

## importance-of-unity

Not just the kind of society, and especially in that day, the society in which men lived.

I grew up in a home in which my father never used the kind of words that many of you men have heard in the business or workplace. He would allow himself the word D-A-R-N.

That was simply something that my mother explained to me that I shouldn't use, so that's never been a part of my vocabulary in that sense. But I grew up in a home where the kind of general conversation never included the kind of communication that men used to allow themselves.

And I now even hear women use on talk shows, which once in a while you hear when you flip the dial or tune in. This is the way the world is. So what we are learning here is the most important thing we do is to govern ourselves. Now one of the areas in which we must govern ourselves most has to do with anger and wrath. I think this is very important. We can become frustrated and angry over things with which we may disagree. We're told to put off the old man, put on the new, this is a comparison with garments. We're told to lie not to one another.

Now one of the common places in which lies occur is in gossip. Gossip does not have to be a lie, it can be true, but the intent is not right, it's malicious.

So here we have a description that Paul is addressing and I think it important to recognize to what extent these areas, apart from the question of sexual immorality and improper words that we use, but the other areas pertaining to attitude and motives can easily get out of hand when we find disagreement over issues of governance and doctrine.

My purpose here is to address this afternoon, but I didn't directly address this morning.

This morning I addressed the question of our interrelationship and functioning as a unit.

Here I would like to cite for this afternoon in the same theme the verses that Paul is emphasizing. He's not pointing up how important it is to agree at every point of doctrine.

He tells you not to be carried about by every wind of doctrine that comes alone.

There are some people who change their minds over every new thing that can occur. We need to be sure why we did what we did, examine why, and when there is a flaw we consider and change.

When there is no flaw that comes to us we do not change, and when there is we must not fail to change. Abraham Lincoln quoted many a time in the church that I will believe something that is called new truth when it is proved to be true. That's our job.

What I may consider proof and what you may be considering as proof may not be the same thing.

You may need more proof than I do, or I may need more proof on something that you do, but I should not be angry at you if I find that you don't understand something because what would convince you you haven't found and I haven't found for you. Don't assume, I hope you all understand this, don't assume that what convinces me of something would convince you, or that what has convinced you would convince me.

A chemist may need far more proof than I would, not being a professional chemist, on something that somebody writes on the subject.

Being more knowledgeable with mathematics, I might demand more proof than you would. You would take somebody's explanation as adequate, and I would not.

Knowing more on the subject of history in general, I might demand far more proof than you would if you didn't know. I don't think we have always understood that. We think that if we have explained it to ourselves, you should understand it, and when you don't, there's something wrong with you.

That is never the case.

So it is important that we learn how to conduct ourselves in accordance with the intent that God has given us to pursue eternal life, and that means that we should govern our mind, govern our thoughts, and be able patiently to work with one another.

Now we have many places in Scripture that give us an understanding of how to analyze revealed truth. Let me turn to Luke 11.42, if I might. The Gospel of Luke 11.42.

Will unto you Pharisees, Jesus says, Jesus is the messenger of the new covenant.

He was explaining how people should understand what had been written in the Bible.

He said, you tithe, mint, and rule in all manner of herbs, you know, these tiny stages and the little dried leaves, and you pass over judgment and the love of God.

This is not an argument over the subject of tithing. I want to address it all at this moment, but I think it is very important. This is Jesus' teaching of how you look at things, how they should have looked at it if they wanted to have life even when the covenant made it Sinai was still enforced, and how we should look at it now that a new covenant relationship is enforced.

For it was possible to gain the spirit of God as a gift.

Gain may not be the word I really wanted to say, to gain life through the spirit of God, even during Old Testament or Old Covenant times, that is when the covenant made at Sinai was enforced.

Not for the nation as a whole, but for someone who looked into the Scripture and saw its intent in purpose.

Long before the prophets were written, David understood. Long before Jesus was born and the apostles lived, David could read the Old Testament and have the spirit of God and still know that he wasn't saved by the works of the law. And he could know what it was that he ought to be doing spiritually. Jesus defined it here as having judgment.

That means the ability to make decisions.

There are people who have poor judgment, people who have good judgment.

By nature, we differ in the ability to make judgment, but we must not pass over this.

And we must distinguish, because somebody surely will misunderstand, to judge one another is quite a different thing. But to have good judgment and to know how to help someone else, how to come to a conclusion, how to remove the log, as Jesus said in your eye, that you may remove the splinter in the other person. Most of us, of course, have it the other way around. The other person's problem is the log. In yours is only a splinter, but Jesus worded it differently and intentionally.

Aim the love of God. You want to know what it is that pleases God.

