

Wednesday, October 21, 2020
E PLURIBUS UNUM

In 1782, the Congress of the United States added the Latin phrase **E PLURIBUS UNUM** to the seal of the United States.

E Pluribus Unum: Out of many, one.

Unity is an important reality – not just in a nation but in the body of Christ as well. We know that it is a key to the Lord's blessing:

PSALM 133

Unity in the body of Christ is a necessary ingredient for the anointing. What is unity? How is it achieved? What are the components of true unity? That's what we're going to talk about tonight. This message can be applied to unity in the kingdom of God, but it also applies to unity among any group.

1 Corinthians 1:10-13 (NKJV)
1 Corinthians 3:1-4 (NKJV)

These scriptures reflect the biblical response to disagreements in the church. *Our maturity is not measured by our doctrinal stance but by our ability to maintain unity with Jesus and each other.* Christianity is first and foremost a “relational” reality. If the fruit of our doctrinal stances brings division in our relationships, then it is missing a key component of the heart of God. Before we go on, let's look at the components of unity:

1. Honor

For there to be true unity, the group must have something they unify around. In other words, the individuals must have in common the honor of an idea or in the case of the church – a Person: Jesus Christ. The United States unified around the idea of liberty based upon how God created humanity. The idea of liberty and unity in the US was based upon how God created humans and how they relate to God and one another. In the church, we rally around Jesus. His ways are what unite us.

2. Submission

Jesus' ways are what unite us. If we honor Him, we submit to His ways. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will obey Me." A lack of submission produces division. God has a divine order He works through on the earth. It involves humans so it is not perfect. When something is not perfect yet we are commanded to submit to it, what does that look like?

The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So practice and observe everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. /// Matthew 23:2-3 (BSB)

This does not include obedience to heretical teachings. Remember, we unify around God and His Word. Who has the right to divide God's body? Who has the right to raise rebellion against God's order? Isn't it interesting that in marriage, the Bible tells us that if unbelievers are willing to live with a believer, let them do so (1 Cor. 7:13). If we can love each other and allow God to work out the changing, that is preferable.

3. Connection

To live in unity, we all must do our part. In the body of Christ, each of us is gifted to operate in the place God has called us to. True unity is not just an absence of argument but the presence of cooperation. How do we know we are cooperating in that which we honor? We each do the part God has gifted us to perform. Another thing that destroys unity and causes division is when we try to do someone else's part. Doing so devalues the part we are trying to supplant and inhibits the sovereign conviction and corrective work of the Savior.

4. Value

True unity comes when we value each other. There is no substitute in the body for love. How do we know we love each one another? By making the same protections available for all. By allowing each of us to learn and grow. If we don't value the individual parts, selfishness will attack unity. Jesus said that there was

not greater love than for a man to lay down his life for his friend. Who is my friend? Who is my coworker in the gospel? How do I show my love for them?

It takes patience, trust in God, love, and respect for one another to operate successfully in unity in the greater body of Christ. Problems come in when one of the components we spoke of is absent or ignored.

Today's Scriptures:

- Psalm 133:1-3 (NKJV)
- 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 (NKJV)
- 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 (NKJV)
- Matthew 23:2-3 (BSB)