church, what they believe is exactly what we believe. We meet in two different places, we're totally unified. The same thing's true inside the town. Peg and I are good friends with Brian and Tristie Fisher who's the pastor at Grace Anderson. Now we're totally unified with them. As a matter of fact, Brian, when we've addressed certain issues of discipline here, has called me and said, "We will honor the discipline you exacted in your church." So there's complete unity between us even though we meet in different places. So there's a church worldwide unity. But in the text in front of us, he's talking to the Ephesian church. Because they put, it's just a mess. I mean he goes into Ephesus, he speaks there, he goes into the synagogue, pulls some Jews out, become Jewish

Christians, they're having a great fellowship, and then all of a sudden what happens. The Gentiles begin to flow in and it as the Gentiles begin to flow in, boy it's all sorts of chaos because now we have different cultures, we have different music, we have different dress, we have all these issues that are surfacing even with a similar belief in Jesus. So he's trying to get them to where they need to be. That's why in Ephesians 2 he spends that long chapter talking about the blood of Jesus bringing us together. So inside this room, the agenda that he lays out here is for us here. Now listen to what he says. Ephesians 4, verse 2. He talks about the fact, we looked at it last week, we're to walk in the calling with which we've been called.

²with all humility, meekness, long suffering, here's the Greek, putting up with one another in love, ³hastening to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴One body, one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is over all, through all, and in all.

Now there is how we build a unity in a building where we're different. We have to embody in each of our lives certain characteristics. Now listen to what he says. Number one, with all humility. We have to embody that. We have to be humble. Now that does not mean that you don't admit to what you're gifted at. When you look at somebody and you compliment them and they go, "Well I'm not any good." That is false humility. It's really bordering on arrogance. Because you're wanting people to again tell you how great you are. So it's false humility. It's not biblical. Humility in the Bible is simply that no matter how gifted you I might be, I am not better than anybody else. It goes back to the calling with which we're called. When you are I stand at the foot of the cross, the ground is completely level. Nobody's higher than anybody else. If you think you didn't have to come through the blood and you don't have to come through the blood, then you are better than me. But if you had to come through the blood, then you're not better than me. I'm not better than you. We've all come to Christ the same way. So because of that equality, I can't think I'm better than you. It's based on the cross, nothing else. Because we are different. Some in this room are smarter than others. Some are better athletes than others. Some are better looking than others. Some have made more money than others. But you're not better than anybody. You're not better than anybody because you're an Aggie. I know some of you think that. But you're going to have to really re-read the Bible. There are no Aggies in the Bible. You're not better than an Aggie because you're a UT grad. You're not better because your football team wins several national championships all the time. You're not better because. Clemson? Chuck, are you here because double his tithe for this next week. Clemson. See there's disunity right here. I'm going to deal with this in a minute. So you just stay seated because you are coming up on the phone. And yes, it's a new phone. There you go. You're not better than a Republican if you're a Democrat. You're not better than a Democrat if you're a Republican. You're not better than a Democrat or Republican if you're Independent. You're not better than somebody because you homeschool your kids. You're not better than somebody because you believe in public education. You're not better than somebody because you put your kids in private school. See how it gets quiet? We do at times think we're better than other people. Humility is not going on and saying, "I'm not this." Humility is, no matter how gifted you are, and understand something by the way, if you are gifted, where'd that come from? From God! James. Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of life. So if you are a good football player, it's because God made you that way. So we're not going to think better of ourselves. First rule to achieve unity in this room is none of us is better than the other.

Second thing is, look at this,

with all humility and meekness,

Meekness doesn't mean wimpy. Meekness, James 1:21, receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your soul. A way I receive God's word is I don't have my own agenda against God's word. Meekness is simply saying, "You know what, God, You say it, I'm in, end of question." I don't have my own agenda. I don't push my own agenda. I don't get to do that. So it's not my ideal. This is a struggle I see with tons of young pastors today. I meet with a number of them and every single one of them will come to me and go, "You know, Brother Chris, what was your vision for Central?" And I look at them and go, "You know, I don't think I'm entitled to my own agenda. If Jesus is Lord, He's already laid the agenda out and that is to make disciples." So if I'm involved in making disciples, I'm in His agenda. If I'm involved in anything else, I'm inserting my agenda and that is simply not biblical. So you don't get to assert your agenda. OK. You're not better than anybody. You don't get to assert your agenda. And here's what he says. I love this. Here's the Greek.

with longsuffering, putting up with each other in love.