Not like the Jews who try to find a way around the law, or who tried to make themselves supercilious, and the Jews did both things. There are some people who think the Pharisees only bound burdens when, in fact, in some cases they released people from responsibility that they should have exercised. The binding of excessive burdens as in connection with the Sabbath and healing is obvious. The releasing of people from responsibility that they should not have released them from is obvious. When you remember that strange word from the Hebrew, generally not translated in English, where Jesus said that a gift that properly should take care of parents and widows and orphans, if you present that as a gift to God called Corbin, then the Jews, who were the religious teachers, say, well, if you do that, you give it to God. That's enough.

You don't have to be concerned about other people. But the God who said love me with all your heart, soul, mind, and might also said to love your neighbor as yourself. Therefore, they were without excuse in freeing people from responsibility. For the real reason, of course, what they had in mind was, if you make a donation, they got the money. It was far more important to God that if you loved him, you also loved your neighbor than that you made a gift to the things that should have been of help to your neighbor. God doesn't need your money. He doesn't need your gift.

You need to know what it is, what is in your heart. The work of God may need gifts.

And other people may need it. The God wants to know that you're using good judgment in what you do.

So it is very important to recognize that as we look at scripture, we should look at it with judgment, not in haste, and we should look at it first and foremost as how the love of God should be expressed. The love of God is shared abroad in our hearts, said Paul, by means of the Holy Spirit, so that we may do the things that please God and help men.

I will turn to another verse in Matthew 23-23 where Jesus addressed the same most fundamental question with different words in one place and the same in another, 23-23. The Jews were involved with detail on some things that omitted weightier matters, law, judgment, mercy, I don't mean law, it was matters of the law. They overlooked judgment, mercy, and faith. Now let's look at these words. Judgment is the same in both cases. The love of God doesn't appear here.

In the other accounts, Jesus spoke of the love of God. Here Matthew focuses on mercy.

Now the love of God most certainly would include mercy. So mercy now focuses on one aspect, that is you are generous, concerned, and helpful in showing mercy to someone who is in need.

You use good judgment. You in fact have to make decisions when you read scripture.

And you should show mercy to others who may be weak and fall short in responsibility.

And there is also the importance of faith. Faith makes it possible to make decisions with confidence, to tell somebody you ought to be healed, you should not go to a doctor, you should have faith, doesn't answer the question of why the person may not have it.

It takes faith to know how to obey God in the way he asks us to live.

But not everybody has that depth of faith.

Long ago in the autobiography, Herbert W. Armstrong mentioned the case of his older daughter.

He was pregnant and also had a cyst. And she was now always in a perfect spiritual state of mind.

And the doctor said that either there should be an operation or she would lose the fetus and possibly die herself.

Certainly the fetus would not be born alive if she didn't have surgery.

And Mr. Armstrong told her, unlike them in the ministry decades ago, that she either should know that God will answer or she should act before the time is up and rely on men to take care of it on the basis of their best skills and find the best man available. She prayed and fasted and knew that God would answer.

Now, she had a record of knowing that and in this case, she believed that under examination it was gone. The doctor examined her and it was gone. So no operation was necessary.

But if it had not gone, there was only one decision.

And that was the sensible one.

If God has not answered and the time is up, don't put the doctor in such a difficult situation that he's doing something to help. So it's important to understand the role of faith and mercy and the love of God in looking at the scripture. And Jesus was speaking when no New Testament book was around.

And he was saying, when you look at the Bible, the first thing you must never forget in how you read and study is good judgment. This, I think, the church has underestimated. We have focused our knowledge and wisdom and understanding, all of which bear on the topic. But it is interesting that at this point, Jesus did not say wisdom and mercy and faith. He used another term because if we're to be judged by every word of God, then we need to know how to examine every word of God.

Some will not be critically important because there's simply personal names in some genealogy.

It pays at least to know that the genealogy is there and possibly why.

I cite something of that nature just so you know how to distinguish between that which is more important and that which is less. An older person who has little time to read should choose to read the most important parts of the Bible that come to his attention or that someone can recommend.

A person who is a professional teacher has a responsibility to learn much more of some other areas of the Bible to be sure you make them plain and clear if that is a part of your job.

But in any case, as we look at Scripture, it is important for us to learn how to use good judgment.

Now when we do look at Scripture, we also need to learn that other people may look at it differently and it depends on our background.

There are different ways of looking at it.

That might seem strange, but it is not strange at all. If we all looked at it the same way, we wouldn't have all the denominations we do. The fact we have people who are sincere who look at it differently should give us the evidence that we don't all look at things the same way.

And if we're sincere, then we're not dealing with the question of being dishonest.

There are some people who are knowingly dishonest. You can see it. I've heard the lecturer once of a what we call a fringe movement in the Christian world. That person quite clearly did not wish a certain person in the audience after the lecture to think of any other possibilities and a certain possibility in order to get that person to be a member of a particular movement.

