



“UNITED WE STAND!”

Ephesians Chapter 4:1-16

> (v1-3) OUR CALL TO UNITY!

- Every believer is called to walk worthy of their calling, which is characterized by:

- (1) Lowliness - *Is humility*. Someone has said, "Humility is that grace that, when you know you have it, you have lost it." Wiersbe writes, "Humility means putting Christ first, others second, and self-last."
- (2) Gentleness - *Kindness, consideration, a spirit of fairness and compassion*. Philippians 4:5 - *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.*
- (3) Longsuffering - *Is to be patient, long-tempered, the ability to endure discomfort without fighting back. "Love suffers long and is kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4).*
- (4) Bearing with one another – We are saved by God's grace and mercy, so let us offer that same grace and mercy to each other as we bear with one another. Colossians 3:12-13 - *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*
- (5) Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit – Endeavor is to "make an effort"; whereas *unity of the Spirit* is to maintain the work of the Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15) in you and to bear its fruit (Galatians 5:22-26 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*)
- (6) In the bond of peace - Jesus said in Matthew 5:9 - *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*. Paul wrote in Romans 10:15 - *"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

> (v4-6) SEVEN UNITIES OF CHRISTIANITY!

#1 - One body – *Believers from Pentecost to the rapture!*

#2 - One Spirit – *Believers born again and sanctified by the Holy Spirit!*

#3 – One hope of your calling – Titus 2:13-14 - looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

#4 – One Lord – Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)

#5 – One faith – Acts 2:42 - And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

***"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
(Romans 10:17)***

~ THE TRIUNE GOD - We affirm our belief in one God, infinite Spirit, creator, and sustainer of all things, who exists eternally in three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three are one in essence but distinct in person and function. (Deut. 4:35; 6:4; Isa 44:5-8)

~ GOD THE FATHER - We affirm that the Father is the first person of the Triune Godhead and the source of all that God is and does. From Him the Son is eternally generated and from Them the Spirit eternally proceeds. He is the designer of creation, the speaker of revelation, the author of redemption, and the sovereign of history. (Gen 1:26; 3:22; Is 48:16; Matt. 28:18–19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3–4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Tit 3:4-7; Heb. 1:1–3; Rev. 1:4–6)

~ GOD THE SON - We affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity, eternally begotten from the Father. He is God. He was conceived by the Virgin Mary through a miracle of the Holy Spirit. He lives forever as perfect God and perfect man: two distinct natures inseparably united in one person. (Matt 1:22, 23; John 1:1, 2, 14; Phil 2:6, 7; Col 1:15-20; Rom 5:9; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20)

~ GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT - We affirm that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son and equal in deity. He is the giver of all life, active in the creating and ordering of the universe; He is the agent of inspiration and the new birth; He restrains sin and Satan; and He baptizes simultaneous to salvation, indwells and sanctifies all believers. We affirm that the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to every believer for the edification of the body of Christ and that these gifts are distributed by God's sovereign design. (Mt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:11, 18; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 6:19; 12:13; Eph 1:13; Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 1:2; 1 Cor. 12:1-31)

~ **THE SCRIPTURE** - We affirm that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, though written by men, was supernaturally inspired by God so that all its words are the written true revelation of God; it is therefore inerrant in the originals and authoritative in all matters. It is to be understood by all believers through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, its meaning determined by the historical, grammatical, and literary use of the author's language, comparing Scripture with Scripture. We believe that God's Word has been preserved in many translations throughout the world (Ps 119:160; Jer. 15:16; Ps 19:7-11; Zech 7:12; Mt. 24:35; John 10:35, John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4, 2 Pet 1:20, 21)

~ **CREATION** - We affirm that all things were created by God. Angels were created as ministering agents, though some, under the leadership of Satan, fell from their sinless state to become agents of evil. The universe was created in six literal days and is continuously sustained by God; thus it both reflects His glory and reveals His truth. Human beings were directly created, not evolved, in the very image of God. As reasoning moral agents, they are responsible under God for understanding and governing themselves and the world. (Gen. 1:1; Gen 1:1-31; Gen 2:1-3; 18-25; Ex 20:11; Ps 90:2; 148:1-5; Is 44:12-14; Ezek 28:12-17; Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:8-10; Gen 3:14,15; Gen 3:1-19; Rom 1:20; Eph 3:9; Ps 8:3; 19:1; Heb 1:3; 11:3; Heb 1:14; Rev 7:11-12; Job 1:6-7; Luke 10:18; Col 2:15; Heb 1:6,14)

