

Unity -One together in Christ with the Father

John 17: 20 – 26; Psalm 133

As you come here this morning what would you say is a priority as you live our your Christian faith?

The setting of the Gospel this morning is in the Garden of Gethsemane. As Jesus prays here, we discover His heart and spiritual priorities. As Christians it is wise for our priority to be on these priorities also: a/ the glory of God, b/ the sanctity of God's people, c/ the unity of the church, d/ the ministry of sharing the Gospel with a lost world. Today, I'll focus on 'Unity'.

[Who here has a garden? And loves gardening? Illustration of one beautiful garden – one garden with such beautiful diversity]

What is the basis for true Christian unity? The person and the work of Jesus Christ and His glory (John 17: 2 – 5). In this prayer of Jesus', He is concerned that His people experience a spiritual unity that is like the oneness of the Father and the Son.

The disciples had often experienced a spirit of selfishness, competition, and disunity; and this must have broken the Saviour's heart. I wonder how Jesus feels when He see the condition of the church today?

The moment we become Christians, we become part of a body of believers, the Body of Christ. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "Our community with one another consists in what Christ has done for us." Christ is the basis of our fellowship. No Christian is an only child.

Philip Yancy writes, "Christianity is not a purely intellectual, internal faith. It can only be lived in community." So the question is not, "Am I going to be part of a community of faith" but "How am I going to live in this community of faith?" We can pretend that we're on our own, but eventually we realize how much we are meant to do life with each other.

One of the things that most impresses the world is the way Christians love each other and live together in harmony. It is the witness that out Lord wants in the world, John 17: 21, 'that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me'. People here in the Bega Valley cannot see God, but they can see each of us as Christians; and what they see in us is what they will believe about God. If they see love and unity, they will believe that God is love. If they hear gossip and conflict and division, they will reject the message of the Gospel.

What message are we sending to out community? What do people hear from each of us about church and our faith? What do they see in your actions and how you treat others?

There is every reason why believers should love one another and live in unity here at St Johns; we trust and belong to Jesus Christ our Saviour. Each of us will one day enjoy the same heaven!

Read Psalm 133,

'How good and pleasant it is

when God's people live together in unity!

²It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,

running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.
³It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.

As you go out and share your life with all sorts of people across the week, what are some things you could share about the church and your faith?

[Ask for responses and ideas – talk about some of the great aspects of Thursday Church – good fellowship, good meal, good to catch up and support each other.]

As we make unity a priority and live out our faith in Christ, we will have things to share with those who do not know Christ. As we share with others, we make God known and that brings glory to God. By doing this we engage with the priorities of our Saviour's heart.

Christian Unity
by Lionel E. Deimel



Around the table gathered, we
Are one in sweet community,
For Christ has ransomed one and all
Who answer to his loving call.

We worship God in many ways;
We celebrate on different days;
But Jesus is the guiding Way
The kingdom will be ours some day.

So let us vow to never fight
About who's wrong and who is right
Concerning truths we cannot know
That turn our Christian friend to foe.

And let our worship fit our needs;
Let us unite in Christian deeds;
May we God's love and mercy show
To those who don't the Saviour know.

Amen