This was long ago in the late 1940s after the first year at Ambassador College, and I attended that lecture. But most people are far more sincere. I have met men who were sincere and I have met men who were not. I have met men who were sincere, with whom I would disagree.

And I have met men with whom I could agree who are not sincere. It just happened to be on that point we didn't have any difference. Human beings must recognize that we take different approaches.

We take certain premises for granted.

I take the view. You will not be judged by my view.

I take the view and you take whatever your view is, but you will have to give an account as to whether that was the biblical way of doing it. Before the book of Acts was written, before any gospel account was written, before Paul was converted, Jesus said, how to look at what was then scripture.

And in chapter five of Matthew, he makes very clear how we should look at the problem.

He who says, it's enough that I do not kill my neighbor or murder him, and yet hate his neighbor is a murderer at heart.

That is, if you were to look at the scripture, the law, the Ten Commandments, you would discover in there what they would discover, what the prophets discovered. You would discover something more if you ask, why is it given? And how should I see its intent and purpose? If all you see in the law is the letter of the law, you will be condemned and you will die because the law saves nobody. The question arises, why can't we have grace without law? The answer to the question is, it's the wrong question.

Let me explain something, because this is an age of confusion, confusion in the whole world and some confusion still in the church. Grace is grace and law is law.

You are served by grace.

Grace does not define right from wrong. If I want to know right from wrong, I must go to the divine instruction. I do not go to my conscience unless my conscience is educated by divine instruction. I would need to make, first of all, some decisions. Is there evidence that God has spoken to us as humans? And is that evidence clearly delineated so I know it is in the Bible? Actually, my search was easier than somebody who lives in India or Saudi Arabia or the state of Israel. He doesn't have access to either old or New Testament or only the Old Testament and not the New. Having discovered that the Word of God indeed is speaking to me, it is possible then for me to look at it and to note that some things are stated, thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not kill, and I notice all the things that are not included in that, especially when I come to you shall not commit adultery, and I notice all the things not included in that. For adultery is not homosexuality or bisexuality or bestiality or fornication or prostitution. And to kill someone doesn't touch upon anger or hate. And so Jesus said, he who lives by the letter of the law dies.

Because he can't fulfill even the letter and he overlooked all the intent and purpose in the details of the law given elsewhere if all he limits himself to are some broad principles.

We have grace without law when it comes to the mercy of God and forgiveness.

There is no other way but the mercy of God and the grace of God and the death of Messiah.

But when it comes to what we ought to do, we need the divine instruction.

The divine instruction has often been summarized in law, but it's much more than that because the Old Covenant was not more than some three chapters in a fraction.

In a repetition in a major part of one book Deuteronomy, that the instruction of God begins with Genesis and ends in the Hebrew scriptures with 2nd Chronicles, that Jesus had available. And we ought to look at that instruction and he did in the patriarchs and the prophets had that instruction either orally or partly written. David didn't even have Isaiah or Jeremiah or Ezekiel or the Twelve or all the books of Psalms. He didn't have 1st and 2nd Chronicles and 1st and 2nd Kings. And yet he is going to be in the resurrection king over Israel.

Because he found written to the Spirit of God the intent and purpose, it is therefore possible to be saved, who face in the coming of the Savior. And examining the instruction God has given us that determines right from wrong, without any portion of the New Testament and most of the Old. But you can't use that as an excuse now because you have all the rest of the Old Testament and the New. Therefore you could even know more than David, as David said he knew more than his ancestors did who didn't have all that God revealed to the children of Israel it became of record.

I do not find that we need to have the convulsions we do but somehow we have gotten into two ways of thinking. One that somehow salvation is more than the gift of God.

The more perfect and the more you overcome the more you can be saved which is nonsense.

We had an article, how much should you overcome or must you overcome to be saved? This was in support material in the Pastor General's report and appeared in the World Wide News.

Now there are people who worry and the article was addressing people who worry that they haven't overcome enough because they think the degree to which they have overcome is not enough but somehow the overcoming process is what in part saves you.

That's why I say I have a drunken father and a smoking mother, tobacco smoking let's say, and I have to learn to honor my father and mother and I struggle to honor my father and mother and I have problems with it because they haven't treated me right as a child they don't treat me right now they don't treat my wife right they don't treat the grandchildren right and yet I try to honor them am I making a picture here that's clear I hope none of you have the experience and so there's some people who think that if they could just perfectly honor their father and mother that somehow contributes to their being saved and if they fall short they feel guilty and then they feel condemned and then they think the solution is to get rid of the law honor your father and mother nonsense.

