

That They May Be One

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[0 : 00] John chapter 17, would you please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word, beginning in verse 20.

! I in them, and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? Thank you. In 1934, 88 years ago this past February, Highland Park Baptist Church was born.

The church met in a four-room house, which they rented for \$10 a month. That group consisted of 35 members, 35 people who saw a need in our community, then known as Highland Park, to establish a church.

Years later, ground was broken on this location, establishing a presence on this mound of earth, a Christian community very much physically positioned within this city to be a city on a hill.

[2 : 01] And you know, only God truly knows how many disciples He has made in this church or through this church over the last 88 years.

But it's obvious that many have been made, otherwise this church would no longer exist as it does today, if at all. Those 35 members, those 35 members are no longer with us on this earth.

But the church that God called them to start is still here, almost nine decades later.

This church didn't die with them, but this church lives on today. Our church's history should serve as a reminder to us that a small group, unified in Christ, and in His purpose will be a group He uses to accomplish great things.

And there is no greater proof of that reality than in the 11 disciples whom Jesus prayed for here in John chapter 17. The time would soon come after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and ascension when these 11 men would set out to fulfill Jesus' instruction, which was to go into the world and make disciples.

[3 : 30] And today, we know how far-reaching their impact for the Lord has been. 2,000 years later, millions of disciples have been made throughout the world.

And each disciple that has been made can trace their spiritual lineage all the way back to these 11 men whom Jesus met with and prayed for in John chapter 17.

They were empowered by Christ and His Spirit to do extraordinary things. In the book of Acts, we witness the birth of the church and the spread of the church throughout the world.

We see Christians reproducing Christians, disciples who are making disciples, people who are coming to faith in Christ, so much so that the enemies of the church were forced to admit that their impact was turning the world upside down.

The Holy Spirit was shaking things up and using them to do that, shaking things up in a way that those who lived in the world back then had never experienced before.

[4 : 37] But in this moment, as Jesus prayed for His disciples, these men hardly seemed ready or thought themselves capable of turning the world upside down.

One of them, if you remember Judas Iscariot, was a traitor and was at that moment, as Jesus is praying, meeting with those who would arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Peter, the bold, seemingly fearless leader of disciples, Jesus said, would crumble before the accusations of a servant girl denying Christ three times.

The rest of the disciples would abandon Jesus after His arrest, fleeing for their lives, and yet, though Jesus knew all these things would happen, He also knew that they would fulfill their role in redemptive history.

Despite the disciples' weaknesses, the gospel would prevail. And empowered by the Holy Spirit, those first disciples would begin an unbroken chain of witnesses that continues to this day and will

continue to the day when our Lord returns and calls out His church to be with Him.

[6 : 06] If you have been saved by Jesus Christ, you are a part of that chain. And you have been entrusted by Him to be a current day steward of the gospel that has saved you.

The life-transforming message that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. And so, in this portion of Jesus' prayer, His focus turns from those eleven men to you, to you, to each one of you.

Now, you are the one who is on Jesus' mind here. you are the subject of Jesus' next prayer request to the Father.

And He prays that you, that you would be united to other believers in a clear, discernible, and undeniable way that testifies to unbelievers that Jesus is the Christ, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that by believing in Him, they will have life in His name.

There is life in His name. And so, the main idea that emerges from our passage today is this, your unity to other believers testifies to unbelievers that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

[7 : 38] Your unity to other believers testifies to unbelievers that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world. You know, I believe that all of us have a God-given desire to be a part of something that is bigger than ourselves, to work alongside others to accomplish something that we could never have accomplished or achieved on our own, to lend ourselves, to lend our time, to lend our money, to lend our efforts to a cause that we believe will have a great impact, a cause that we want to have our names attached to, we want our names to be forever associated with.

Listen, in these verses, Jesus tells you that there is no greater organization for you to be a part of than His church. And there is no greater cause for you to invest in than His cause which He seeks to accomplish through you.

Making disciples and seeking the lost. The church is an eternal organization whose work has everlasting results.

And your unity to it, you must understand, is the greatest privilege and it is the greatest cause that you will ever be associated with.

We are the guardians of this lampstand in this corner of God's great and vast universe. verse. 88 years from now, should the Lord not have returned by then, may it be the case that your unity, our unity, as a local body of believers today, would yield a harvest for the Lord of the harvest into that future should it come.