~ **MAN** - We affirm that man was created in the image of God having personality (ability to think, decide and feel). We affirm that Adam, the first man, willfully disobeyed God, bringing sin and death into the world. As a result, all persons are sinners from conception, which is evidenced in their willful acts of sin; and they are therefore subject to eternal punishment, under the just condemnation of a holy God. (Gen 1:26, 27; Rom 3:10-23; Eph 2:1, 2; 2 Cor. 5:17)

~ **THE WORK OF CHRIST** - We affirm that Jesus Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice by the appointment of the Father. He fulfilled the demands of God by His obedient life, died on the cross in full substitution and payment for the sins of all, was buried, and on the third day He arose physically and bodily from the dead. He ascended into heaven where He now intercedes for all believers. (1 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 15:3-5; Rom. 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1, 2)

~ **SALVATION** - We affirm that each person can be saved only through the work of Jesus Christ by faith alone in Him as Lord and Savior. The believer is declared righteous, born again by the Holy Spirit, forgiven of all sin, and assured of heaven. (John 1:12,13; Acts 16:31; Rom 3:21-25; Eph 1:7, 1 John 2:2; 2 Peter 3:9; Eph 2:1, 2; Rom 5:18; 6:23, 2 Cor. 9:15, Tit 3:3-8; Jn. 6:37-49; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38, 39; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:5)

~ **SANCTIFICATION** - We affirm that the Holy Spirit indwells all who are born again conforming them to the likeness of Jesus Christ. This is a process completed only in Heaven. Every believer is responsible to live in obedience to the Word of God in separation from sin. (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Eph. 4:24; 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 5:23; Phil 2:12; 13; Heb. 10:10, 14; 12:10; Rom 6-8; Gal 5:16-24; Eph 4:21-24; 1 John 3:1-3; Eph 5:26-27; Jude 24-35; Father: John 15:2; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 5:23; Christ: Gal 2:20; Eph 5:26-27; Col. 1:22; Heb 13:12; Heb 2:11; Heb 10:10; Holy Spirit: 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom 8:13; Eph 1:17; Rom 5:5; Gal 5:22-23)

~ **THE CHURCH** - We affirm that the universal church is the body of Christ composed of all born again believers. We affirm that a local church is an assembly of baptized believers, under the discipline of the Word of God and the lordship of Christ, organized to carry out the commission to evangelize, to teach, and to administer the ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Table. It functions through the ministry of gifts given by the Holy Spirit to each believer. (Matt 28:18-20; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 1:2; 11:23-26)

~ **FUTURE THINGS** - We affirm that the return of Christ for all believers is imminent. It will be followed by seven years of great tribulation, and then the coming of Christ to establish His earthly kingdom for a thousand years. The unsaved will then be raised and judged according to their works and separated forever from God in hell. The saved, having been raised, will live forever in heaven in fellowship with God. (Rev 20:1-7; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Tit 2:13, 14; Rev 19:11-21; 20:1-15; Mt. 25:46; Jn. 5:28, 29; 11:25, 26; Rev. 20:5, 6, 12, 13)

~ **WITNESS AND SERVICE** - We affirm the responsibility of each believer, motivated by the love of Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to witness for Christ, that the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to give the Gospel to every creature throughout the world are still incumbent on every believer. We believe in the will, power and providence of God to meet our every need in His service likewise to live sacrificially for the proclamation of the Gospel into the entire world. (Matt 6:33; Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 9:6-8; Phil 4:19)

#6 – **One baptism** – 1 Corinthians 12:13-14 - For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many.

#7 – **One God and Father of all** – Ephesians 1:3-6 explains this well – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to

Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

> (v7-16) UNITED IN THE FAITH!

