

The One Church

Sunday, October 15th, 1989

John 17:20-22

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”

The title of the message for today is: “The One Church.” I have chosen for my text John 17: verse 20. This is the Lord’s Prayer, our Lord’s great Priestly Prayer. In verse 20, He says this; *“Neither pray I for these alone but I pray for them also which shall believe on Me through their Word that they all may be one.”*

He is saying, “Neither pray I for these alone (these disciples who believe on Me), but I pray for all of those down through the years who shall believe on Me through their Word that they all may be one. That is My prayer, that they all may be one, as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee that they all may be one in us. That they may be one as we are one.” Now, that is oneness, as God the Father and God the Son are one. That, all these who believe, all believers, all who have faith in Christ, may be one as God the Father and God the Son are one.

People have tried in vain for centuries to bring all religion, all churches, all denominations and all Christians together. There have been all sorts of ecumenical movements and organizations to bring denominations and churches together, under one umbrella. This is what they say, “We all believe in God. We all believe in life after death. We all are inspiring to go to the same place. Let us unite under one head, one organization and win the world to religion.”

It will never be done. Religious people are not one. Religion doesn’t make people one; Christ makes people one. He said, *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one.”* Religious people are not one. They are divided over the essentials of faith. Just because they use one Bible does not mean that they are one. Just because they use the same Bible, does not mean that they agree on what the Bible says.

Actually, religious people over the world, disagree on the inspiration of the Scriptures. They disagree on the essentials of faith. They disagree on the character of God. They don’t all agree who God is or what power God has. They don’t agree on the fall of man and sin. They don’t agree on what happened in the Garden.

They don't all agree on who Jesus Christ is. Some believe that He is the Son of God and some believe that He is the Son of Mary. Some believe that He is the Son of Joseph. They don't agree on His life, they don't agree on His death and they don't agree on His resurrection. They don't agree on the Holy Spirit and its work. They don't agree on how God saves sinners. They don't agree on the resurrection.

You see; religion today will never be one. They will never be together because they are not agreeing with the essentials of faith. They are not one and they have never been one. They are not one now and they will never be one.

Listen, as our Lord prayed, "All true believers are one." It doesn't matter where they live or who they are. They may never have met one another but they are one. Abraham is one with the apostle Peter. Moses is one with the apostle Paul. Isaiah is one with James and John. They are one in Christ. It doesn't matter in what dispensation they lived, it doesn't matter how much information they have. True believers are not divided; they are one in Christ. They have always been one. They are one now and always will be one.

That is what our Lord prayed, "*That My people may be one as Thou Father, art in Me and I in Thee that they may all be made perfect in one.*" Listen to this in John 10, the Lord says; "*Other sheep I have which are not of this fold.*" He looked at the disciples and said, "*Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring.*" He will bring them and He shall bring them. "*They shall hear My voice and they shall be one fold and one shepherd.*" Do you see what I am saying?

Believers are not one because they believe in one God. That does not make them one. The devil believes in one God. That is what the Scripture says. "*Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*" So, believers are not one just because they believe in one God. Believers are not one only because they read one book. Satan quoted the Bible on the Mount of Temptation when he was tempting Christ. He said, "*It is written.*"

Believers are not one only because they want to go to the same place. Believers are one because they are in one body. They are in the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "I am the Head and you are the body." There is one body. Christ is no monster; he doesn't have one head and a dozen bodies. There is one Head, and that is Christ.

He is Head of the church and there is one body. All believers are one because they are in one body. They are in Christ. That is what He said, "I pray for these people. I pray for My people who shall believe on Me through their word that they may be one as we are one, as the Father and the Son are one. That they may be perfect in one (one body)."

You see; believers are one because they are chosen in Christ. They were all chosen at the same time, before the foundation of the world, in Christ. They are all blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. They are all predestinated to be like Christ. Yes, they are all going to be alike. They are all going to be like Christ.

