

SABBATH THOUGHT 2025-11-22—JESUS' LAST WISH

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

On His last night on this earth, Jesus gave a NEW commandment:

JOHN 13:34-35 “**A new commandment I [Jesus Christ] give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.** 35 “**By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**”

What did Jesus mean that “all will know that you are my disciples?” Presumably, it is referring to Believers recognizing others in the Body of Christ. However, in His last words to the twelve disciples before His crucifixion, Jesus beseeched God for one thing above all others and you may be surprised to find out the reason for it:

JOHN 17:11, 20-23 “Now I [Jesus Christ] am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, **that they may be one as We are.** ... 20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also [pray] for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 “[I pray] **that they all may be one,** as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; **that they also may be one in Us,** that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one:** 23 “I in them, and You in Me; **that they may be made perfect in one,** and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Jesus prayed FIVE times “that they may be one” with EACH OTHER in the same way that He and His Father ARE one! Who are *they*? All the disciples (v. 11), including the twelve, as well as all “who will believe in Me though their word” (v. 20). *They* refers to every Believer from the apostles to the end of the age. But most surprising of all, Jesus prayed that Believers would be one with each other so that the world would KNOW and BELIEVE that He was sent by God the Father—He repeated it TWICE! When Jesus said “all will know” He was referring to the WORLD, not just Believers!

Oneness among the one Body of Christ is how the world can know and believe that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah sent by God the Father!

FIVE TIMES Jesus urged God to “keep [guard, keep an eye on] through Your [God the Father’s] name” the Believers so they would be one with each other! In the modern vernacular this could be, “In the name of God, be ONE with each other!” Unity of Believers weighed heavily upon Him likely because He knew what would happen; the worst occurring during the Great Tribulation¹:

MATTHEW 24:9-10 “Then they will deliver you [the saints] up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. 10 “And then many [saints] will be offended, will betray one another, and **will hate one another.**

¹ Also Mic. 7:1-6; Ezek. 38:19-21; Matt. 10:21; Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16;

A good portion of the New Testament record is dedicated to pleadings against divisions, dissensions, and offenses. Just as Jesus beseeched God, Paul also pleaded for oneness among Believers:

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10 Now **I [Paul] plead [beseech, implore, entreat] with you, brethren**, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and **that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together** in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Similar entreaties were made by Paul to Believers in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, and Philippi as well as to Timothy and Titus and by James to the Twelve Tribes². Perhaps the most heartfelt plea was to the Ephesians:

EPHESIANS 4:1-7, 11-13, 15-16 I [Paul], therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, **beseech [plead, implore, entreat] you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness [humility] and gentleness [meekness], with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love**, 3 endeavoring to **keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. 4 *There is **one body and one Spirit***, just as you were called in **one hope** of your calling; 5 **one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father** of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all. 7 But **to each one of us grace was given** according to the measure of Christ's gift. ... 11 And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 **till we all come to the unity of the faith** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ... 15 but, speaking the truth in love, **may grow up in all things into Him** who is the head—Christ— 16 **from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies**, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body **for the edifying of itself in love**.

In my experience, the hate among Believers today continues to increase. While it is likely not yet the magnitude of hate during the Great Tribulation, it is there just as it was in the days of the apostles. Hatred causes divisions. Few seem to take seriously keeping the **"unity of THE SPIRIT"** and the **"unity of THE FAITH"** with each other in **"all [humility] and [meekness], with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love."** Even though there is *one Body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord Jesus, one faith, one baptism, and one God*, there is no unity when there is hate among Believers, as is evident in those who:

- Believe a man or organization is the best or only source of 'truth';
- Believe a man has authority to disfellowship a Believer from the Body of Christ;
- Reject a Believer who questions the teachings of a man or organization;
- Condemn Non-believers who are not yet called;
- Reject a Believer simply because your preacher tells you to;
- Ignore or reject a Believer simply because someone else does;
- Ignore or reject a Believer who fellowships with another organization;
- Reject a Believer who has different understandings of prophecy;

