

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of Mar 3, 2019

The Power of One

Pastor Temple 8:15, 9:30, 10:55

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15-20 min)

- Anything to share about in the past week? About follow-ups from last Sunday, Blessed & Distressed?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- Opener Question: What is your favorite team sport and why? (question from Lyman Coleman)

Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture below, Luke 5:1-11. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

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. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." ⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

- What calling is being referred to in verse 1, a general calling as a disciple of Jesus Christ or more specific calling as disciple? (you may wish to read the previous verses 3:14-21 in answering this question, as well as 4:4)
- Why do you think Paul feels the need to tell the people that unity requires effort (verse 3)?
- How are the personal qualities listed in verse 2 and the theological truths listed in 4-6 resources for greater unity in the Church?
- How does the presence of various more specialized callings (verse 7, 11) not take away unity from the church but rather contribute toward it?
- According to verses 11-16 what is the purpose of the church?
- How is speaking the truth in love different than just speaking the truth (vs. 15)?
- While there are historical examples such as Roger Williams causing church divisions for trivial reasons, do you believe there are certain conditions in which a church division could be justified? If so, what could they be?

Other Related Scriptures (10 min)

- Would a volunteer please read out loud John 17:20-26. In verse 20, Jesus looks beyond his immediate followers to those who would one day follow him in his church (that's you and me!).
- In your own words, what is Jesus' prayer for us?
- Where does the strength for unity emanate from in these verses?
- What purpose of unity is given here? (verses 21, 23)?
- According to verse 26, how did Jesus' perceive his divine mission to God's people?
- How does it feel to know that Jesus prayed for you?

Personalizing and Applying The Message (15 min)

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional scripture above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- How do you feel you are doing at "living a life worthy of the calling you have received?" (vs. 1)
- How does knowing the prayers of Jesus and the apostle Paul for unity in the body of Christ affect our attitudes towards Christians in other denominations whose practices are very different than our own?
- How do you feel you are doing at your call to "keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace?" (verse 3)
- Do you find it difficult to "speak the truth in love" instead of just trying to keep the peace at any price? Why is this a difficult task for some of us? Why is it important to keep this careful balance?

Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)

- How does the uniqueness of people's life situations affect the appropriateness of the messages of "truth in love" we would offer them?
- Are there any occasions this week in which you might extend Christian greetings across denominational lines in Christian unity? How about within the denomination among those who have differing opinions?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer.