

**The Glorious Paradigm of Christian Unity – Part 4**  
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**John 17**  
**June 10, 2012**

Amen. Please turn with me in your Bibles to the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John. I mentioned earlier we are looking at the subject of Christian unity and oneness. Normally we are working through a book of the Bible verse by verse, chapter by chapter, but recently we felt like we needed to take a little bit of a break and focus on an area of a burden on our hearts as elders, and that is the issue of oneness in our relationships. We have been, in our Sunday morning Bible study time, doing an excellent Bible study: Resolving Everyday Conflicts. If you haven't come yet, please make plans to come and be a part of that. It's very practical instruction on how to apply what we're doing in the worship time. It is really dealing with some of the foundation of our oneness.

We see the foundation of our oneness in John 17. Jesus prays again and again, three different times in the text, "That they may be one." Actually, almost a fourth time too, when you count Verse 23, there's another occurrence of the word, 'one', but it's unity translated. When we read it in a moment, you'll see that. "That they may be one, Father, even as we are one." The Body of Christ is to be characterized by a unity that reflects the glory of the Trinity. What a high calling, and that is our calling.

We've been looking at this subject for a number of weeks, seeing that for us to reflect the glory of the triune God we have to understand something of what that unity looks like. In John 17, in this prayer of Jesus, we see it. We see a number of elements of unity. We are to be one like the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit are one. We must have mutual purpose, we've seen a mutual love, mutual knowledge, mutual honor, and last week, mutual delight. Today, mutual purpose. It's the fifth one that we are going to look at this morning. Let's read John 17, beginning at Verse 1.

**John 17:**

*Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, 2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

*4 I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*

*6 “ I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; 8 for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. 9 I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; 10 and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11 I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. 12 While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.*

*13 But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. 14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*

*20 “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

*22 The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory*

*which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*

***25 “O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; 26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”***

Let's pray:

*Our Father, we come now to this passage again which we have been looking at and which reveals to us something of the hidden mystery of the relationships within the Trinity, the Godhead. We realize that we're walking on holy ground and Lord, we need grace. We're walking and addressing truths that are beyond our ability to comprehend as human beings. We are finite and You are infinite. So we come especially mindful of our need of Your Spirit to illuminate us, to open our eyes, and open our hearts that we might see, that we might believe, that we might love You more truly. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.*

We titled the messages from this passage 'The Glorious Paradigm of Christian Unity'. This is actually part four in that message as we've been looking at these successive aspects of the relationship in the Trinity which we see in this passage specifically, opening up the relationship of the Father and the Son. Jesus is revealing to us the inner workings, kind of like He's inviting us into the family room of God. We're not standing on the porch anymore, we're invited into the very intimate setting where the relationships within the triune God are right there before us. Jesus, in this opening up of His heart, is saying to us that we are to reflect this in our relationships. This is the glory of the Gospel lived out. The Gospel which transforms us. The power of God which comes and gives us a new heart which takes out the heart of stone and puts in a heart of flesh. It makes us new, justifies us, and calls us to take the message to the world. Part of the message is that which is lived out in our relationships. Twice in the passage Jesus says, "As we are one the world will know that the Father sent Jesus." It's an amazing promise. What will authenticate the message of the Gospel is the oneness and the unity in the Body of Christ, when you and I overcome conflict and love one another. When you and I have relationship that is supernatural, then the world has to stand up and take notice. God has come in their midst, by His Spirit, in His Church, in His people.

So we're going to continue looking at 'The Glorious Paradigm of Christian Unity.'" I mentioned that we've seen that there is within the Trinity mutual knowledge, they know one another intimately. They love one another completely. There is mutual honor. They grant honor and glory to one another. We are to reflect each of these things. Mutual delight, which we looked at last week, joy in each other's presence. We are to reflect that. But today, we're going to see one of the things that can make a tremendous difference in our lives and that is the oneness of mind among the Godhead. If we are to reflect the Lord's glorious unity in Himself in our relationships, we must understand that we are to have one mind as a Christian people.

We see this in the passage that there is an absolute oneness of mind between the Father and the Son. There is complete unity of purpose. There is perfect agreement and harmony in all that they do. This is true of the relationships of the Godhead. The Father, and Son, and Spirit are never out of step. Never has there been a disagreement. Never has there been a difference of opinion. They are completely unified in everything they do. Three distinct persons, one essence. That's the Doctrine of the Trinity, one God revealed in three persons. A mystery which truly the mind cannot conceive. No analogy exists. But the Bible makes clear, as we study it carefully, that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are equal in power, in glory, equal in majesty, equally worthy of worship and adoration and equal in being. No difference in their essential majesty, their glory, yet we see that there are three distinct persons, that they each have properties that are unique to themselves. There is an 'I' and a 'You' within the Trinity. The Father loves the Son. The Son loves the Father. The Father loves the Spirit. The Spirit loves the Father. The Son loves the Spirit. The Spirit loves the Son. There is this relationship, a glorious relationship. Within that relationship there is a oneness of mind.