[9 : 35] That lives would be transformed, both our lives and the lives of those who have yet to have been added to our number. As he uses our unity as testimony that there is life in Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.

And so, in these verses which record Jesus' prayer for you, he explains two tremendous results, that your unifying yourself to other believers produces.

The first result is this, your unity to other believers will produce disciples. That's what Jesus says, that's what he prays for, that your unity to other believers, not might, but will produce disciples.

Look again at verse 20. Jesus says, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word. So, having prayed specifically for his eleven remaining disciples, Jesus now looks ahead.

Jesus now looks past the cross. Jesus now looks past his death. Jesus now looks past his resurrection. He looks past his ascension. He looks back to heaven, where he will be at the right hand of the Father.

[10 : 53] He looks to all of his disciples, all of them who would come to faith in him throughout time. Though most of them had not yet been born yet, they nevertheless were on our Savior's heart as he prayed for them and as they had been throughout all eternity.

He knew them all. He knows you. His intercession for you, which began two thousand years ago, continues to this day. Hebrews 7, 25 at the end says, since he always, speaking of Jesus, lives to make intercession for them.

That's what he's doing right now. That's what he's doing for you. And I don't know about you, but it makes me feel really good knowing that Jesus is praying for me.

Doesn't that make you feel good? It makes me feel really good to know that Jesus has prayed for me, and it makes me feel really good that Jesus is interceding for me right now because I know that I need the Lord's prayers.

And so understand that you here are the subject of his prayer, and that he continually intercedes for you.

[12:06] But imagine you were one of the eleven disciples on this night as Jesus was praying these words. Jesus says that many will, with certainty, will believe in him through your eleven guys' word.

Now you might be tempted to think if you were one of them through our word. Through our word? That can't be right. After all, most of us are what?

We're fishermen. Our expertise is in catching fish. Our expertise is in mending nets. Our expertise is in rowing boats. Our expertise is knowing where to find fish to haul them in.

That's what we know. How can we do this thing? Lord, you won't be physically present with us anymore. How could you be so certain and so willing to entrust such a great responsibility to ordinary guys like us?

Remember when Jesus called his disciples, his first disciples, do you remember that after he told them to cast their nets in on the other side and they did it and they brought in a haul of fish and Peter came running to Jesus realizing that this was no ordinary man, that he was in the presence of God and he got down on his knees and he said, Lord, depart from me for I am a sinful man.

[13:39] And do you remember what Jesus said to him? From now on, you will be a fisher of men, a fisher of men.

Amen. Their ability, those eleven disciples, their ability never depended on who they were, but what Jesus would empower them to be and what Jesus would empower them to do.

And on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended and indwelt them, Peter preached the gospel. The disciples preached that word and recorded those words which were given to them by the Holy Spirit, which are contained in our Bibles.

And throughout the centuries, all who have preached the gospel, who have preached that word, have preached the apostles' word, which was given to them by the Holy Spirit, with the results, as we've seen, that millions and millions have come to faith in Jesus Christ.

And Jesus' prayer here ensured that their ministry would be successful, not might be successful, but would be successful. Despite the disciples' weaknesses, despite the disciples' inabilities, despite Satan's opposition, despite the world's hatreds, the gospel would prevail.

[15:08] They would begin the chain of witnesses that continues to be unbroken down to this present day. All of the church's evangelistic successes is the result of Jesus' prayer, which was answered in verse 20.

His prayer guaranteed the formation of his church and its continued existence throughout the centuries until he returns. The gospel has not lost its effectiveness today.

The Lord is still gathering his church and he's chosen you to be a part of that work. I don't think the disciples could have imagined the kind of impact the Lord would empower them to have.

I don't think in this moment they could have had any thought that such life transformation would be possible when they simply opened their mouths and preached the word that God had given to them. The disciples were few in number. They were men with limited resources, but it didn't matter. Jesus didn't choose them because they were the cream of that year's seminary crop.

[16:23] He uses the ordinary to do the extraordinary. Nothing has changed today. God uses today ordinary means, the ordinary means of his disciples to do and accomplish extraordinary things.

But a key component to that is the unity that his disciples have with one another. A unity that exists in his church which reveals the nature and the character of who God is.

Jesus continues in verse 21, that they may all be one just as you father are in me and I in you that they may be in us, that they may also be in us.

