



Pastor's Pen

My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2:2-3

Dear Bethel Church family and friends,

Grace and peace to you from God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I pray this finds you and your loved ones well. I know they say that if you don't like the weather here in South Carolina, wait 5 minutes, as it's sure to change. But the last week has been crazy with all four seasons in seven days. Add to that the recent plague of June bugs on the church campus, and I just might be convinced we're in the last days. Come, Lord Jesus, come!

If you've been reading along recently, you'll remember that we've been exploring the Lord's **"very great and precious promises"** to all of His chosen sons and daughters. One of the important vows God has made to us as His people deals with our unity in the Body of Christ. Undeniably, spiritual harmony is extremely important to the ministry and mission of God's church.

My friends, the world around us, our adversary the devil, and even our own corrupted nature can all play an unhappy role in creating division within a local congregation. Sadly, none of us is exempt. I think this is why in His High Priestly prayer recorded in John 17, Jesus asked the Father to unify us as His people. **"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."** (John 17:20-23)

As our Lord clearly teaches in this passage, the effectiveness of our witness to others as children of God is directly impacted by our unity. Just like it was for the team of leaders and youth we sent to Mullins last weekend. So, yes, we need to believe and teach the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, such as the eternal existence of our Triune God in three distinct persons, and the Bible as the inspired, inerrant Word of God. But unity doesn't mean uniformity. Thus, we can differ on our understanding of secondary and tertiary issues (like our understanding of last things) because of the freedom we have in Christ and still be unified as God's people. Indeed, harmony must be our continued goal for the sake of our Kingdom witness and the King who gave His life for us.

So, I encourage you, just as Paul did the Colossian church, **"be encouraged in heart and united in love."** Truly, this unity of heart and mind begins with each of us, looking into the mirror and asking ourselves what we can do to promote peace at Bethel, both with our words and our actions. We need to do everything we can to ensure we are not doing or saying anything that might open rifts in our congregation. Then we need to pray and ask the Lord to apply these changes to us, altering our hearts and minds, so that we all might live in a manner suited to followers of Jesus Christ. Truly, the psalmist was right when he wrote, **"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"** (Psalm 133:1)

Saints, please don't miss the interesting promise Paul points out when we work together to display the unity that is ours in Christ. The apostle reminds us that we will **have the full riches of complete understanding**. Understanding about what you ask? The person and work of Jesus Christ. Church, what could be better than knowing our Savior more and more intimately? May God help us understand and rest in the promises He has made to us as His sons and daughters. Happy Easter!

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Chris

this week

Sunday's sermon:

Final Thoughts

1 Peter 5:12-14

events

Easter Celebration
3/29 at 4:30 pm

GriefShare
3/31 at 1:00 pm

Men's Bible Study
4/1 at 6:00 am

Mentors & Moms
4/2 at 9:30 am

volunteer schedule

Infant Nursery
Beth Jackson and
Cindy Love

Toddler Nursery
Laura & Macie Clinton
and Kristine DeRousse

Worship Training
Amanda Burmmett
and Kyla Ferguson