Let's look at two points this morning. The first point is the oneness of mind in the triune God. We're going to try to behold what we see in the passage and what that opens up for us in the Scriptures. The oneness of mind of the triune God, that's the first one. The second point is the oneness of mind in the people of God. How can we reflect that?

### 1) The Oneness of Mind in the Triune God:

Here looking at John 17, we see that there is a complete unity of purpose between the Father and the Son. It's evident in all of John's Gospel, but here in this 'High Priestly Prayer' that Jesus prays the night before He is to be crucified. He prays this prayer out loud. He's always living a life of prayer, but here He prays out loud

so the apostles, the disciples can hear Him and understand something of His wondrous relationship. In this passage six times, as He prays, the Lord Jesus Christ says, “Father, you sent Me.” One of the things that we see about the oneness of mind is that that is the heartbeat of Jesus throughout His ministry. That He is sent by the Father. He’s not an independent agent doing His own thing, He’s been sent by the Father. Six times in the passage, look at Verse 3.

***John 17:3 ~ This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.***

***John 17:8 ~ or the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.***

***John 17:18 ~ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.***

***John 17:21 ~ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.***

***John 17:23 ~ in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.***

***John 17:25 ~ “O righteous Father although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me;***

Fifty times in John’s Gospel, on the lips of Jesus, He says, “The Father sent me.” It’s the natural breath and heartbeat of the Lord Jesus Christ to say, “Everything about Me, everything about what I’m doing is that I’m on mission.” Here in this particular passage, all six times, one particular word is used, one Greek word. We have a couple of different Greek words that underlie the word ‘send’ or ‘sent’. Fifty times in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, “You sent Me,” or “The Father did send Me.” There are two words that are used. The first word is the word ‘pempo’ which is basically a general word meaning ‘send’ or ‘sent’. Then there is the word ‘apostellō’ from which we get our word ‘apostle’. The word ‘apostellō’ is used 20 times in the Gospel of John. Most of the time they are used interchangeably. Like you look at John 5 and John 6 you have about seven or eight times the word ‘send’ is used in both chapters as Jesus is teaching, and it’ll be ‘apostellō’ then it will be ‘pempo’. Really it’s used interchangeably, but here the word ‘send’ occurs seven

times in the passage, six times speaking of Jesus saying, “I’m sent.” Once He says, “Now I send them.” All seven times the word ‘apostellō’ is used so that in this passage in Jesus’ prayer, as John records it, he wants us to understand the distinction between this word. It’s not being used in the interchangeable sense. The word ‘apostellō’ carries with it the idea of ‘to send with authority’, ‘to send from’, ‘to set’, ‘to place’, ‘to appoint’. It has the idea of great specificity of purpose, and the authority behind the purpose. Jesus is coming with clear orders, is what he’s saying. “The Father sent Me. That they may believe that You sent Me. I have come with clear marching orders and I’m fulfilling them. That is My mission.” This is why we call them the ‘12 apostles’. They’re the ones who were sent by Jesus with His authority to speak for Him. So using this word, Jesus is saying that He came, not on His own initiative, He came as One Who is sent.

Part of the nature of the triune God, the marvelous revelation we have in Scripture, is that the Father sends the Son. It’s the Father’s plan, the Son is sent. So there is complete agreement in their mission. Jesus doesn’t come to a situation and decide, “Hey, I think I’m going to change the plan here.” That’s the way we do things, isn’t it? We have a plan. I might be sent to the grocery store to get an item and I have a better plan once I get to the grocery store. You know sometimes I go to get one thing and I come back with 14, without the one thing that I was sent for. There were so many things that just came to my mind that were so much better that we need to take advantage of. Jesus never went off on his own in that sense. He did what the Father wanted Him to do. There is complete oneness of mind, and He was glad, in joyful cooperation. This is perfect harmony. You see it also in the passage, not just in the word ‘send’ or ‘sent’ which occurs six times, as we said, but another word that occurs even more in the passage is the word ‘gave’ or ‘have given’ which occurs 16 times in Jesus’ prayer. Let’s look at four things that the Father gave Him. There are more than this but just for our purpose, we’ll look at four.