You see, in the church there exists a supernatural unity, a unity that the world cannot duplicate. People in the world unite with those who are like them, don't they?

And they tend to separate themselves from those who are not like them, which creates divisions and creates factions. It reminds me of the cafeteria in my high school.

[17:38] school. We had a cafeteria and then we had a mall that was just an open area in the middle of our school where the older kids sat.

Cafeteria had tables, the mall had benches, the cafeteria was the underclassmen, the mall was the upperclassmen and don't you dare be an underclassman trying to come into the mall where the

upperclassmen sat.

But look, on that we were further segregated besides age, over here you had the athletes, the jocks. Over here, far away you had the thespians and the band members.

Over here you had the cowboys or what we would call the hicks. Over here, no offense, over here we would have the really smart kids who would study during lunchtime, right?

And we all had our little factions. We were united in our little factions, but we were not together, we were not united. That's the way the world unites, by creating factions.

[18:49] It's the way the Jews operated in Jerusalem at the temple. They had a court that separated people by race and by gender. But in Christ, all such barriers have been torn asunder.

As Galatians 3, 27-28 says, for as many of you were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free.

There is no male and female for you all are one in Christ Jesus. And you know, despite our denominational differences, all true Christians are truly united to one another by regeneration in the belief that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

And in our local body, in our church, if we create factions, we are creating divisions. And in that case, we testify to the world that you know what?

We're not really any different than you. If an unbeliever was to walk into one of our fellowships, this is what they should see.

[19:59] They should see old people sitting with young people. They should see people of different races sitting together. Men sitting with women.

Children sitting with grandparents who aren't their biological grandparents. Oklahoma State fans sitting with Oklahoma with Sooner fans.

Can we draw the line? KU fans even. Michael, right? We're small in number. But they should see us together and they should see that this group of people enjoys one another's company and they're nothing alike.

Why do they share so much in common? Well, because we share a bond that is supernatural and that bond is Jesus Christ who has saved us from our sins.

It's a unity that the Holy Spirit creates but it's a unity that we are called to preserve. Ephesians 4, 1-6 Nick already read this passage to us.

[21:05] Let's look at it again. Therefore, I therefore a prisoner for the Lord urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called with all humility and gentleness with patience bearing with one another in love eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace.

There is one body and one spirit just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call one Lord one faith one baptism one God and father of all who is over all and through all and in all Jesus prays that we possess a unity that reflects his unity with the father and the holy spirit a unity that reflects the triunity of God what does that unity look like let's the holy spirit and that purpose is to glorify God Jesus began this prayer by praying father the hour has come glorify your son that the son may glorify you in verse five of this prayer he added and now father glorify me in your presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed that's very much the thought on Jesus mind here and was all of his entire earthly life likewise our purpose as a church is to be united in our desire to glorify

God and not just when we're together at the church but always in your life that's God's desire for you first Corinthians 10 31 so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do do all for the glory of God may that be your purpose in everything that you do I've been reading a I grew up watching that team and liking that team and if you know anything about that team they had the two greatest players in basketball at that time they had Shaquille O'Neill a seven foot center and they had Kobe Bryant who you know six seven six eight shooting guard who was phenomenal both of those guys were just amazing athletes and wonderful basketball players and together they won three championships but years because they each wanted to be the star of the team and they grew to hate one another because they wanted to be the one who took the majority of the shots they wanted to be the one who got the glory they wanted to be the one who won the MVP Kobe Bryant couldn't stand it that Shaquille O'Neill was the MVP of the finals all three times that they won it fell apart and you know we unfortunately see the same kinds of power struggles in the church don't we a small group a Sunday school class a committee leadership staff members can strive against one another instead of with one another wanting the credit thinking they deserve

at least some of the glory we've all been apart or heard of a contentious business meeting where the glory of God took a backseat to someone seeking the glory for themselves and whatever their project might have been it's ugly it's unlike Christ and such attitudes divide the church and mute the church's witness to a world in desperate need of hearing the good news of