Now the Greek word for love here is *agapē*, not *philía*. So he doesn't say we have to like each other. The problem is we have to put up with people. You generally don't like them. Now, Vince, I want to read you, I found this, the head of Lifeway tweeted one time, "Tell me about your best church fights." Here they are. These are the people you put up with in love, with longsuffering. Here are the church fights.

1. An argument over the appropriate length of the worship pastor's beard. I didn't know that was in there.
2. A fight over whether or not to build a children's playground or use the land for a cemetery. How do you fight over that? Tell you, we need to bury people more than we need these kids coming to Jesus.
3. A church argument and vote to decide if a clock in the worship center should be removed. I don't know if that means the pastor was long-winded or short-winded. I do not know.

Put up with!

4. A 45-minute heated argument over the type of filing cabinet to purchase: black, brown, two, three, or four drawers.
5. A fight over which picture of Jesus to put in the foyer. I did not know we had photos of Jesus. But apparently some church has two and they can't decide which one to put out there.
6. A petition to have all church staff clean shaven.
7. A dispute over whether the worship leader should have his shoes on during the service.

8. A big church argument over the discovery that the church budget was off by, drumroll, \$0.10. Someone must have been a great Christian; finally gave a dime to settle the issue.
9. A dispute in the church because the Lord's Supper had cran/grape juice instead of grape juice. Now let me ask you something. Can you really taste the difference in something that small? Because if your taste buds are that good, you are incredible. As a matter of fact, I'm going to tell you what we're going to do. We're going to switch stuff out just to see if you catch it.
10. A business meeting argument about whether the church should purchase a weed eater or not. It took two business meetings to resolve.
11. One church split completely over strong versus weak coffee.
12. An argument whether the church should allow deviled eggs at the church meal.

Putting up with in love! You know, they're not really funny if you've pastored these churches.

13. A disagreement over using the term "potluck" instead of "pot blessing".
14. A church member was chastised because she brought vanilla syrup to the coffee server. It looked too much like liquor. It's obviously a Baptist church somewhere
15. A dispute, oops! I'm in trouble here. I didn't even catch that. A dispute over whether church should allow people to where black shirts, since black is the color of the devil.

OK. Now, here's the problem. I'm one of those. I think the minister should have shoes on during the singing. Just checking. The problem is these are real. And so there are times when we have to put up with each other with long suffering. Because some of us, let me back off, all of us are at some point nuts. We're crazy. And so we have to put up with each other. Now I will tell you this, there's a point at which there's a limit. I mean, if you decide we should not have cran/grape juice at the Lord's Supper and we decide we're going to go ahead and have it and you keep it going, then we're going to Titus 3 you and say, "Have a nice day." We can send you to another church. We'll take care of your letter for you. We will do that. But if somebody comes up with, "I don't like cran/grape." And we say, "We're going to serve it anyway." And they go, "OK." Now we just have to live with each other. OK. We've got to put up with each other. That's the rule in the Bible. We're not going to like each other because some of us really are going to come up with crazy ideas. I've heard of people complaining about the pastor's dress on Sunday morning. Here. I know, say it isn't so. Now I'm going to get some e-mail. I can't believe he wore black. They were right. That's just the color of Satan. So we're going to put up with each other. OK. None of us is better than the other. We're not going to assert our own agenda. We're going to put up with each other.

And then here's what we're going to do. Now listen. Here's the Greek. We're going to chase hard after the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Whether we like each other or not. Whether we have to put up with each other or not. You and I are going to chase the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Which means I can forgive him for that comment. It's hard, but I will. Clemson is whatever. So we're going to chase after the Spirit's unity in the bond of peace. We're going to allow, listen, we're going to allow the Holy Spirit to create a bond of peace between those of us who think the clock ought to be removed or stay. We're going to allow Him to do that. You say, "Well how do you really do that? I mean I am a Democrat and I do think the Republicans are

wrong and I can't take it. So how do I do that?" Or, "I'm a Republican and I really think the Democrats are wrong and so how do I live with a guy that votes totally the opposite of what I believe sitting next to me in the pew. How do I maintain the Spirit's unity in a bond of peace with somebody who puts their kids in public school and maligns me for homeschooling mine? How do I do that?" Now listen because what he does, he gives you seven things, now listen, that are more important than anything else in your life. They're more important than whether or not you're a Republican. They're more important than whether or not you homeschool your kids. They're more important than whether or not you went to A&M or you went to Tech or you went to UT. They're more important than any single thing in your life. Here are the seven. Watch.