A) The Father gave Him work to do:

***John 17:4 ~ I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.***

Do you see that Jesus is not doing His own work, He’s doing the work the Father gave Him?

B) The Father gave Him the words to speak:

**John 17:8 ~ for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.**

The words that He gave to us, the words that He gave to the disciples, the words that He gave to the crowds were the words the Father gave Him. So He gave works to do, words to speak.

C) The Father gave Him authority to give eternal life:

**John 17:2 ~ even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.**

He's saying, "You gave to the Son," speaking of Himself here in third person briefly, **You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.** So He has given the Son authority to give eternal life. So His authority, though He's equal in power and glory, He doesn't claim His own authority. He's operating with the authority of the Father. There is this glad submission being evidenced here.

D) The Father gave Him people:

Fourthly, people. We just saw that in Verse 2. The Father not only gave Him work to do, words to speak, and authority, He gave Him a distinct group of people. **You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.** Certain persons, Jesus mentions, have been given to Him. If you noticed when He prayed, He said, "I do not ask Father for all the world, I ask for those whom You have given Me." We see this also twice in Verse 6.

**John 17:6 ~ "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.**

**John 17:9 ~ I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours;**

**John 17:24 ~ Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.**

So five times in the passage He speaks about this certain distinct group of people. This is really the Principle of Election coming into this prayer. The Father has given the Son a distinct group of people. The Son then has the task of redeeming this group of people as He stands before Calvary. The night before He prays for those whom the Father has given Him. This is really the principle of particular redemption. The evidence for it is here in the passage. Now we're not going to stay there, we're just hitting on that, you can note that and continue to look at that. If you're wrestling with those issues keep looking at the Scriptures. It's just right there in front of us in John 17. The point we're looking at though is Jesus is not deciding who. You see that? He's cooperating with the Father's direction. He's taking the ones the Father has given Him. So there is this perfect sense of oneness of mind between the Father and the Son. In fact, if you think about it, we've seen this throughout already, even in our exposition of the Gospel of John. We were looking earlier at John 5. The work that Jesus does is the work the Father gives Him.

***John 5:19 ~ Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."***

The same thing with the words. The words that He speaks are the words which the Father gives Him. John 3:34, John 14:10, and John 14:24 are the same thing. So there is this harmony, oneness of mind. There is never a disagreement about what needs to be done among the Father and the Son, and also the Holy Spirit. What we have here is this glorious oneness, but yet the distinct persons are cooperating. What we have is part of what theologians have called the economy within the Trinity. Now I want to use that term and define it for you. It doesn't mean like we think of economy, or economize. We think of saving money, as in a good economic decision. The original meaning of the word 'economy' actually comes from two Greek words: 'Oikos', house, 'nomos', law or rule. It's the rule of the house. And like home economics, some of us had that class in school, it wasn't about trying to just economize and save money, it was about how you order activities. That's really what it means. 'Oikos nomos', how do you order the home? How do you order the household? Certain responsibilities fall to different members of the household. That's economics, and within the triune God, three distinct persons, there is a clear, discernible economy. The Father takes on a certain role. The Son takes on a certain role. The Spirit takes on a certain role, and They're consistent in that. Apparently, these are related to the essence of Who They are and Who They're being. What we see in Scripture, is that the Father is the One Who

plans. The Son is the One Who accomplishes. The Spirit is the One Who applies. In all of their works you see this discernible pattern. The Father is the One, the mind thinking behind. Now the Spirit and the Son have equal powers, they're all omniscient, all omnipresent, yet the Father is the One Who plans. The Son accomplishes, the Spirit applies.

Think about it in creation. In fact, turn back over to Genesis 1:1-3. I mentioned how a couple of weeks ago we talked about the development of the Doctrine of the Trinity in Scripture. That the Lord doesn't reveal all of this all at once, it's a progressive revelation because He knows that we are sold in sin, blind, finite even after we're redeemed. We're still finite, our minds have trouble. He taught us as a parent teaches a child. You 'baby talk' with a child. You don't start using big words with little Johnny when he's a year old. You don't talk about the ontological economy of the Trinity, things like that, when he's one year old. But over time, some of our kids have been learning some of these things when they're 8, or 9, or 10.

Anyway, the point in Genesis 1:1-3, though it's not revealed clearly, the Trinity is not there on full display in the Old Testament, it's clearly anticipated and it's there implicitly. You see all persons of the Trinity involved in creation in those three verses.