Jesus Christ when we do that we are denying God of the glory that he deserves they're united in their purpose which is to glorify God second the father and the son and the holy spirit are united in mission they share the common goal of redeeming lost sinners and bringing them to salvation Jesus emphasized his unity with the father and their mission when he prayed in verses two through four since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him and this is eternal life that they know you the only true God in Jesus Christ whom you have sent I glorified you on earth having accomplished the work that you gave me to do and then in verse 18 of this prayer Jesus prayed that we be united in this mission too as you sent me into the world so I have sent them speaking of you speaking of us his disciples into the world additionally before [25 : 44] Jesus ascended to heaven he issued this command for his disciples Matthew 28 19 through 20 go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you so two questions that I think we should all repeatedly be asking of ourselves in whatever we do as a church whether it concerns teaching or planning an event or an activity or whatever it is two questions we should always be asking ourselves is first of all is God going to be glorified in this is God going to be glorified in this and then secondly will this lead to Christians being discipled and or disciples being made are we doing this for the glory of God if not scrap!

it are we doing this and it's something that's going to help our people be discipled and grow in their knowledge of God's word and their faith in Christ is it going to be something that will help us make disciples then let's do it if not scrap it do away with it third the father and the son are united in truth Jesus prayed in verse eight for I have given them the words that you gave me and they have received!

them and have come to know in truth that I came from you and they have believed that you sent me as a church we likewise must be united in our proclamation of the truth especially in a culture like ours that has exchanged the truth for a lie we proclaim the truth to the world and to one another as well at times that truth that we proclaim to one another comes in the form of encouragement at times that truth that we proclaim to one another and to the world comes in the form of a rebuke but all of it must be done in love because you know what we are all tempted at times to drift away we are all tempted to let our guard down or maybe we feel worn out from the battle we fail to put on the armor of God that he has given to us well listen God has made provision for that and the provision that he's made for that is his church

Ephesians 4 11 through 16 and he gave the apostles the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints you the church for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ which is the church until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the sons of God to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine by human cunning or by craftiness and deceitful schemes rather speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in every way into him who is the!

and yesterday Jack is in a baseball tournament continues today my job on the baseball team is to be the pitching coach and what that means a lot of times is it's my job to warm up the pitcher and so that means that I've got to do a lot of squatting and rising and squatting and rising we played two games yesterday and we had about four or five kids pitch so you can rising the squatting and the rising and I have a really bad right knee so when I came home my knee hurt and it's a pain isn't it I mean literally it's painful and it's also a pain to the rest of your body isn't it it's like stop hurting the rest of us is okay stop it and you know you could say well maybe just cut it off right that's not going to work that's going to add to a worse pain and

[30 : 08] I would like to keep the rest of my leg so what do I do what do you do in that situation where part of you is in pain you treat it you're gracious to it aren't you and I put on my knee brace that I wear just to keep it you know straight and then before bed I rubbed a whole bunch of icy hot on it you know and I wake up feeling a little bit better ready to go today for round two here's my point as a church sometimes our members are in pain and that can come in a lot of different forms it can be of loss of a loved one can be the pain of just stumbling and falling and when that happens as

the body we don't say well get out of here we'll just cut you off no we're gracious to that part aren't we you're in pain and it's our job as your body to be gracious to you to treat you graciously that you would be restored back to health brother sister that's what true unity looks like if a member of our body is hurting or missing you you make the effort you be the one don't anticipate well that's what the deacons are for that's what the elders are for that's what the

Sunday school teachers are for you make the effort they're part of your body you make the one to help them you seek to be the one used by the Lord to bring healing you know a business will terminate its weakest member its weakest employee its least productive a professional team will cut or trade its weakest player but the church is different that's not how we treat our weakest members we all know the saying a chain is only as strong as its weakest link well I wonder if the church is only as unified as its least unified member in other words if we if you are anonymous to each other then you know what I think is going to happen we'll be anonymous to the world they won't know that's that building over there

Highland Park yeah it's behind Soho I've driven by it before if we don't desire to be a part of one another's lives I think that reveals a lack of desire to truly reach the lost if we don't love one another we don't love the lost if we're not trying to reach out to one another we're not going to reach out to unbelievers and you know if you have concerns about inviting an unbeliever to this church because you're afraid of how they might be treated here that's a problem and if that's the case that has to change our ability to communicate the gospel effectively as we have been commanded to do depends on each one of us making the choice every day to preserve the unity that we have been given by faith in

Christ so that the world may know not how great we are but how great Jesus Christ is and that's what Jesus prays for in verse 21 so that the world may believe that you have sent me this is part of what our unity achieves the world will see that Jesus has truly been sent by God the church's ultimate apologetic to an unbelieving world is its unity which is kept in the bond of love and so the second result here that Jesus prays for is this your unity with other believers puts God's love on display your unity with other believers puts God's love on display in verse 22 Jesus says the glory that you have given me I have given to them they may be one as we are one the glory that Jesus speaks of here refers to the manifestation of God's character primarily his holiness his otherness his purity though not to the same infinite extent the spiritual life and power that belongs to the Trinity belongs in some way to believers and is the basis of our unity this goes back to the command to speak the truth and love to one another in doing so we preserve our church's holiness and therefore when we seek to preserve!

