

**DAY 78****READ**

EPHESIANS 4:1-6

FOCUS

¹ AS A PRISONER FOR THE LORD, THEN, I URGE YOU TO LIVE A LIFE WORTHY OF THE CALLING YOU HAVE RECEIVED. ² BE COMPLETELY HUMBLE AND GENTLE; BE PATIENT, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE. ³ MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH THE BOND OF PEACE. ⁴ THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT, JUST AS YOU WERE CALLED TO ONE HOPE WHEN YOU WERE CALLED; ⁵ ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM; ⁶ ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, WHO IS OVER ALL AND THROUGH ALL AND IN ALL.

REFLECTION from PASTOR DOYLE SURRATT

Hey everybody, I pray that your faith is strong, your mind is clear, and your emotions are stable these days. A number of years ago, my brother, who is a pastor as well, was teaching a pastor's conference in another part of the world. After he had spoken for a couple of days, he and his wife were packing to leave and the police knocked on the door of their hotel to question them and to arrest them. But because there was some confusion about the details of the events of the meetings they had attended, the police left. Shortly after that, they received a phone call from the U.S. Embassy asking if they had been arrested yet. Upon informing the State Department that they had not been arrested, they were told to get on the first plane out of the country and to hope they didn't get picked up at the airport. Now while this is an interesting story of adventure, there is actually a very sad back story to it that was revealed later. The entire incident was instigated by a Christian leader who was trying to lead a different group of pastors and, if I remember correctly, they were all from the same denomination. What had happened was that my brother had gotten in the middle of an internal power struggle among church leaders and had been falsely accused. Another sad aspect of this story is that this group of Christians had long had the reputation of this kind of infighting.

In Ephesians 4:3-6, Paul expressly urges us to not behave this way. In these passages he reminds us that to God we who are truly Christian are all one Church--we are not divided into many churches. In other words, we may worship in different places and styles, but we are still one Church and are to be in unity with each other. When he says to "make every effort" he is saying that it will not be easy--it will take work to live in unity. In God's mind we are one but, in our experience, and in the eyes of those who are watching from the outside it doesn't seem like it.

How often have you thought about unity among Christians? Remember, Paul is writing about the incredible gift of reconciliation between God and us--between Jew and Gentile--and now between brothers and sisters in Christ. A part of the solution is to develop our personal character traits that are mentioned in the previous verse: humble, gentle, patient, forbearance. But he also indicates a big part of the solution to disunity is owning what the Gospel teaches us about God and the implications therein. He goes on to talk about three sets of three items that remind us of the unity found in the God that we say we believe in. In verses 4-6, we are reminded that the Holy Spirit has made us one--regardless of race, background, social, or financial status. In a society that believed in many gods, he is saying that only the true God--by His Spirit--can bring real reconciliation between disparate groups of people. Something good to remember in these times of such misunderstanding and frustration.

We often feel hopeless in times like these, but Paul says that in the Spirit we have the ultimate hope. He goes on to say that there is one Lord (Jesus) in whom we place our trust and in whose name there is one baptism. There is also one God (not many), Father of all (who believe), who is over all (no one or nothing is more powerful), through all (He is Creator of the universe) and in all (He is everywhere all the time).



DAILY DEVOTION

DAY 78

REFLECTION from PASTOR DOYLE SURRETT (CONT'D)

In this three in one, we see perfect unity and are to live in similar unity. The only way people will ever know true unity is if we as the church decide to allow God to bring unity into our relationships, marriages, families, and churches--and it can only happen through the work of the Spirit in our lives. Let the Gospel shine in your life today! Seek to find unity with other believers...starting now.

QUESTIONS

- WHO CAN YOU EXTEND GRACE TO TODAY TO PROMOTE UNITY?
- ARE YOU IN COMPETITION WITH ANOTHER BELIEVER?
- ASK GOD TO EXAMINE YOUR HEART TO SEE IF YOU ARE HARBORING ANYTHING AGAINST ANOTHER BELIEVER.