***Genesis 1:1-3 ~ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*** (There's the Father as the One planning. That is the One responsible.)  
***2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.*** (There's the Holy Spirit. He's there in touch with the creation. That's where the Spirit is. He's the One that makes the contact with the creation. He's hovering over the surface of the waters.)  
***3 Then God said,*** (There's the Son because what is Jesus' name in John's Gospel? In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, and the Word was with God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things came into being how? By the Word. Apart from Him, nothing came into being that has come into being. When God said, "The Son is the One going forth from the Father, making, accomplishing the will of the Father. The Father has the will, the plan, the Son accomplishes it. Then the Spirit applies it.) ***"Let there be light"; and there was light.***

You see this even in Chapter 2, Verse 7, when you realize that the word ‘spirit’ is the same word for ‘breath’. After the Lord forms man, this focus is on the sixth day that you have in Chapter 2. The sixth day of creation.

***Genesis 2:7 ~ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.***

Breath is the same word as spirit, in Hebrew and in Greek, the same word. The Spirit is One Who actually makes alive. He’s the One Who brings what the Son has done in forming the man. The Father’s mind creating the Son, forming, touching the One who comes near and then the Spirit making alive. It’s the same way with our salvation. The Father plans, the Son accomplishes, the Spirit applies. Think exactly about the plan of salvation. ***God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...*** You see, the Father is the One Who decides to save, or is planning redemption, but He sends His Son. He *gave* His only begotten Son. The Son comes and accomplishes. The Son lives a sinless life in this world for 33 years. He takes upon Himself humanity and lives in dependence upon the Father. The Spirit is actually involved in the whole plan of redemption in the same way. Think about this, the Father determines when to send the Son into the world. The Son comes at a moment in time when He is conceived in the womb of Mary. How did that happen? The angel told Mary that, “The Spirit of God will come upon you.” You see the Spirit created the body for Jesus and placed Jesus in the body, within Mary’s womb. The Father planning, the Son accomplishing, and the Spirit applying. You see that in the incarnation. You see it in all of redemption. Jesus comes in obedience to the Father. He seeks communion with the Father continually. How does He accomplish all of the things? He does it personally, but the Spirit of God anoints Him. So Father, Son, and Spirit are there in perfect harmony every moment, all along the plan of redemption.

So what you have, as you look at the Bible and start looking for these things as you read the passages. This is why the Spirit descended upon Christ as a dove. He’s living as man, but the Spirit is now anointing Him with power for His ministry. The eternal Son had power, but He’s laid aside His power, the use of His power. He’s still God, but He’s laid aside the use of His power and He’s living as man, dependent upon the Father.

We talked about, remember when He was tempted by satan, “If you’re the Son of God, turn these stones into bread.” satan was tempting Him to use His own intrinsic power to meet His needs as man. Jesus says, “No, man shall not live by

bread alone, but obey every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. I'm living as man." So He continues to depend upon the Father and the provision of the Spirit. What you have though, in this unfolding, glorious picture are the distinct persons of the Trinity, with distinct roles, operating in perfect and glorious harmony. In John 17, Jesus is saying, "That is what I want My Church to look like. Distinct persons with different gifts, operating in perfect oneness of mind." That's what God has called us to. The more we understand that, the more amazing that will become, but there is a path to that. He intends for us to be one, and it's an astonishing reality. It's a lot more amazing for us, in a sense, isn't it? Because we are sinners. Not only are we sinners, but even before you talk about us being sinners, we are just different. We have different ways of thinking, different mindsets, different backgrounds, and different experiences. Then when we're born again, we're given different gifts, different burdens. Isn't it funny how you relate to other members of the Body of Christ and you see how we have different burdens? In a particular situation, we can be looking at something, something happens and we see different things about it.

I heard a teacher give an illustration one time of somebody. He said, "Imagine these different spiritual gifts sitting around. They're all in the kitchen together at somebody's house and somebody spills something on the floor. The different gifts see different issues." Like he says, "The servant, the gift of service is already on his or her knees cleaning it up. Starting to, trying to find something to clean it up with. The gift of mercy is talking to the person that spilled it. 'Oh, I'm so sorry. Don't worry.' The concern is the burden and the hurt of the person that just now did this.

