

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **John 17:15-23**.
- B. The restoration movement in this country was an attempt by various men to leave the denominational world that had divided Christendom and to unite all believers in the one church of the NT.
- C. They wished to restore, that is bring back the originality, uniqueness, and unmistakable characteristics of the first century church.
- D. This historical movement is different from the reformation:
 - 1. The reformation, headed up by Martin Luther and John Calvin was to reform the Roman Catholic Church of the 16th century. They had no intention of restoring Christ's original church.
 - 2. The restoration, was begun in America in the late 1700s and early 1800s with men from various denominational backgrounds, decrying the religious division of their day.
- E. Tonight; the 2 favorite passages of the restoration preachers; John 17, and Ephesians 4.

I. SOME THOUGHTS ON UNITY FROM JOHN, CHAPTER 17.

- A. This is Jesus' great prayer for the unity of His followers.
- B. Unity comes from being sanctified in the truth (Jn. 17:15-19).
 - 1. In the world but not of the world (17:16).
"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."
 - 2. Sanctification means... being set apart for God (even unto a purpose).
There is truth found in:
 - a. The Word of God (17:17).
"Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."
 - b. The Son of God (17:19; 14:6).
(Jn 17:19) "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth."
(Jn 14:6) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."
 - c. The Spirit of God (1Jn. 5:7).
And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth.
- C. Unity comes from being in (like) the Godhead three (see 17:20-23):
 - 1. The Trinity has:
 - a. Different functions: God the Creator; Jesus the Christ, and the Spirit the Comforter.
 - b. They are one in purpose: evangelistic, instructive, redemptive, benevolent, etc.
 - c. They are one in character: honest, loving, patient, kind, etc.
 - 2. Xians are to be united in many ways:
 - a. Belong to the same Father.
 - b. Trust the same Savior.
 - c. Believe the same truth.
 - d. Live and love in the same body (church).
 - e. Engaged in the same work: glorifying God (see 17:4).
"I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do."
 - f. Hope for the same heaven.

II. SOME THOUGHTS ON UNITY FROM EPHESIANS, CHAPTER 4.

- A. **The Ground of Unity** (Eph. 4:4-6).

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

- 1. One body.
- 5. One faith.

- 2. One Spirit.
- 3. One hope of your calling.
- 4. One Lord.
- 6. One baptism.
- 7. One God and Father.

B. The Gifts of Unity (Eph. 4:7,11).

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. **11** And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

- 1. Apostles.
- 3. Evangelists.
- 2. Prophets.
- 4. Pastors and teachers.

C. The Growth of Unity (Eph. 4:12-16).

1. Equipment for service (4:12).

...for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

The function of the 4 ministries mentioned in v. 11 is to build up and equip the saints to know how to live right and do their ministries according to the word.

2. Stability and stature (4:13,14).

...until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

Faith, knowledge, maturity, and stature are what happens when the body is united and growing as it should. Maturity will help each part function correctly and ward off intruders and their messages.

3. Truth and love (4:15).

...but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, And the church, when united and functioning correctly, will grow up and become the spirit and image of Christ Himself.

4. Cooperation and edification (4:16).

...from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

If the body grows correctly (each part doing its job) it will maintenance itself.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

A. See Jer. 6:16.

Thus says the LORD, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls."

B. A united Christendom can win the world! One of the great detriments to evangelism is a divided church. The world will know that we are truly Xians when we live and worship in unity.

C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring-Xians.