[35 : 18] church's holiness we are preserving our church's unity God will not use a church that sweeps sin under the rug or winks at it a church that either speaks the truth in unloving ways or loves the world more than the commands contained in God's word will be a church whose light stand will be removed moved I heard a missionary once tell this story about a tribe in Africa that he had been visiting and the tribe had completely converted every single one of them to Christ as far as they knew and the men were the leaders of that community and they were the spiritual leaders of their families and so they had all decided that together what we're going to do is every day in the morning, each man is going to leave from his hut and walk out to a place alone and pray. Pray for our community. Pray for our witness. Pray for one another. Pray for our families, our church.

Well, this missionary said that as time would go on, sometimes one of those men would get distracted by things of the world and they would stop making that walk. They would stop walking that path because over time those paths had become well-worn and you could see the path from hut to the place out where the person prayed. And in that case, when one of those brothers was distracted from what they should have been doing, another one of them would go and simply say this, brother, grass is growing on your path. Grass is growing on your path. Your unity to other believers depends on your encouraging others' pursuit of holiness. But you must do so in a way that doesn't shame but that edifies.

In verse 23, Jesus says, I in them and you in me that they may become perfectly one so that the world may know that you have sent me and loved them as you have loved me. The Father and Son, we've talked about how many ways they are united. Another way in which they're united is in love, both at Jesus' baptism and at His transfiguration. The Father declared His love for His Son. And here's the bottom line. The love that we've received from God through Jesus Christ and the love we have for one another is the glue that binds us together. As Colossians 3.14 says, and above all

these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. The church's love for one another is, again, its ultimate apologetic to an unbelieving world. The loving unity of the church made visible is used by God to produce a desire on the part of unbelievers to experience that same kind of love because they're not going to get it from the world. We see a beautiful picture of this in Acts chapter 2.

Look at how Scripture describes the unity that that first church experienced. 2.42 through 47, and they devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. All the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

[39 : 10] All those people were seeing the church having this unity, this bond of love, and it stirred something up within them. They saw that they don't have that, and that's what they sought. And as a result of that, every day, day by day, many were being saved. I don't know about you, but I'd like to be a member of a church like that. Wouldn't you? And the more we seek to be united to believers like that, the more you seek to be united to the people in your pews like that, the more the world will take notice. So pray for our unity and make efforts to get to know everyone in this church. And introverts, I'm with you, I'm one of you. We want to know you. Come to our fellowships. Be a part of what's going on.

Don't run out the door as soon as whatever. We're done. We want to know you, and we want you to be a part of what's going on here. You know, one thing I love is when members of our church come to watch Jack's games or Hazel's games because it means a lot to them. But it's a great opportunity to put on display the love that we have for one another in view of the world. You know, people will ask us, are these your relatives, your parents, your grandparents, your brothers and sisters? Like, well, not biologically, but they're our church. And it's strange to them, but in a great way, because they don't have that. And I think it's something they desire. So meet outside of this church together in public places, because you know what? That's where they're most going to see our unity. Not here. They're not going to come here first. We've got to go to them, and we've got to show them what it means to be a part of the church. I like, I just read this quote yesterday, Mark Penrith. He said, a single bee isn't a swarm, a lone wolf isn't a pack, a solitary ant isn't a community, and you by yourself are not the church. You need the church. In the church, there should be no lone wolves or lonesome doves. The church should not be a place where people show up anonymously and leave anonymously, or a place where there is endless fighting and bickering in order to get your way.

Your way, our ways, must be God's ways. We are stewards, not owners. We are not a club, but a family. And yeah, as a family, we're not always going to get along, but at the core, we know that we belong together. We are not divided into factions, but united eternally to one another in Christ. In some places, Scripture describes the church as a body as well. In other places, it likens it to a building, as we see in 1 Peter 2, 1 through 5. I want to read that to you.

