

ONE body in CHRIST

Մէկ Մարմին Քրիստոսով

Ephesians 4:1-6

Welcome to Rally Sunday. We introduce a major theme each year.

- **Get out of the Boat** was my theme in 2017
- **Connected with God and Each Other** in 2018
- **Living Right-Side Up in an Upside-Down World** in 2019
- **Be Still and Know that I Am God** in 2020
- **Nothing Greater... Nothing More...** in 2021

We introduce those topics by going over books from the Bible. James, John, Mark, 1st Thessalonians, Life of Joseph (Genesis), The Beatitudes (Matthew), The Lord's prayer (Matthew), Philippians...

We don't finish these topics. We won't graduate from these classes. We will keep studying God's Word and we will continue learning and allowing the Spirit of God to transform our lives.

This year, in 2022-2023 we would like to introduce this theme:

Lord, Make us ONE in CHRIST

It is an appeal, a prayer. We took the concept from the Word of God in Romans 12:3

Let me read the passage:

So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. (Romans 12;5,6b NIV)

Why did we choose this theme? Lord, Make us ONE in CHIRST...

Why?

After more than two years into the pandemic, I see the need to evaluate ourselves as the church, the body of Christ. Brothers and sisters, Let us **rediscover church.**

The pandemic brought many challenges and changes in every area of our lives. Among other things, it brought **division** in churches, families, and communities. As if our political life was not enough to bring schisms in our society, we did not need a new factor to divide us. Yet the Pandemic did.

Why should we be united? What does this plea mean: **Lord, make us one in Christ.**

Let me go back to the beginning.

Why should I be a member of the church (universal church)?

Why should I attend this church (local church)?

Although we provide online services, and this was extremely helpful for members who cannot attend for health reasons (until now), or they live outside Fresno, but why do we need to be here in-person?

“While all gatherings were not possible, Badveli, you preached to empty pews. We heard from you, Badveli, that you did not like to preach in an empty Sanctuary. Well, tough. That is your problem, Nerses. Learn to preach and adjust to the new world and **teach us from the Bible.**”

“Stop pushing us to attend the church.”

Question: Does attending church save me from sin?

No, salvation is through Jesus Christ.

so

Why should I sit next to a person who is not like me, who is wearing a perfume that I don't like;

who watches TV shows that I don't like;

who listens to the music that I don't care;

who wears things that are not in style;

who comes from a country I have not been to, and we are so different....

Why should I sit next to a person who forgot to call me on my birthday?

Why to be united in a church like this?

So is your theme relevant, Badveli? **Lord, Make Us One in Christ.**

“God does not invite us to church because it's a comfortable place to find a bit of spiritual encouragement. No, he invites us into a **spiritual family** of **misfits** and **outcasts**. He welcomes us into a **home** that's rarely what we **want** yet just what we **need.**”¹

Thus, welcome to PACC Rally Sunday, welcome to **the imperfect embassy of Jesus Christ.**

Welcome to the PACC hospital, where all are wounded and need healing and transformation.

Welcome to a place **that Jesus builds**, and he is the foundation, the cornerstone. And Jesus has a very **intimate relationship** with us: we are the bride; the church is the bride who is married to Jesus. Beautiful imagery of unity, a **marriage relationship**.

Let me go to our passage today from Ephesians.

The book has two sections.

The first three chapters are theology and doctrines. The last three passages are application, how to walk with the Lord.

Eph 1-3

The Believer's Wealth

Our position

Being (Who We Are)

Identification with Christ

Our Calling

Being

Divine Sovereignty

Eph 4-6

The Believer's Walk

Our Practice

Doing (How We Live)

Imitation of Christ

Our Conduct

Becoming

Human Responsibility²

I am jumping from the theology section to implication:

Let me read from chapter 4, the first six verses:

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. (Eph 4:1-6 ESV)

There is a word repeats in this passage: **ONE**. How many times? Seven times.

Let me call it the seven-fold ONES.³

Our topic includes in the phrase "make us ONE." To become one, it talks about **unity**.

Unity is does not mean uniformity.

We are different from each other, God created us with different abilities, gifts, backgrounds, (both natural and spiritual).

It is not a union. Union sounds like an organization, where there is hierarchy.

No, the unity that the Bible teaches is much different. **It is a relational unity.**

We are united with Jesus when we are in relation with Him, then each of us united with him, which means each person has a relationship with Him. Then we are united, and become one in this relationship.