One body. There's not two distinct bodies of Christ. There's only one. If you've been indwelt, the Holy Spirit's in you, the blood of Jesus has forgiven you, you've been baptized into the body of Christ, there's only one body we're baptized in. There's not two bodies, just one.

One Spirit. None of us have a different Spirit. We all have the same Holy Spirit indwelling us through whom we can connect to the Father. Through whom we can be empowered to live for His glory. Through whom we can conquer the sin in our life. We have that ability. All of us have the same Spirit.

One hope of your calling. You what the hope of your calling is? Hope is not the hope that we'll win a national championship. Hope in the Bible is always a certainty of something that's going to occur but has not yet. So the one hope of your calling is that when you and I die, we're all going to heaven together. So we might as well get used to whatever they're serving up there. Cran/grape or grape or Mogen David. Whatever it is they're serving up there, we're going to be together. And here's the problem. We're going to be together for eternity. And there are not, there is not a Baptist section and a Church of Christ section and a Methodist section and a Presbyterian section. We think there is. And thank goodness, if we were in charge of heaven, there would be. But He's in charge. And so when you and I die, we're going to the same place. We're going to be together for eternity so we might as well adapt here.

One Lord. There is one Jesus. There is one singular way to be forgiven and step into one hope and that's through the blood of the one Jesus.

One faith. You have one way to believe.

One baptism. He's not talking about that. He's talking about Spirit baptism. Inside you there's one.

There's one God and Father of all who is over all, through all, and in all.

Now listen to me. There's nothing in your life, now listen, there's nothing in your life more important than those seven things. Don't tell me that you're mad because this guy's a Republican and this guy's a Democrat. I don't care. It's not more important than those seven things. That's his basis in unity. Now listen carefully. That's the basis of unity in His church. The home is a

micro chasm of the church. And so the basis of unity in the home is those seven things. Because they're more important than anything else you think or you don't think you have with each other as husband and wife. My wife and I, we had a Sunday School class over the other night. Asked questions about our marriage. My wife and I have been married now for, oh geez, 45 years. Now we're total opposites. She's an extrovert. Likes to talk. I'm an introvert. I walk around here on Sundays, but I just as soon be in my office. I'm an introvert. I'm not a good conversationalist. My kids know if they catch me on the phone it's, "Yeah, hey, how are you doing." And give it to Peggy. We're man and a woman. We're distinct. Our love languages are totally distinct. She's words of affirmation. My love language is not in that book by Gary Smalley. It's harassment. That's my love language because I love getting it as much as I love giving it. When you have somebody that can't get it, they don't have it. I like getting it as much as I love giving it. That's why Ed Wren and I are friends. It's the only reason we're friends. Because we have the same love language which doesn't work well with a woman with words of affirmation. My wife told them the other night, "I deal with it most of the time." And I'm like, "Yeah, right." She does take it, but we have different love languages. We grew up in different homes. She grew up in a home with a very close family. I didn't. So my idea of what we do at night as a family is different than her idea of what we do at night. We are totally disparate people that have been married for 45 years and still enjoy each other. Because we're both centered around those seven things. We both think we're part of the body of Christ. We both believe the Holy Spirit lives in us. We both believe we're going to heaven when we die. We both believe in Jesus Christ. We both asserted the same faith. We both have a Spirit baptism and we believe the God of the universe is inside us. I don't care how bad your marriage is. I don't care what you like or don't like about each other. You don't have anything in your marriage more demeaning or damaging than the beauty of what Jesus Christ has put in both of you.

Let's pray.

Father, remind us in this room of who we are in You. Remind us in our homes of who we are in You. And for those today that are not in You, remind them of that. I ask You that in the name of Your Son.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. Staff and I are here at the front. You've never met Jesus; we'll share with you how to do that. You want to be a part of this fellowship, we want you to come. We'll talk to you about that. If you need to come down here and kneel and pray, say, man I've got some issues I need to face inside my home. We'll pray with you about that. Or you can just kneel down here and pray by yourself. Whatever the Holy Spirit of God speaks to you about this morning, you come.

I want to thank you today. Eddy Boyd is going to come and lead us in a word of prayer.

Holy Father, thank You for this time of worship. Father, as we continue in our worship, we ask your blessings on this, on this offering, Father, and I pray that we, we offer this offering in as we are instructed by Your Holy Spirit. Father use this offering to further Your glory. In Jesus name. Amen.