The gift of exhortation is coming along in the same direction, but saying, "Hey, listen. It's okay. That's nothing to worry about. Let's just keep moving along and don't be discouraged." The gift of teaching is saying, "Well, the problem was that if you'd been holding that differently, you wouldn't have dropped it." The gift of prophecy is saying, "Yeah, you need to be more careful." The administrator is saying, "Bill, you go get the mop. Sally, you get the broom. John, you get some paper towels right now," and every one of them has a distinct gift, and it's like the Lord has wired us so that we see through that gift. What can happen is we can get frustrated that everybody doesn't think like us. That's how we are when we're frustrated and conceited, and we think more highly of ourselves than we ought. "I can't believe that they didn't see that issue. Of the seven people in the room, nobody else was more concerned about how badly John was feeling than I was. I'm superior. I wish everybody else was more Spiritual like me." No, the Lord has wired us differently. Now think about that.

We're coming into contact every day, and you can see in the wisdom of God, the sense that we need each other. That becomes clear, but it's difficult with these different mindsets and gifts, to have that oneness. It takes grace on a daily basis, and in John 17, he's giving us principles that are really the foundation for these things. How is it that we who are so unique, so diverse, can be one? How is it that people of radically different backgrounds can be one? How is it that people who have had great conflict among themselves where great damage has happened in relationship can be one? Jesus says *...that they may be one even as We are One*. That's His goal.

How can that happen? Well, it first of all has to happen through the blood of the cross. There is no unity apart from faith in Christ. That's the message of Ephesians 2. He broke down the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile. There wasn't a greater barrier that could exist racially and ethnically than the barrier between Jew and Gentile, and Jesus broke down the wall of hostility in His cross. He Himself is our peace, is what the apostle Paul celebrates in that passage, so that the majority of us who were formerly Gentiles, separate from the Commonwealth of Israel, separate from the covenants, far away and far removed from the word of God – if we'd not been born today, but if we'd been born 5000 years ago, 3000 years ago, 2000 years ago, whatever your ethnic background in your home area is – my family is English and German. There were a bunch of pagans up there in England and Germany. There were some wicked, evil people until the Gospel came, and then the Gospel changed everything. But until that time, we were in the dark, and every one of us who is not a Jew by nature, no matter where you lived, you were in the same darkness (your ancestors). And had not God acted, we would still be in the dark in misery and chains. And part of our commonness, part of the oneness is realizing not so much where we came from, but where we are now. He's broken down the wall that separated us and kept us out, and He's brought us into His family, into His own household, and we're brothers and sisters. We who used to be enemies, because we were the enemies of God and the enemies of each other, now we're brothers and sisters. What the apostle is saying here is that we need to have a oneness of mind in the people of God. We have to labor at oneness of mind that matches the oneness of mind in the Trinity in order for us to manifest this unity.

## 2) Oneness of Mind in God's People:

What does that look like? Well, we see that first of all it's our calling. In John 17:18, He says, "*As you sent Me, I sent them,*" so we're supposed to be on the same page as Jesus was. What does that look like? I think one of the passages that really helps us talk about this idea of oneness of mind is Philippians 2, the passage I read earlier. Turn over with me to Philippians 2:2. That's the verse I want us to focus on. The apostle Paul says to the Philippian Christians:

***Philippians 2:2 ~ make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.***

There are some very rich word pictures here. The phrase *...united in spirit...* means literally with one soul. The word soul would be better than the word spirit here, but the idea of the way we use the word spirit can overlap. But in the Greek, it's the word for soul. 'With one soul'. The soul is the seat of the affections. It's the inner life: the mind, the will, the emotions, the seat of affections. The idea is that the affections are those things that move our heart. We're to have the same affections, which is, we're to be moved by the same thing. The same thing is to thrill us, and we're to labor at this, so that we all have a oneness of soul, a oneness of affection. What is it that we want more than anything else? Now, we have differences about a lot of things. We like different kinds of food. We like different activities, hobbies, and whatever. That's not the issue. What is it at the heart, though, that we want? What is it that we desire more than anything else?

Well, one of the reasons that we have conflict in our relationships is we forget to have oneness of mind, oneness of desire, and affection. But if you and I want the same thing, if we want to see Christ, if we want to be with Him, if that is our heartbeat, it's amazing how conflict diminishes. That's what Paul is saying is that if you understand these things... and then he lays term upon term here. *...maintaining the same love...* We're to have love, each of us, one for another, agape pouring out, love that does not look at the object but just loves in spite of the object, the same way God loved us. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. That's how God demonstrated His love for us. He set on display His love for us by dying for us when we were sinners. There was nothing in us to attract His love.

Within the end points of this, there are four basic instructions: I want you to be of the same mind, maintain the same love, be united in soul, and intent on one purpose. The first and the last have the same word in them. It doesn't appear that way in English, but it's the same Greek verb *phroneō*, which means to have understanding, to think, to feel, or to direct ones mind to something. He essentially says to have the same mindset. *...make my joy complete by being of the same*

*mindset, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, and having the same mindset.* He says it really twice. What he wants us to have is the same way of thinking about things. To direct ones mind to a thing, is the idea. This word is very important in Philippians.

