**Joy in Unity**

**(John 17:1-26)**

**Yearly Theme: *“Joy is…”***

**Series Title: *For the Joy…***

**April 19th, 2020**

***Something to think about:***

What is “unity?”

**unity[[1]](#footnote-1)**

*Noun, plural* **u·ni·ties.**

1. the state of being one; oneness.
2. a whole or totality as combining all its parts into one.

Vesta Kelly said, “Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look at what they can do when they stick together.”

One of the greatest challenges in this world, one of the greatest challenges in the Church, is “unity.” But, why is this? Why is unity so hard, especially in the Church? Well, the simple, but profound, answer to that question is that there is an enemy that is bent on destroying any and all unity, community, and peace, not only within the world, but especially in the Church. Call him Satan, the devil, whatever you like, this enemy is so consumed with destruction that he will stop at nothing in order to subtly or blatantly wreak havoc on humanity for the purpose of drawing people away from God.

We come today (the Sunday after Easter), to a passage that Jesus prayed the night before He was arrested by the Temple guards. Along with His disciples (minus Judas Iscariot who had left the group in order to betray Jesus), Jesus prayed this prayer of unity over the disciples, and all those who would become disciples because of His, and their, message. He says this just after telling them that everything is about to change. He prays this prayer of unity just after telling them that they would have sorrows and troubles of many kinds, but to take heart because He has overcome the world. Listen to the words of Christ this morning with a fresh ear…

**Turn in your Bible to: *John 17:1-26***

**Key Point*: “Unity with God through Jesus, and unity with the Body of Christ (the Church), is the catalyst for true joy.”***

One of the greatest tools of the enemy within the Church is division. If Satan can (and he often does) divide the Church, then he can hold sway over the direction of peoples’ hearts.

What can we learn from this passage of Scripture that could keep us moving in the right direction with unity?

1. **There is unity between God the Father and Jesus.**

*John 17:4-5 (NLT), 4 I brought glory to you here on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5 Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.*

1. **The truth of Jesus’ words brings unifying joy to those who hear and understand them**.

*John 17:13-14 (NLT), 13 “Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with joy. 14 I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they did not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.”*

1. **True unity is rooted in the truth.**

*John 17:17 (NLT), Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.*

***Something to take home:***

I contend, that apart from unity, there is no joy. Jesus the great Unifier/Reconciler between us and God brought us great joy by offering us so great a sacrifice. In Christ, God has pulled out all obstacles and all rituals and freely offers us a path to salvation and wholeness. Apart from God there is not unity, and apart from God there is no real, lasting joy.

It’s time to be light and salt once more. It’s time to work toward being one as Jesus and the Father are one. It’s time, once again, to share in the glory of God the Father and Jesus Christ, by reflecting the light of Christ to the world around us and drawing others to Him. It’s time to work together, not because it benefits us in some practical way, but all because it glorifies God in every single way.

**Key Point*: “Unity with God through Jesus, and unity with the Body of Christ (the Church), is the catalyst for true joy.”***

1. Dictionary.Com Unabridged Based on The Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)