This takes me to discuss what kind of seven-fold oneness Paul is describing for the church: (theology of oneness)

one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

Seven is a biblical number, but also there is trinity. (one Spirit, one Lord, the Lord Jesus; and one God and Father of us all).

Seven-fold ONE. "All seven express the reality that there is **only one gospel** and that **to believe that gospel** is to enter into the unity it creates. Christianity is a shared faith. "⁴

1. One body

"'one' body, composed equally of Jews and Gentiles, the single family of God."⁵
That was the context of that day.

Paul uses an organic term, **soma**, body, a living body. In the 1st Corinthians Paul further explains how the human body is a good example to describe the body of the church.

We all belong to one body of Christ.

We have shared mutual life, and we depend on each other.

I cannot have all these ministries in the church if we don't have one body, different elements serve together. (Book By Ray Stedman Body Life)

2. One Spirit

We all found Jesus in our lives through the Holy Spirit.

This is the invisible power of God that works in each of us. We live in obedience to the Spirit of God. Only His Spirit can lead us to God, teach us, remind us, advocate for us, comfort us. Our relationship with that Spirit should unite us.

3. One Hope

This is hope in Jesus Christ. It is not a wishful hope, I hope to see you tomorrow. No this is our hope in Him. When we accept Jesus, He becomes our hope today,

(*already*) he is with us, but also there is eschatological hope, one day (*not yet*) Jesus will return our hope in him will be completed. This belief unites us.

4. One Lord

Kurios, that means Jesus is our Lord, he has authority over us. We obey that authority. We have an allegiance to him; we belong to him. By our lives we proclaim that Jesus is our Lord, King.

5. One Faith

Faith in what? Faith in Jesus. Watch out, it is the foundational element of our belief in Jesus that unites us, our faith in Him.

There are many churches or denominations, we have one faith, we are talking about the saving faith of Jesus Christ. The one who died on the cross and was resurrected. Through faith we are saved.

6. One Baptism

We are baptized by dying for the old nature (symbolically being immersed in water) and having a new life, resurrected life by coming out of water. It does not matter what kind of baptism (immersion or sprinkled water) you have, but there is one baptism. **“don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”** (Romans 6:3,4 NIV)

7. One God the Father

He is the one who created us. He is the one who loved us as his child. He is our Father, Abba, and we are his children.

You see how our oneness is relational.

“We must assert that there can be only one Christian family, only one Christian faith, hope and baptism, and only one Christian body, because there is only one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Is there only one God? Then he has only one church.”⁶

-How can we accomplish this unity?

We are so different, and we argue a lot; we insist our points. We interpret the way we want.

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.

What is worthy of our calling. If we are saved by Jesus, we are called to live a life that Jesus is manifested.

Paul brings forth some important points:

Humility, gentleness, patience, bearing one another in love, making every effort.

So it is not automatic that we will be united, that we can have oneness.

We can fall in the trap of “my theology is the right one and eventually self-righteousness is all you have.”

Make every effort and keep unity of the Spirit in bond of peace.

Bond in Greek means ligament, tendon. We need the peace of Jesus to be connected, to be one...

We just took the communion. That is one table. Are we connected?

The lord’s Table should remind us very important point:

“Because even and especially the awkward members of the body remind us that no one approaches God except by sheer grace. No one can buy a seat at this table. you can only be invited.”⁷

Why church?

We are shaped together in this church. Together, yes, child, youth, adult, married single, senior, widow, you name it....

There is a mystery to be the body of Christ as a church.

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27)

How can this be?

Yes, all the members that you like and don’t like are the one body of Christ are called the church of Jesus Christ.

So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. (Romans 12:5,6b NIV)

Lord, Make us ONE in Christ.

Let us approach the Table.

1. Collin Hansen & Jonathan Leeman, *Rediscover Church*, p 13

2. Ken Boa, Bible studies series on Ephesians. <https://kenboa.org/series/walk-like-a-child-of-god/>

3. Inspired by Jerry Tu’s sermon on Ephesians preached in PBCC, Unity of the Spirit (July 31, 2022)

4. Klyne Snodgrass, NIV Study Bible Commentary Ephesians, P 199

5. John R.W. Stott, Bible Speaks Today, P 151

6. *ibid* p 152

7. Collin Hansen & Jonathan Leeman, *Rediscover Church*, p 16