In fact, Paul uses this verb ten times in this short epistle. It occurs only 25 times in the entire New Testament: ten times here in Paul's letter to the Philippians, and ten times in Romans. So it is used 20 times by Paul in those two letters, both of which talk a lot about relationships. Where you find it in Romans is where he's talking about relationships. *Don't think more highly of yourself than you ought to...* contains the same word. "But think as to have a sober mindset," contains the same word. So this word is important. He says that if you're going to be one like the Triune God, you've got to learn to have the same mindset. Set your mind on the same things. Set your mind on the same purpose. *...intent on one purpose...* is a pretty good translation. Your mindset is what you set your mind on. You're intent on one purpose. Basically, he says that twice. *...make my joy complete by being intent on one purpose, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, being intent on one purpose.*

What is that purpose? I said Paul uses it ten times in this letter. Let's look at another couple of passages here. First of all, Verse 5:

***Philippians 2:5 ~ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,***

The word 'attitude' is the same word from *phroneō*. So he's saying to have the same way of thinking that was also in Christ Jesus. Think like Jesus thought. What was Jesus' purpose? You need to emulate that. Essentially what we see when we look at John's Gospel, is that Jesus' purpose in John 17 was to give glory and honor to His Father.

***John 17:4 ~ I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.***

What was His purpose? What was His intent? What was His mindset every day? "I'm here to glorify My Father, accomplishing His work." What does glorify mean? To magnify God the Father. "I want people to see Him." He goes on to say in Verse 6:

***John 17:6 ~ "I have manifested Your name..."***

The Name is the character, the glory. It's really another way of saying, "I've manifested Your glory." Manifest means 'to make visible.' His intent every day was to make the Father's majesty and glory visible. We're supposed to have the same attitude that was in Jesus Christ. What does that mean? It means that our mindset ought to be every day to make the glory of God known, to make it visible. This is what you and I are to have as our mindset. This is to be our purpose. This is to be the one thing that we do above everything else. This is the reason we exist. It is very important to keep coming back to that. The reason you exist is not to do your work, your job, your career. To do your job well and to do your career well glorifies God, but the reason you exist is to glorify God, not to do your job. The reason a mother exists is not to raise her children and to love her children, but she's to glorify God. We see this also in Philippians 3:15, where the apostle Paul uses this word again about mindset:

***Philippians 3:15 ~ Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;***

This attitude is mindset. It's the same word. It's there twice in that verse. Both times 'attitude' is the word from *phroneō*. Have this mindset, this way of thinking. He says in Verse 16:

***Philippians 3:16 ~ however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.***

And then in Verse 17, he tells us to follow his example. What is Paul's example of the attitude he's to live by? It's revealed in Verses 8-14. What is 'this attitude' he's referring to in Verse 15? The attitude he had been talking about in Verses 8-14. What he says in Verses 8-14 is basically, "Everything that I was before I came to Christ, all that I gloried in, I have counted as refuse and dung, and all that matters to me now is knowing Jesus Christ. Every day, I realize I haven't yet attained it. I want to know Him more. I want to experience the fellowship of His sufferings, the power of His resurrection. I want to know Christ. Forgetting what was behind, I press on toward what lies ahead, and press on toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Everything's about knowing Jesus. Paul says that's the mindset we're to have. So if we're to have the same mind, that means we're all to have that mindset. Paul uses it in Philippians 1, when he said that we're to have the same mind in 1:27, and right before that, what's the same mind he's talking about? Paul had just said, "For me to live is Christ and die is gain, whether I live or die, that Christ may be exalted in my body." You and I are called to exalt Jesus Christ.

It's one thing to say that. Yes, we all agree with that. Sure our purpose is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. It's a wonderful statement, but it can become a little bit familiar, and then we forget what it really means and what a difference it makes. Paul shows us in this letter how much of a difference it makes when we have this mindset. We see it in Philippians 4:2. He says:

***Philippians 4:2 ~ I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.***

Apparently what was going on is though the Philippian church was commended in many ways and they were doing well in a lot of ways, there was a conflict going on between two of the older ladies in the church, those who were very well respected. Euodia and Syntyche had a conflict, and it was so bad that it was unresolved, and the apostle Paul is now calling on them to resolve their conflict. In fact, the word 'call' is really 'urge'. ***I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche...*** Do you see that? He didn't say, "I urge Euodia and Syntyche." He wants them to see that he's urging them, that he's calling them. To what? To ***...live in harmony in the Lord.*** What do you think that phrase ***...live in harmony...*** is? It's the same word: to have the same mind. Literally, it says, "I urge you Euodia and I urge Syntyche to have the same mindset in the Lord, to think the same things, to value the same things." He's saying, "Look, the real issue in resolving conflict isn't who did what or what happened. You've got to work through that, but the real issue is: Are you living for the same purpose? And if you are living for the same purpose, 98% of the battle is won. The same purpose is the glory of God. "Euodia, do you want to make much of Jesus Christ? Euodia, do you want your life to magnify the glory of your Savior? Syntyche, do you want to make much of Jesus Christ? Do you want your life to magnify the glory of your Savior? If so, then be like Jesus. Become a servant." Why do we have conflict? Because we have pride. "You hurt me, and I want you to understand how badly you hurt me." "But *you* hurt *me* first, and I want *you* to understand how badly you hurt *me*. I want to win this conflict." What did Jesus do? He humbled Himself and became like a servant. It's not about winning. It's about glorifying Jesus.

Our problem is that we react to situations. I love what Martin Lloyd-Jones says: *Our problem is that we listen to ourselves. What we need to do is talk to ourselves.* Our problem is that in situations, we react, and we just let the reaction happen. What we need to be doing is when something happens, we need to be preaching the truth to ourselves. When we're in conflict, I see you as my adversary. It's a contest. "Will you see my point of view? I'll meet you halfway, but you're over

there and I'm over here." What the apostle Paul is saying is that the key to resolving conflict is to see that there is no enemy and adversary in flesh and blood across from me. We have an adversary and he is the devil. You and I are to stop looking at each other across the battle lines, and to join each other side by side. Every conflict begins to be resolved when we say, "Wait a minute. We are here to battle for Christ. We're His servants." What's our calling? To glorify God. In the Peacemakers training we're using in our Sunday School, what's the first G? Remember the four G's? The four G's of conflict:

*Glorify God.*

*Go and be reconciled.*

*Get the log out.*

*Gently restore.*

In every conflict, there's an opportunity to glorify God. We should be saying, "Wow, we've got a conflict. This is a great opportunity. Don't you see? You're mad at me and I'm mad at you, but we have an opportunity to lift up Jesus Christ right now." If only you and I would see that we're on the same team and that we're not against one another. You are not my adversary. Even an unbeliever is not your enemy, for Paul says, "We do not war against flesh and blood." The unbeliever who is lost is not the enemy. He is the mission field. But you and I in the body of Christ are certainly not to be ever seen as enemies. When we see that, we are operating under the influence of satan and sin. We have to stop fighting and start cooperating. How? Let's work together. How can we glorify God here? How can we magnify the Savior who saved us, who died so that He could wash us and cleanse us from our filthiness, who endured such hostility, who endured such mistreatment, who endured such pain and suffering and agony, such injustice, and yet kept entrusting Himself to the One who judges righteously? Can we not both be like Christ in this situation?

What we have to do is come alongside one another and say, "I want to help you be like Christ, and you help me be like Christ, but either way, I'm determined to lift up Jesus." When that is the attitude, the walls of conflict fall down, and now it's just a matter of: What do we need to do to please the Lord right now? I need to confess my sin. I need to get the log out of my own eye. It's not a speck in my eye. It's a log in my eye and a speck in yours. That's how Jesus tells me to deal with conflict. You have a speck, and I've got this big tree on my face. Wow... I want to get this out. Will you please forgive me? And then we confess our sins and glorify God by granting forgiveness. He forgave me a seemingly infinite debt compared to the

small debt that I have against you now. Because He's forgiven me that, I gladly give it to you, and in doing that, I'm picturing in a small way the glory of Christ.

I had the opportunity to be in a conversation a couple weeks ago. We don't realize how many opportunities for real Gospel witnessing we lose. We let so many opportunities slip through our fingers. Many of those times, it's because we don't talk to someone, but sometimes it's because we don't handle conflict well. When we have conflict, there's an opportunity for the Gospel. I was sitting down with a couple of ladies, and we were discussing another issue. These two ladies are outside the church, and they were talking, and the unbeliever said to the believer, "I want to thank you for loving me and loving my family," and the Christian said, "Well, you're welcome. There's no thanks necessary." She said, "I want to thank you for loving me and my family. I don't understand how you could do it, knowing how we've treated you." And the Christian at first was kind of stunned, and she didn't expect this kind of interaction. She'd had a relationship with this lady, and she knew that things weren't harmonious and good. And after a moment, the non-Christian said to the Christian, "Thank you for being such a good person," and I'm just kind of watching this unfold, because I don't want to get in the way. The Lord is doing something really awesome here, and I'm praying. The Christian lady says back to her, "I want you to understand something. Thank you so much for what you said, but I want you to know I'm not a good person. I am someone who God has forgiven of so much. He has loved me in spite of my sin, and all I was doing in loving you was just giving you some of the love that Jesus has had for me."