² Acts 15:7-10; Rom. 12:1-21; 14:1, 20-21; 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3-4; 8:9-13; 10:32-33; 11:18-19; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 5:6; Phil 1:9-10; 2:3, 14; 4:2; 1 Tim. 1:6; 6:3-5, 20; 2 Tim. 2:14-18; Titus 3:9; Jas. 3:1-2

- Reject a Believer who makes a mistake;
- Ignore or reject a Believer even when they sincerely try to reconcile;
- Assume a serious trial that comes upon a Believer is punishment from God;
- Is pleased when a serious trial comes upon a Believer—even if they did sin.
- Ignore or reject a Believer in need;
- Ignore or reject a Believer in need because they believe their organization will provide for him or her;
- Ignore or reject fellowship with a Believer during the Feast of Tabernacles;
- Refuse to wash the feet of a Believer during the Passover;
- Criticize a Believer whose child does not behave in an 'approved' manner;
- Take sides in an offense between Believers without hearing both sides;
- Take sides in marital issues between Believers without knowing both sides;
- Ignore or reject fellowship with a Believer who is poor or does not have a nice home, car, clothes, etc.
- Gossip about other Believers;
- Listen to gossip about other Believers;
- Criticize or condemn other Believers for any reason.

These are not imagined problems and the list could go on and on. I have personally witnessed every single one of them at least once. I have been guilty of some of them and you have as well. The problem is lack of humility, meekness, and longsuffering in agape love. We demand perfection from others but expect others to be tolerant of our own faults, mistakes, and even sins. The disunity among Believers is an enormous problem. Every year, Believers partake of the yearly Passover without regard for the lack of agape love among them. The Day of Covering (aka, Atonement) is not about resolving divisions and offenses. Unity in the *one* Body, *one* Spirit, *one* hope, *one* Lord Jesus, *one* faith, *one* baptism, and *one* God is through the ONE bread of the Passover:

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16-17 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not **the communion [intimate fellowship]** of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not **the communion [intimate fellowship]** of the body of Christ? 17 For **we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.**

Communion at Passover is an intimate fellowship of Believers through the ONE bread, which is the ONE Body of Christ! There is NO intimate fellowship without unity. Is it possible that the majority of this world do not believe that Jesus Christ was sent by the Most High God because there is an lack of unity among Believers? I wonder how much different the world would be if there was unity in the *one* Body of Christ! Unity among Believers must include the WHOLE Body of Christ, not just an organization. Good Works are a measure of agape love and I know of only a few who help other Believers in need but even they seem to think that "the household of faith"³ is limited to members of their organization.

³ Gal. 6:10.

What is the solution? How can the entire Body of Christ be one with each other? First, accept the fact that there are more than a few *true* Believers outside of your organization; second, accept the fact that other Believers may have different non-salvational beliefs and teachings (that does not make them wrong!); third, accept the fact that each member of the Body of Christ has different gifts from God who intends them to be USED to serve others⁴:

ROMANS 12:1-15 I [Paul] beseech [*plead, implore, entreat*] you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service*. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as **we have many members in one body**, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so **we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another**. 6 **Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them [put those gifts to USE!!!!]:** if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 *Let love be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 *Be* kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor [*appreciation*] giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Each Believer has different gifts according to the grace of God. While these include prophesying, ministering, and teaching, the greater gifts, in my opinion, are exhortations, giving, leading, mercies, and agape love. The gifts of God USED to do Good Works unify the Body of Christ if done with affection, brotherly love, and honor toward one another. Being kindly affectionate, giving preference, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, steadfast in prayer, distributing to the needs of the saints, and given to hospitality build oneness among Believers. Jesus last and heartfelt desire for Believers was "that they may be one" with EACH OTHER, in the same way that He and His Father ARE one! Unity comes by using the gifts God has given to everyone. Oneness among the one and only Body of Christ is vital because it is how the world can know and believe that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah sent by The Father to redeem the world from death unto eternal life in the Kingdom of God!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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⁴ Also 1 Cor. 12:4-27.