Christ in you has overcome that's what the statement in the article is he has overcome the devil the world and God this nature into subjection to the will of God and if Christ lives in you you also are accredited as an overcomer because you are willing to have them live in you but that does not now give you the excuse that you don't have to face up the fact you must stay in a state of repentance to ask Christ to live his life in you how much you try to honor your father and mother measured in some large fit is not the issue it is the attitude of being willing to honor your father and your mother the attitude that comes from the presence of the spirit of God and I learned the importance of honoring my father and mother as a result of the divine instruction I do not learn that from grace I learned that from instruction but the instruction is quite a different matter from grace the grace and the mercy of God is granted us so that we may if we are in a repentant overcoming state of mind willing to have Christ live in us and his spirit in us and for some who have it easy to honor father and mother and for some who don't we live side by side and work with one another and we help one another that's what all this is about there is a great deal of difference between being an overcomer in

attitude and thinking that overcoming is what saves one because you can never fully in this life overcome all parts of your human nature even with the spirit of God that's just the reality because you have enough of human nature and you have not the fullness of the will of God and enough of human self-will that there is always something more to overcome there's always something more so you don't have to have a sense of guilt because Christ in a sense is in you and the potential power to overcome the devil at all times if you have in your mind the state of repentance the state of mind of being an overcomer that comes from revealed knowledge so when I look at the scripture I find things in the new testament I find things in the psalm I find remarkable things in the prophet you may have your approach some others that you may have your approach but you need to recognize whether that approach will stand in the judgment when I read in the new testament the importance of what Christ did what Christ now is and what he shall do I see there why we know that God as Savior came to dwell among men and that he is the captain of our salvation our Lord and the King who is to come to establish the kingdom of God on earth which many are forgetting and much of the world has forgotten at the same time however it is important to know that the righteousness of God that is in us that was led to you that righteousness that is apart from law because it is the righteousness of Christ attested to by the law and the prophet that is now in us through the Holy Spirit if we are a state in a state of repentance and in a state of belief but at the same time that righteousness is not attained by doing the law with our own strength but that righteousness can be missing if you decide that you won't look in the scripture to see what it is that God defines as righteousness in Christ for Christ was the perfect man and he did not sin he was not in a state of opposition and if Christ overcame the devil the world and anything in his nature he can do the same things in you and where you fall short the grace of God forgives and Christ then becomes the standard that is in you and when you have that standard as your life through the spirit of God if Christ lives in you and every time you discover if you fall short you ask God to forgive yourself sorry to forgive you as you forgive others then you stand in the judgment free and guiltless if you decide that it depends on what you do you will find it a broken lead if you decide you don't need to see what it is you ought to do you will also find yourself a broken lead that may seem a paradox but it is not I already told you what Paul said in Ephesians 4 in chapter 3 of Colossians things that you must be willing to do but that you cannot do by yourself alone in your own strength and by the gift of the Holy Spirit you work on these things they don't make you immortal honoring your father and mother won't make you immortal you die like we all do the gift of God through the Holy Spirit and Christ living in us makes us ultimately at the resurrection immortal and that is something beyond any power that we can achieve without the gift of God so grace and mercy stand in a category absolutely different from anything else but at the same time God asks us to let Christ live his life in us and not that we should continue in the way of sin so we must be willing to surrender our lives to Christ to let his mind be in us so that when we read these scriptures all the news we discover in them every day some things that we can in fact discover in the life of Christ the patriarchs the prophets the judges and the apostles and put that to work in us which doesn't save us but it makes us the kind of being that we ought to be because it means our minds now are attuned to the mind of God if we say I love my neighbor as myself Jesus loved his neighbor as himself and you are thinking the same thoughts and Christ in you is living through the Holy Spirit and making it possible for you to think like Jesus Christ did but that has nothing to do with the problem the way you fall short and have sinned that there is forgiveness in some other way than simply the mercy of God so today I will conclude here at 501 this little clock says by encouraging all of you carefully to look at yourselves and to see how you behave toward yourself your family you're a neighbor in the church or out and within this fellowship that we can maintain a body of peace and unity and begin to think the thoughts that God revealed from Genesis to Revelation because that's the mind of God and the mind of God was in Jesus Christ and if Christ is living in you Paul said it this way with my mind I serve the spiritual law of God with my flesh if I let it rule the law of sin and death

that is it does the things that are wrong but if I learn by the power of the Spirit of God to rule over myself step by step which is what I ought to be doing anyway and resist the devil and his temptations that come into mind or from outside that affect the world it is not really I who is living says Paul but Christ is living in me because you let the Spirit of God change and transform your mind and your attitudes whether if we do this we will not be concerned about many of the problems that have afflicted different areas of the church of God we must focus on the unity of the faith as reflected in the unity of the spirit of God in us and that is manifest by the love of God and the love of our neighbor as ourselves