

Unifying Power of The Gospel

The gospel is God's only power to save and unify individuals from all nations

Introduction

- Politicians, educators, diplomats and religious leaders often call for "unity" among all people no matter how diverse
- But their method to achieve "unity" is flawed – they call on all to be tolerant, reason with one another and seek to be reconciled accepting one another as we are
- Their standard for "unity" is flawed – elevation of sin above righteousness

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Introduction

- Goal of harmonizing diverse groups to live together in peace is admirable but the means are flawed
- They call on groups to compromise moral principles and accept what they consider wrong as if it is right
- Eventually by exalting group identity above morality, envy, strife and selfishness thwart any hope of lasting unity

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Introduction

- Through His Gospel, the Lord has provided the only means by which individuals from diverse backgrounds might be unified together in service to Him
- Denominationalism fails to unite because they refuse to follow the gospel but endorse human compromise of Truth
- But, how does this happen?
- Let us study the unifying power of the gospel

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Unifying Power of The Gospel

Need for unity because of our sins

Need For Unity Because Of Our Sins

- No matter what our national background, we have sinned against God, violated His Divine Law
- We stand as His enemies and face eternal punishment unless we turn and obey the gospel of Christ
- No matter what our background, our greatest problem is unforgiven sins

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Need For Unity Because Of Our Sins

Rom 3:21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

Rom 3:22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

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Need For Unity Because Of Our Sins

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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Unifying Power of The Gospel

Need for unity because of our sins
Submission to gospel produces unity with God

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Submission To Gospel Produces Unity With God

- Since we all have sinned, there is no difference between us before God, no matter what our background
- We are forgiven when we obey the gospel by believing in Jesus as the Son of God to the point of repenting of our sins and being baptized into Christ, for forgiveness of our sins
- All, no matter what background must be saved in the same way

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Submission To Gospel Produces Unity With God

Act 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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Submission To Gospel Produces Unity With God

Gal 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

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Submission To Gospel Produces Unity With God

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

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Unifying Power of The Gospel

Need for unity because of our sins

Submission to gospel produces unity with God

Unity maintained by continued submission to the gospel

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Unity Maintained By Continued Submission To The Gospel

- To remain unified with God and one another, we must continue to submit ourselves to the gospel
- Sins of different cultures not excused but all cultures agree to set aside sin and put on righteousness
- We must never be divided based on cultural distinctions
- We must all be subject to the same standard of behavior, the gospel

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Unity Maintained By Continued Submission To The Gospel

Col 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

Col 3:6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,

Col 3:7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

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Unity Maintained By Continued Submission To The Gospel

Col 3:8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

Col 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,

Col 3:10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him--

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Unity Maintained By Continued Submission To The Gospel

Col 3:11 a *renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

Col 3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

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Unity Maintained By Continued Submission To The Gospel

Col 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Col 3:14 Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Col 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

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Unity Maintained By Continued Submission To The Gospel

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Col 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

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Submission to gospel produces unity with God

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Unity maintained by privately holding opinions

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Unity Maintained By Privately Holding Opinions

- While we must turn from sin and do right to be unified with God and one another, we do not have to give up matters of opinion
- That which is not sin we may hold privately and practice

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Unity Maintained By Privately Holding Opinions

- But, we must not seek to press our opinions on other Christians
- We must also not have contemptible attitudes toward others who hold different opinions than we do

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Nature of These Opinions

Rom 14:1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, *but* not for *the purpose of* passing judgment on his opinions.

Rom 14:2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables *only*.

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Do Not Show Contempt or Pass Judgment

Rom 14:3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

Rom 14:10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

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Do Not Let Freedom Become Stumbling Block

Rom 14:13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this-- not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

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Do Not Let Freedom Become Stumbling Block

1Co 8:9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

1Co 8:10 For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?

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Privately Practice Opinions With Clear Conscience

Rom 14:22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

Rom 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating* is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

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Jesus' One Church Composed of Individuals From All Nations

Rev 5:8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

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Jesus' One Church Composed of Individuals From All Nations

Rev 5:9 And they *sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Rev 5:10 "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

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Must Give Up Sin But Can Practice Opinions

Examples of sins we must give up

Polygamy

Drinking alcohol

Eating blood

Examples of things we can continue to practice

Eating various foods

Celebrating various days

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