

Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore – 2010 June Camp
Rev. Daniel Kleyn

WE ARE ONE: (5) THE WAY TO MAINTAIN IT

Introduction:

1. We previously considered our calling to maintain unity. Now we look at the way in which to do this.
2. God's Word gives pointed and clear instruction. Phil. 2:3. I Cor. 12:25. Rom. 12:3. Rom. 12:16.
3. We focus our attention on Eph. 4:2, which mentions three Christian virtues that are necessary for unity.

WE ARE ONE: (5) THE WAY TO MAINTAIN IT

- I. The first virtue mentioned in Eph. 4:2 is humility – “with all lowliness and meekness.”
 - A. This is first because it is most important. And it begins with humility in relation to God. If it doesn't begin with that, then we won't be humble in relation to our fellow saints.
 - B. Humility comes from realizing that we are members of the church only because of the sovereign grace of God in Jesus Christ. Membership is God's work, and God's gift.
 - C. Then the child of God will be humble in relation to his fellow believers in the church. Though this is difficult to do, we will think soberly concerning ourselves, and esteem others better.
 - II. The second virtue mentioned in Eph. 4:2 is longsuffering – “with longsuffering.”
 - A. This refers to suffering along with our fellow saints when they suffer. It means we carry each other's burdens. Romans 12:15. I Cor. 12:26.
 - B. This is the blessing of belonging to a body. Each member has unique gifts to use for the good of others. *Heidelberg Catechism*, LD 21 – “...every one must know it to be his duty, readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts, for the advantage and salvation of other members.”
 - C. When we suffer with those who suffer, this usually strengthens the unity we have.
 - III. The third virtue mentioned in Eph. 4:2 is forbearance – “forbearing one another in love.”
 - A. This refers to putting up with each other's weaknesses, habits, behaviors, etc.
 1. This is difficult to do. We need first of all remember that God is very patient with us.
 2. We also need to remember that we each have our own weaknesses and faults.
 - B. Forbearing one another also includes bearing with one another's sins.
 1. This does not mean we ignore sin. We may not. But notice I Peter 4:8.
 2. We must keep Matt. 7:3 in mind. And we should assume the best concerning each other.
 - IV. Ephesians 4:11-16 point out that the preaching of the Word is also crucial for maintaining unity.
 - A. Christ gave the gift of preachers to the church also with a view to the unity of His body. Unity cannot be maintained without faithful and bold preaching of the truth of the gospel.
 - B. That preaching humbles us. It reminds us that it is by grace alone that we are members of the church. It also reminds us that by the grace of God the members of Christ's church are saints.
 - V. We need to be thankful for and treasure the blessed gift of the oneness/unity we have in Christ, and strive to maintain it through the virtues mentioned.
-

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the gifts God gives to members of the church? How can we use those gifts in the church?
2. How can we suffer with those who suffer?
3. What should we do when sin threatens the unity that we have?
4. How do humility and forbearance relate to each other? How do they work together?
5. Does prayer play a part in keeping the unity of the Spirit?