They are called in Christ, accepted in Christ, redeemed in Christ, forgiven in Christ and seated in Christ. *“In the fullness of time, God is going to gather together in one, all things in Christ, which are in heaven and which are on the earth.”* Is Christ divided? Then, the church is not divided. Is the Godhead divided? Then the church is not divided. Can Christ be separated? Can He be divided? Not at all! Neither is the body of Christ divided. There is just one Christ and there is just one body.

Listen to Ephesians. I want you to take your Bible and turn with me to Ephesians chapter 4, verses 4 through 6. If you are going to establish oneness, this is where you have to do it. All of this is in Christ and that is how we are one. In Ephesians 4:4-6, Paul says; *“There is one body and one Spirit. Even as you are called in one hope of your calling, there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all.”* In First Timothy it says, *“There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”*

Now, that is true oneness. That is the oneness of believers. That is how they are one. *“There is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one hope, one faith, one baptism, one God and one Mediator”*. Those who embrace this truth are one. They cannot be otherwise because there is just one. Do you see that? There is just one.

All of this conglomeration of religion and denial of the essentials of the faith will never be brought together. They are not one and they are not in Christ. There are half a dozen ways of being saved in false religion. There are half a dozen ways of coming to God, but not according to the Scripture.

Let's look at it. First of all, He said; *“There is one body.”* What is this body? Well, the body is the church. There is one true church. I know there a lot of local churches. I'm a pastor of a local church. I've been pastoring the same local church for 39 years. There are other local churches out there. Let me tell you something; there is one true church, there is one glorious church; there is one body and one family and it is the church of Jesus Christ. That is what it says in Colossians 1:18, *“Christ is the Head of the body, the church.”* That word church is singular. I'm not saying, churches or bodies; Christ is the Head of the body, the church.

“He is the firstborn from the dead that in all things He might have the preeminence.” The Head has the preeminence. The Head governs the body. The Head controls the body. In Ephesians 5:23 it says, *“The husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the Head of the church.”* Then He said, *“Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself, (not for them), for it that He might present it, (that one church), to Himself, a glorious church without spot or wrinkle.”*

It is the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. In other words, in this church, there are no tares. In this church there are no hypocrites. In this church there are no false professors. In this church there are no lost people. In this church, the body, the bride of our Lord Jesus Christ are one, there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, there’s neither rich nor poor, there’s neither black nor white and there’s neither old nor young. It is one church in Christ, one body. They are one.

Most of them have never met one another. They haven’t seen one another. Some of them are in glory. Some of them are on this earth, some of them are over seas, and some are here in this country and that country. They all believe the same thing and they believe the same gospel. They have heard from the same Lord, *“There is one body.”*

There is one Spirit. This is the Holy Spirit of God. Every believer has the Holy Spirit. *“If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ; he is none of His.”* You see; *“By one Spirit, we have been baptized into the body of Christ.”* That is how you got into the body of Christ, by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. It was by the miraculous, regenerating work of God’s Spirit. *“No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.”*

People who are out looking for the Holy Spirit have never met God. They do not know Christ. You see; the Holy Spirit regenerates us. We are born of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. Christ said, *“When He, the Spirit of Truth is come; He will convince the world of sin.”* The Holy Spirit reveals Christ. Our Lord said, *“When the Spirit of Truth is come; He will take the things of Mine and show them to you. He won’t speak of Himself. He will glorify Me.”*

The Holy Spirit teaches us. The Holy Spirit seals us. *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”*

He is not the spirit of confusion. He is not the Spirit of division. He is the Spirit of truth. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ. There is one body, one church and there is one Spirit.

The scripture says, *“There is one hope of your calling.”* You see; salvation is a calling. I know it is a new birth, regeneration and a conversion. It is a calling. The scripture says, *“It is a Holy calling.”* The scripture says, *“We are the called of Christ Jesus.”* God is calling out a people for His name. *“He called you by our gospel. You see your calling brethren, whom He called He justified.”* Do you see that? Salvation is a calling. Everybody who is saved is called. God calls them to Himself. It says here, *“There is one hope of your calling.”*

There is one objective, there is one aim, there is one goal and *“There is one hope of your calling.”* Everybody agrees with this, this one church, in which this one Spirit has baptized us. They have one hope. Do you know what that hope is? I’ll read it to you, *“Beloved, right now are we the Sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when He shall appear; we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is and every man that hath this hope in Him, that when He shall appear; we are going to be like Him.”* What hope? What did I just read? When He shall appear; we shall be like Him and every man that hath this hope wants to be like Christ.