(v7-10) Where was Jesus after His death and before His resurrection? Jesus went to Sheol (Old Testament term) / hades (New Testament term) this is a realm with two divisions, a place of torment or paradise (Matthew 11:23, 16:18; Luke 10:15, 16:23; Acts 2:27-31), which is the abodes of the saved and the lost before Christ resurrection and ascension.

The abode of the saved was called “paradise”, also known as “Abraham's bosom.” The abodes of the saved and the lost are separated by a “great chasm” (Luke 16:26). When Jesus ascended to heaven, He took the occupants of paradise (believers) with Him (Ephesians 4:8-10).

The lost side of sheol/hades has remained unchanged. All unbelieving dead go there awaiting their final judgment in the future, to be eternally cast to the *Lake of Fire*, Hell. (Jude 7; Rev. 19:20-21; 21:8).

Did Jesus go to sheol/hades? Yes, according to Ephesians 4:8-10, and Acts 2:29-33 - *"Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.*

Remember Jesus told the thief on the cross beside him, Luke 23:43 - *And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

Also, 1 Peter 3:18-21- *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.*

(v11) Christ's calling and gifts:

- APOSTLES – Nelson's Bible Dictionary defines an APOSTLE - A special messenger of Jesus Christ; a person to whom Jesus delegated authority for certain tasks. The word apostle is used of those twelve disciples whom Jesus sent out, two by two, during His ministry in Galilee to expand His own ministry

of preaching and healing. It was on that occasion, evidently, that they were first called "apostles" (Mark 3:14; 6:30).

These same disciples, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, were recommissioned by Jesus after His resurrection to be His witnesses throughout the world (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8). After Jesus' ASCENSION, the apostles brought their number to twelve by choosing Matthias (Acts 1:23-26).

The authority committed to the apostles by Christ was unique. It could not be transmitted to others. The apostles could install elders or other leaders and teachers in the churches, and they could authorize them to assume special responsibilities; but apostolic authority could not be transferred. Their authority has not come to us through their successors; it has come through their writings, which are contained in the New Testament.

- **PROPHETS** – A New Testament prophet is one who proclaims the Word of God (Acts 11:28; Eph. 3:5). Believers in the New Testament churches did not possess Bibles, nor was the New Testament written and completed. His Spirit would share God's truth with those possessing the gift of prophecy. The purpose of prophecy is "*edification, encouragement, and consolation.*" (1 Cor. 14:3)

- **EVANGELISTS** – A person authorized to proclaim the gospel of Christ. Literally, however, the word means, "*one who proclaims good tidings*" (Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5). The evangelist was a gift of God to the early church (Ephesians 4:11). These persons were not attached to any specific local church. They traveled over a wide geographical area, preaching to those to whom the Holy Spirit led them. The early disciples were also called evangelists (Acts 8:26-40; 21:28), because they proclaimed the gospel. All ministers should "*do the work of an evangelist,*" but this does not mean that all ministers are evangelists (2 Timothy 4:5).

- **PASTORS & TEACHERS** – A Pastor is a shepherd, meaning he is the feeds (educates), protects (contends, corrects), and guides (counsels) our Lord's flock through the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation.

- Peter describes New Testament duties of the Pastor/Elder in 1 Peter 5:1-4 - *The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

- Qualifications, instructions, and duties of Pastors are found in the “*Pastoral Epistles*” which are *1st & 2nd Timothy and Titus*. Pastors are teachers making disciples of Jesus Christ through the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation!

(v12-16) For what purpose? SEVEN PURPOSES ARE LISTED:

(1) (v12) To equip the saints; (that is to teach and train)

(2) for the work of the ministry; (in-reach and out-reach)

(3) for the edifying (building up, strengthening) of the body of Christ;

(4) (v13) till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect (means “mature”) man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

(5) (v14) so that believers will not be deceived;

(2 Timothy 2:15 - *Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*)

(6) (v15) we speak the truth in love, that we may grow up into Him, Christ who is the head; (It has well been said that truth without love is brutality, but love without truth is hypocrisy.) Proverbs 27:6 says, “*Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*”

(7) (v16) whereas we the united body functions together causing growth for the edifying of itself in LOVE!