Now, do you see how powerful that witness is? That is something that gets to the heart of someone. You can love me when I know what I've done to you? How can you possibly love me? They are seeing something of the Triune God coming out. Jesus says that that will make them want to know. "Tell me about your Savior." Conflict is always an opportunity for that. Within Christian families, when we're already both saved and we know the Lord, we have an opportunity here to glorify Him in the way we respond to this. We have an opportunity to see His wondrous power to break down dividing walls in this opportunity. We have an opportunity to demonstrate before our children, as husband and wife, the power of the Gospel. It's an opportunity. We've really got to see it that way. That's a mindset shift, isn't it? I think this is the default position of mankind. Part of it is we were created for a perfect world. When Adam and Eve got up in the morning, it was always good. The sun is out. Man, look at that garden. You know? Everything was great. We were created for that, so when we wake up and things are not right, there's a dissonance. We want things to go well, but in a world where sin has marred everything, Jesus is going to make things right, but the only way they can be made

right is through the Gospel, the power of Christ crucified, preached and applied to someone's life. There is no harmony anywhere else, and you and I, even after we've been born again by the Spirit of God, repented of our sins, trusted in Jesus Christ, received the forgiveness that comes from Him, we still have this sin nature and we still war at times with one another, because we let our mind get set on our fleshly desires. And every moment where we have a conflict, the Lord is saying, "it's not you lose, I win." No, we both can win, because we both have the opportunity to see the power of the Gospel at work today. "I want everything to go well, but now you want to go to this restaurant and I want to go to that restaurant. You never want to go to my restaurant. Why don't you ever want to go?" Whatever small thing it is, it doesn't matter.

This is an opportunity for us to show the glory of Christ, praise God, and that's a mindset change that has to happen by conscious effort in the Scriptures daily. I am a servant. I'm a slave of Jesus Christ today. He bought me. He owns me. Praise God He owns me. I'm no longer in the dominion of satan, and I'm here to magnify Him, Lord, today. I'd forgotten that I'm on a mission for You, but this conflict has just reminded me of what I'm here for. I'm not here to have just a happy day. I'm here to make a difference for eternity because the night is coming. The days are short. There's only a little bit of time left. Thank You for reminding me that it's all about Christ and it's all about the Gospel. When we have that mindset and then we say, "Let's help each other," that's the undoing of conflict. That's the one thing satan does not want us to get a hold of. May God help us to be like Him in this way, maintaining the same mind, united in Spirit, intent on one purpose, for the glory of His Name.

Let's pray...

*Heavenly Father, we give You glory for the great plan of the ages, which You are enacting. You have perfectly ordered every event in our ordering, every single event that will happen in every moment of every day, from creation to redemption, to the day that Jesus comes. And that means that in our lives, everything that happens is a divine appointment. There are no mistakes and no accidents. Lord Jesus, You have accomplished such a great salvation that You paid for every sin that we've ever committed or ever will commit, so that every moment when we're in conflict, we have forgiveness right there made available specifically for that moment. Holy Spirit, You've come to take up residence in the heart of Your people, and You are ready at every moment to apply the power of the cross to our lives, to our conflicts.*

*Lord, with so much wonder at what You've done, so much awe at Your perfect wisdom, we come aware of our great poverty. We are empty. We forget. We're guilty of exalting ourselves. We're guilty of thinking that we are so much more important than the other person in our lives. Lord, we want to be like Jesus. Help us to be like You, oh God. Help us learn to take the low road with great joy, because when we deny ourselves and we follow Christ, we find that we have a new sense of Your fellowship and Your blessing, and we've been pleasing to You. We pray that Your Spirit would transform our minds more and more every day, that we would be as a body in our individual families, and the body of Christ as a whole, dramatically different a year from now than we are today. Dramatically. Help us, Lord. We ask this not ultimately for ourselves at all, Lord, but we ask this for Your glory. We ask this so that the world may know, Father, that You sent Jesus. We ask this in His Name, Amen.*

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