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

[43 : 03] On the campus of Danny and I's alma mater, there is a brick, and it has our name engraved on it, I think with the years we graduated. And we purchased that brick some time ago, and we purchased that brick because that's where we met. And we still believe in what that school is doing and its purpose.

And you know, that brick forms a walkway with a lot of other bricks, with a lot of other names written on them. By itself, that brick would be a cause for stumbling. What is this brick doing here all alone in this grass? It doesn't belong. But collectively, those bricks form a path.

United together, they accomplish a purpose. And so my hope is for me and for each one of us that, you know, we would think of the same way.

Lord, I just want to be a brick that you unite to form a path that leads people to you, that leads people in this church closer to you, that leads unbelievers to you, that they would be saved and know you as Lord and Savior. In another 88 years, again, should the Lord have not come by them, where will Highland Park Baptist Church be? Will it be?

We must collectively believe that our best days, that God's best days for us aren't behind us, but before us. Even past our time here, if you know what I'm saying. When we go home to be with the Lord, that in 88 years, this church is still here and the best days for that church then are still before it.

[45 : 02] And so I ask you, do you think that God is done here? Do you believe that God is done working at Highland Park?

Do you think that His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, is incapable of forming a bond between us, like Jesus prayed for? And I'm not saying that we don't have that, we do, but excel still more, brother and sister in Christ. Amen?

Do you think that Jesus' prayers are useless? Do you think that His prayers aren't answered? And you think, not here, maybe somewhere else, Lord, but not here.

Look, He's prayed for you. And He's prayed for you right here. In John chapter 17. And He's prayed for you to be united to one another.

And it must be your goal. It must be your goal to do your part to seek and preserve a unity within this body that makes the truth of Christ visible to the world.

[46 : 19] And we don't just do that here. We partner with the church to do that everywhere. That the world may know that Jesus is the Son of God.

That the world may know that there is salvation only in Him. That they would know the love of God that is so great. So the main point of application is this.

Unity creates a transformational community. Unity creates a transformational community. And may that be the kind of community that we together strive to be used by the Lord to have happen here in greater ways than it's happening now.

Three questions of application for us to, for you to discuss in your community groups tonight. And if you're not a part of a community group, look, there's another great way to be united to members of this church.

And if you'd like to be a member of a group, just come and find me after church and we will get you plugged in. We still are going to meet for another month and into the middle of May. So there's still plenty of time.

[47 : 36] Question number one, what will unity amongst Jesus' disciples accomplish? According to His prayer, what does He say it will accomplish? How are we to be united as the church both universally and locally?

So how are we to be united and what ways are we to show that here and how are we to be a part of the church and show that throughout the world? Our engagement in missions and with other churches in our community, in our nation, and in our world?

Question two, read Ephesians 4, 1 through 6. According to these verses, how are Christians commanded to preserve their God-given unity?

According to these verses, how are Christians, how are you commanded to preserve their God-given unity? And then finally, what does a divided church look like?

What does a united church look like? What do you and our church need to change so that we become a transformational community or that we become more and more of a transformational community?

[48 : 53] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we are thankful for the salvation that we have received in Jesus Christ. That, Lord, through His life, through His death, through His resurrection, through Your grace, to open our eyes to see the truth, that He is the way, the truth, and the life.

Father, You have united us to Yourself forever. And we know, Lord, that there is nothing that can separate us from Your love for us. There is nothing, Lord, that can separate us from the unity that You have created in us to be a part of You forever, knowing that there's eternal life that awaits us once this life is over.

Lord, we've read Your prayer. Lord, we've seen that Your desire is that we be united. And we know, Lord, that Your desire is that our unity would be a powerful testimony to the world that You are who You said that You are, the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

And so, Lord, our prayer is, and may it can increasingly be, that Highland Park Baptist Church would be a place that is so well known for its unity that we are a bright and burning light in this corner of the universe that people would know that what bonds us together isn't that we've just stumbled upon some secret formula or some strategy, but that, Lord, it's You who's done it. And we're just being obedient to Your Word, and we know that we can do it because You've prayed for it. And what You pray for, Lord, gets answered. And so, Father, may we live collectively as a unit, may You, Lord, increasingly use this church to become a transformational community whose light continues to burn and burn brighter and brighter until that day when You come back and take Your church to be with You.

[50 : 57] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I'll see you next time.