

Together We Stand “One in Heart and Mind” Believers Statesboro 02-04-18

We are the Body of Christ Jesus. We are the Church that Jesus established, died for, filled with the Holy Spirit, presently intercedes for, and one day will return for.

“This is God’s ultimate achievement -- a community, a center of warm, pulsating, effervescent, outreaching Christian love, a place with all of its components united in order to become a force in this world instead of a farce.”
Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian

For the Church to be a force rather than a farce, all of its components must unify!

I don’t know who said it first but we all know it, **Together We Stand, OR** _____. (Divided We Fall!)

As a family, we must learn to work together, live together, and stay together!

No matter what we go through. No matter what happens... Together We Stand.

There is only one thing that is better than being a member of the Body of Christ ... it’s being a member of and walking in unity with the other members.

We need to understand that, in the body of Christ, it’s possible to be connected with others because of the work of Christ, yet not be in unity with those you are connected to.

I believe that at Believers Church, we are not only connected, but unified as well. This is the perfect time to talk about unity, when the church is at peace and currently walking in unity.

As we continue to grow, I want us to make sure that we stay connected and stay unified.

Unity is Good and Pleasant

Psalms 133:1-3 How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity! ² It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down on the collar of his robe. ³ It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

- In Unity, there is an atmosphere that is good and pleasant.
- In Unity, the anointing of the Holy Spirit flows freely, completely covering God’s people.
- In Unity, there is a refreshing, like dew on a mountain.
- In Unity, the Lord will be able to command a blessing and give life evermore.
 - A life-giving church is a church that is walking in unity.
 - A church in disunity drains the life out of people.

One Accord

Acts 1:14 “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers” (NKJ)

Acts 1:14 (NIV) They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. (...with one accord in one place.)

Those 120 people assembled in the Upper Room were not only in one place physically, but they were also all together, in one accord, in that physical place.

- They were one in spirit, in unity with one heart, and one in purpose.
- The early church was moving in unity that is rarely seen in the church today.

Acts 2:46-47 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. (So, continuing daily with one accord in the temple) They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

- This type of church, a caring family with unconditional love and acceptance, a church walking in unity, is what the lost world is so desperately looking for.
- The early church was more than Sunday mornings and Wednesday night services. They continued **daily** with one accord (this unity seen in the Upper Room seems to have stayed with the people).
- This unity played out primarily in two places, in **the temple** and **in their homes**.

One in Heart and Mind

Acts 4:32-37 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. ³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.

In his book, “**Healthy Churches for a Sick World**”, Howard Foltz writes:

This congregation enjoyed a unique spirit of unity. Acts 4:32 says the believers were **one in heart and mind, or heart and soul**.

- The word translated “heart” is *kardia*. By implication, it describes feelings or thoughts.
- The word translated “mind” or “soul,” *psuche*, comes from the Greek word from which we get our contemporary term “psyche.” It is defined as spirit.

And so, this group was united in feeling, intention, thought and spirit. This showed in the believers’ actions as they shared possessions to ensure that no member was needy.¹

The Results of Unity

Acts 4:33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

- This is the same Greek word for power, *dunamis*, that was used in Acts 1:8. This power was largely due to the unity in the church.

*And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all. **Unity = Great Power and Great Grace***

Also - Acts 4:34 that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales

This spirit of caring and sharing, experienced in Acts 2, continues to be a vital part of the New Testament Church.

The Unity of the Spirit

In *Ephesians 4:3*, Paul states that we should “*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*”

He goes on to explain that one of the goals of a New Testament Church is to reach unity in the faith.

Ephesians 4:11-13 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Next Life Transformation Step – I resolve today to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit here at Believers Church.

Jesus Prays for Us

John 17:20 “My prayer is not for them alone (the twelve). I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, (You and I)

Wow, how exciting that Jesus is praying for us! What’s He going to ask for?

- Prosperity?
- Health and Healing?
- Success?

What does Jesus really want the Father to give us?

- Wisdom?
- Knowledge?

What does Jesus know we need so much that He is going to ask the Father to give it to us?

John 17:21 that all of them may be one,

(Oneness! Unity!) To what extent does He want us to be one?

- Does He just want us to get along?
- To tolerate one another?
- Maybe He doesn’t want us to gossip about one another?

Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.

- Jesus wants us, and prays for us, to be one with one another just as much as He and the Father are one with one another.
- Not only are we to be one with each other, but He also wants us to be one with Him and the Father.

May they also be in us...

Why did Jesus think that it was so important for you and me to stay together as one?

... so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

¹ Howard Foltz, “Healthy Churches for a Sick World,” *Ministries Today* (Ministries Today Institute Vol. 1 Number 6, (January / February, 2000) , p. 47

Isn't that interesting. If we are in unity the world will believe our message.

Can we, safely say, if we are not in unity the world will not believe our message?

John 17:22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—

What is the glory? Salvation, grace, and the filling of the Holy Spirit!

It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to walk in unity, so that we can also be in one heart, one mind or one soul.

John 17:23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

- **Complete unity.** (NKJ) "Perfect in our unity and oneness". That's what Jesus desires for us.
- When we walk in this complete unity, the world will know that God sent Jesus to this world to make a change in us, a transformation!
- When we walk in this complete unity, the world will know that we are loved by the Father, just like the Father loved Jesus.

That's why, as Paul said in *Ephesians 4:3*, we should "*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*"

Next Life Transformation Step – Today I will begin to agree with Jesus and start praying for Believers Church and all Believers to be one, just like Father God and Christ Jesus are one.

Remember – Together We Stand, Divided We Fall.

But Jesus is saying not only will our unity or lack of unity affect us, it will affect everyone around us.

- Seeing a supernatural unity at work in the lives of everyday people, could be the main reason someone believes and receives Christ Jesus.
- Then again, seeing a lack of unity, could cause people to conclude that Christianity just doesn't work and it makes no difference in the lives of everyday people. (Wrong conclusion.)

So, Let's Stand Together! Let's make every effort to stay together.

Let's be diligent to keep the bond of peace among ourselves and win our world for Christ Jesus!

Life App Group and Family Devotional Application

1. Psalms 133 says that unity is good and pleasant. What is the Lord able to do in this atmosphere of unity?
2. Do you think it is possible for a group of people to move together in one heart and mind, without the power of the Holy Spirit working among them? Have you seen any failed attempts at this in the world?
3. Two great things resulted in walking in unity (Acts 4:33-34) what were they?
4. How can you personally make every effort to keep the Spirit of unity at Believers Church?
5. Like Jesus did, do you pray for us to walk in oneness and unity? What do you think would happen if we all started praying for oneness and unity?