Our end and goal is not to just go to a city or to go to heaven or go to a place. Our one aim and goal is to be like a person. Christ said to the thief on the cross, *“Today; you shall be with Me in paradise.”* Paul said, *“I desire to depart and be with Christ. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”* Believers are united on that.

You are not going to bring together, all these speckled birds and people together who do not believe anything. Believers have one hope. That hope is to be like Christ. This is a three-fold desire of a believer. There is a total commitment to Christ, a total communion with Christ and a total conformity to Christ. That is his hope. *“Christ in you; that is the hope of glory.”*

There are no degrees in glory. Don’t bring talk like that around here. False preachers will tell you that they will live in a mansion and that you’re going to live in a cabin. They say that they are going to have 6 stars in their crown and you won’t have any. They say they are going to live on a big street and you going to live on a back street. That is foolishness! We are all going to be like Him. There are no degrees in glory. All are like Christ. They are loved by the same love, redeemed by the same blood and they are all going to be like Christ. There is one body; the church, one Spirit, the Holy Spirit and one hope to be like Him.

There is one Lord. There is one Lord and one King. Now, believers are brothers and they love and respect each other. They help one another and they learn from one another. They support one another. There is just one King, there is just one Lord and there is just

one Master. Don't you call any man your father; "*there is one Father.*" Don't you call any man your master; there is one Master. There is one Lord and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

We don't ascribe and seek the higher seats and try to lord over each other. We don't try to put men under our dominion. No sir; believers are brothers. We don't take high seats and high titles, or high handedness. There is one Lord.

He is the Lord by eternal decree. God made Him Lord; you don't make Him Lord. God beat you to it. He is Lord by creation; "*All things were made by Him. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The world and all that dwell therein are His by creation.*" He is the Lord by death. "*He died that He may be Lord of the dead and the living.*" We confess Him as Lord by faith. We believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord. He is the only Lord.

Do you see the oneness? Now, if you want to start an ecumenical movement and get all these folks together, then start right here. "*There is one body, there is one Spirit, there is one hope and there is one Lord.*" Nobody is going to play superintendent, no one is going to play president; there is just one Lord.

There is one faith. There is only one faith. Believers are one because they have one faith and one Lord. It may be a small faith or it may be a great faith, but the strength is not in the faith but it is in the Lord. Our Lord is the object of the faith. It may be a weak faith or a strong faith, early faith or late faith. There is still one faith.

This is something that I have never been able to understand. I've heard people say, "I'm a Christian, but I am not of the same faith." How do you get that? There is just one faith. There is one body, one church, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord and one faith. That's right! There is just one faith.

Faith has the same author. "*He is the author and finisher of our faith.*" There can't be two. "*He is the author and the finisher of our faith.*" It has the same object and Christ is the object of saving faith. If there are two kinds of faith, then there must be two objects. There is only one object and that is Christ. He is the object of faith. "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath life. He that believeth not on the Son of God*" is of another faith. What does he believe? I don't know, but I know he doesn't believe on the Son of God. Well then, he has another faith. There is just one faith.

Faith arises out of the same need. "*Christ came to save sinners.*" Faith has the same foundation, the Word of God. Faith has the same rest. "*Come unto Me and I'll give you*

rest. We have ceased from our labors and entered into His rest.” There is only one faith. There are a thousand denominations but I will still tell you, *“There is just one faith.”* There are a thousand different recipes for ruin, but there’s still one faith. There are a thousand so-called messiahs *“But there is just one Lord and one faith.”* That is what the Word says.

