

The Fellowship of the Saints

There rests in the bosom of every creature made in God's image the longing for genuine peace and fellowship with others, a unity with kindred persons. God never intended that man should be alone, and man is therefore naturally gregarious.

“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18 MKJV).

But sin, from the very beginning, has corrupted the compatibility of humankind so that even brothers like Cain and Abel were not able to maintain harmonious unity.

And what has been the cause of man's division? As God was the Primary Factor with Cain and Abel, so He is with us. It was all about what God approved and disapproved. It was all about His will, not Adam's, Eve's, Abel's, Cain's, or any other's.

“And Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat of it. And the LORD had respect to Abel and to his offering, but He did not have respect to Cain and to his offering. And Cain glowed with anger, and his face fell” (Genesis 4:4-5 MKJV).

In the fallen nature, we were disconnected from one another.

It is all about God's will today. Our Supreme Example prayed, “Not My will, but Yours be done.” That is the answer for all division and conflict.

Our problem began with the serpent and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden.

First, in disobedience, we were disconnected from God, which God calls death:

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but you shall not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17 MKJV).

That day, Adam and Eve died. Then, in that fallen nature - the dwelling in death and hell (darkness) - we were disconnected from one another. That disconnect is also death and manifest as hell.

To this day, the only kind of motivation to be in cooperation, among those not redeemed by the blood of Christ (those not reborn of, and perfected in, the

Spirit of God), has been a self-serving one. There is no person alive that does anything unless there is something in it for them. This is not good.

This reality is readily seen in any structure where people have gathered for some common purpose, in businesses, companies, unions, governments, political parties, alliances, associations, partnerships, societies, armies, street gangs, marriages, brotherhoods, clubs, fellowships, schools, churches, communities, cities, kingdoms, nations, and yes, even tribes, clans, and families.

In none of these has there been perfect harmony. That is why even in marriage, the closest kind of unity on earth, there is widespread divorce, often accompanied with families disintegrating, children breaking from their elders and siblings prematurely, reluctantly, unpleasantly, and even violently.

Jesus Christ paved the way for mankind to be brought back into fellowship with Him.

It is recorded that Cain went out and built a city, a way of trying to unite people. Why did he do that? Sin brings fear, which spawns the effort to find solace and comfort. Cain did not do it for the good of others; his track record proves that. With fallen countenance and fear, he did it for himself. But for the grace of God, all men seek their own good, not that of their neighbors. That is the very essence of the sin nature. And did he find unity and security? Is there any city that provides those benefits? Not on earth, there isn't.

Along came the Savior of all mankind, Jesus Christ, Who unselfishly laid down His life and took it up again so that we might have deliverance from the tragedy of our separation from God. Jesus Christ paved the way for mankind to be brought back into fellowship with Him in the fullness of time. We are graciously granted the opportunity to renew the wondrous fellowship with our Maker that Adam and Eve had before the Fall. Fellowship with God automatically enables us to have that same fellowship with our fellow man, provided he has that fellowship renewed with God as well.

“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7 MKJV).

As Cain, we have been killing our “brothers,” but now a new day is dawning.

Our total welfare revolves around the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, the Enabler of being and doing right.

Him have we hated, and our fellow man have we consequently hated, preferring ourselves and our wellbeing over any other. We have been a selfish, lawless bunch;

in the process, we have been destroying ourselves as well as one another in thought, word, and deed.

Throughout all of man's history, we have had nothing but disagreement, strife, and bloodshed. As Cain, we have been killing our "brothers" to have our own way, individually or cumulatively. But now is a new day dawning.

Because our wellbeing, in every respect, revolves around God and His will, it follows that we must be in right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator and Governor of all things. He is our only hope. We must be born anew, not physically, yet quite literally. Jesus Christ must come to live in us as Comforter, Brother, Father, and Lord. We must be saved.

