

John 17:20-27

“Oneness”

May 8, 2016

I read a book this week about how the devil, the world and our sinful nature encourage us to separate ourselves from God and each other. They create divisions among us by our dwelling upon the words and actions of others. They create divisions among us by encouraging our thoughts and desires which lead us to separating ourselves from those around us. The woman author used the image of preachers who preach about money as if it were a sign of the blessing of God. I lost one couple to a radio preacher who promised that if they would place their hands upon the radio, he would bless them. While he blessed them over the radio, he asked for money to continue his ministry.

In our text Jesus prays for us. He prays that we may find the unity with Him that He has with the Father in heaven. It is not easy to find the unity with God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit when we are listening to the voices the false prophets who preach wealth and every other kind of heresy to gain our money, or greater power for themselves. Our anchor in life is the foundation of God’s Word and the cornerstone of Jesus Christ. Our anchor in life is not found in pastors or members of the congregation. Our anchor in life is not found in this

world or the satisfying of the desires of the flesh. Our anchor in life is not found in the promises of the devil that we will gain power and authority over others.

God is the Creator who promises us that He will give us eternity through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His Son, on the Cross at Calvary. We can trust that promise because He has continually kept His promises. We cannot trust the devil, the world and our sinful flesh because like our first encounter with satan, they lie to us to gain power over us. Christ did not die to gain power over us because He already is all-powerful. Christ did not die to gain more followers because He already has the angels following Him and worshipping Him. Christ died to share eternity with us by healing the relationship between us and God.

We gain unity with our God when we commit ourselves to Him. We gain unity with our God when we are washed in the Blood of Christ shed on the Cross at Calvary. We gain unity with God and each other when we humble ourselves and seek to serve our God and serve each other. Life is a constant struggle to keep thoughts, desires, words and deeds from distracting us from the unity we have gained through Christ. Therefore we need to constantly be on watch for those thoughts, desires, words and deeds that seek to separate us. As we feel or see the separation, we need to repent.

I talked about false preachers and false members. How do we recognize them? Their pride is a window into their soul because pride exalts self when we are just poor miserable sinners. Listen to their words and ask yourself where they point. Do they point to our failures and encourage us to try harder to measure up? Or do they point to Christ who made us perfect and now encourages in love to praise and thank Him with our lives. Then He gives us the freedom to decide how we will praise and thank Him.

Of course the Law must be preached to those who are unrepentant. Likewise the Law must be preached to curb our sin. However when we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we preach the Law to give guidance to our faith walk not to condemn us because we are already forgiven. God asks us to give that same forgiveness to each other so that our bitterness and anger at each other will not separate us. Instead when we forgive each other we gain greater unity with God and through God with each other. Amen.