In the sixth place, there is just one baptism, only one. Many people believe that this is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It may be. We are all baptized by God’s Spirit into one body. This is not something you get after you are saved. It is not something you get after you have met Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is when you meet Christ. It is the Holy Spirit that baptizes you into the body of Christ.

There is only one baptism of the Holy Spirit and that is when a man is saved. He is filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit baptizes him. The Holy Spirit indwells him and *“If any man hath not the Spirit of God, he is none of His. As many as are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”* A man that is not led of God’s Spirit is not God’s son.

There is one baptism and that is water baptism. That is the only baptism mentioned in the New Testament. *“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Go into all the world and preach the gospel. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”* Baptism is only for believers. The scripture says that it is *“He that believeth and is baptized.”*

When the Ethiopian Eunuch wanted to be baptized, what did Phillip ask him? He asked him if he believed and he said, *“I believe that Jesus is the Christ.”* Phillip said, *“All right, I will baptize you.”* You don’t baptize someone before they believe. You don’t baptize an infant or a child. You baptize a person who does believe. *“He that believeth and is baptized,”* is what the scripture says. The Lord said, *“Go make disciples and baptize them.”*

Baptism is a confession of Christ. It is a confession of His death, burial and resurrection. It is a confession of my death, my burial, and my resurrection to walk in newness of life. Baptism is identification with Christ. Baptism is a declaration of my commitment to Jesus Christ. There is one baptism and that is the baptism in water, confessing Christ.

Then, in the seventh place it says, *“There is one God, one Father of all believers.”* He is the Father of all believers. He is the only Father of the believers. He is above all and is sovereign in all things. They asked David, *“Where is your God?”* David said, *“God is in the heavens.”* Where is your God? *“Our God is in the heavens and He hath done*

whatsoever He hath pleased. Whatsoever the Lord hath pleased, that did He in the armies of heaven, earth, the seas and in all dark places.” He is one God and one Father.

“He is above all.” That means He is sovereign over all and is through all. By His providence He works through all things and directs all things. Do you see that? *“There is one God, one Father, above all, (sovereign) and through all.”* That means that He works through all things. *“All things work together for good to them that love God who are called according to His purpose.”*

God works through everything. He works through nature. He works through the Scriptures. He works through providence and works through judgment. He works through sunshine or through the moonlight or daylight. He works through darkness and He works through trial and sorrows. *“He is above all and He is through all and is in all.”* That is what the Scripture says; *“He is in you all.”* That means that He dwells in you. *“There’s one body, there’s one Spirit, there’s one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and there is one God.”*

I have saved this for last. I need for you to turn to First Timothy Chapter 2:5, the apostle Paul says; *“There is one God and there is one Mediator between God and men.”* It did not say, “Between God and man;” it says, *“Between God and men and that’s the man Christ Jesus.”* My friends, God is Holy. He is immaculately, infinitely, eternally Holy. He will not change.

You and I are sinners. We are fallen sinners. Our sins have separated us from that Holy God. That God in mercy, love and grace determined to show mercy and grace to fallen sinners. He determined to redeem a people for His name’s sake. He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ into this world. He became a man. *“He was made under the law, made of a woman, and was born of a woman.”*

In this world He became a man. He met the Holy Law of God as our representative and He obeyed that law. He went to the cross and bore our sins in His body and paid that debt. He was buried as our scapegoat and arose as our Justifier. He ascended and was exalted to the right hand of God and He sat down.

There He is our Mediator. He is the Intercessor between that Holy God and us. He is the Mediator, the only one in whom we can come. He is the only one through whom we can pray. He is the only one in whom we can approach God. God won’t speak to us accept through that Mediator. *“He has spoken to us by His Son.”* We can’t speak to God accept through that Mediator.

Mary is not a mediator. Saint Jude is not a mediator and Saint Christopher is not a mediator. Your preacher is not a mediator. No one is a mediator except Jesus Christ. *“There is one Mediator, Jesus Christ the man.”* If you come to God it will be through Him.

Now then, everybody who believes those things are one. You don't have to make them one. God made them one. They are one even as God the Father and God the Son are one.