Sadly, men have presumed to worship Him and have His favor, but it has not been genuine for the vast majority. In their presumption, they have walked in their own self-righteousness, thinking to do God service while despising and even killing their fellow man. Men have built countless kingdoms in the name of their gods, including the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have sown deception and reaped vanity, to their destruction.

How may we have that blessed unity with one another?

But now a new day dawns. Enough of manmade religion. Enough of men's works, as good-intentioned and valuable as they may appear to be. Enough of men's opinions and devices in the Name of God. Now is the Day of the Lord, and it is His time to speak and to act. And only He can do it:

"Making a mess comes naturally to man; only God is able to correct it" (*The Path of Truth*, Proverb 1476).

"And unless those days should be shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22 MKJV).

So where do we go from here? How may we have that blessed unity with one another? Consider this wonderful Psalm describing unity:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psalms 133:1-3 KJV).

Unity flowing from head to toe! How many have had it? Have you? Truly?

Here's what it takes to have that unity: God must do it, because until He takes you to the cross and your will is submitted to Him, you will never have unity with so much as one other person, no matter if they have been to the cross or not.

That's right - without having the cross of Jesus Christ in common, there can be no perfected unity.

So what do we do? All we *can* do is come to the Father, without an agenda, without expecting anything in return, and lay down our lives, including everything we possess in every way, at His feet and leave it all there.

As long as any person's flesh is present and alive,
there can be no true unity.

We have a community wherein several have done just that. It is a blessedness one cannot so much as dream about or imagine. It is a reality that is utterly foreign to any who have never experienced it. Most who name the Name of Jesus Christ cannot fathom true unity, because they have not died to their own wills. They have experienced only emotion and carnal unities of varying sorts and degrees, but to be of one heart and one soul with another takes a work of God through the cross of Jesus Christ; it takes a death for each one.

Churches and all groupings I have mentioned have a shallow idea of unity, which is very different from the reality. I include those that require relinquishment of all earthly goods to join - it is all the same. The unity in nominal Christendom and every other religion and religious work is superficial, temporary, and vulnerable to many and varied threats. That is because the flesh is present. As long as any person's flesh is present and alive, there can be no true unity. While man lives, God languishes, He is grieved, and His Spirit is quenched.

Have you been hopping from church to church? Are you dissatisfied with the church you are in, though you have been a member in good standing there for years or decades? Or are you simply satisfied with the nature and degree of the unity you have, be it with your church, your family, or your church family? If that is enough for you, unless God dries up your oasis and drives you further on, there is nothing you or I can do about it. You will remain with your unity and whatever you have.

As long as you are joined to this world or anyone's flesh, you will never experience the unity of God in heart and soul with any person. You may love your wife or husband or your pastor or your son or your daughter or your mother or father, but unless you have been granted the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and unless you have a unity with Him that no man can alter, you will never have *the* unity of unities with anyone.

You may wish to be ministered to, or you may wish to minister to others. You may wish to be accepted and loved; you may try to accept others and love them. Nothing will work, however, until your will and theirs have been laid down.

Being dead in Him, they are forever blessed with unity with each other.

The problem is you cannot lay down your own will. Until it is out of the way, you will resist the cross. We need a Savior; God must do what He must do with you. You must lose everything, forever. Your identity must be forsaken entirely.

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21 MKJV).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20 KJV).

Don't get the wrong idea - there can still be troubles and conflict; there can be disagreement, anger, frustration, and disappointment. Yet overriding all of it among those who have died, there is an abiding unity that only God could take away, and why would He want to do that once two individuals in Christ have it? Being dead in Him, they are forever blessed with unity with each other, with and in Him, which no man can take away from them. As a song goes, “I have something that the world can't give, and the world can't take it away!” Amen! This is a wonderful thing!

So who is ready for unity with the saints of God? As you choose to live, you live alone, in death. But **“Come,”** says the Lord Jesus, **“die, and live forevermore!”**

Victor Hafichuk

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