

“THE POWER OF ONE”**EPHESIANS 4:1-6****PSALM 133:1-2**INTRODUCTION

THAT WORD UNITY IN THE HEBREW IS PRONOUNCED "YAKH'-AD", AND IT DESCRIBES A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO CAN OPERATE AS A UNIT. AND THE IRONY I FIND IN ALL OF THAT, IS THE FACT THAT MAN IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE HIGHEST OF ALL GOD'S CREATIONS. BUT YET WE'RE THE ONES THAT STRUGGLE THE HARDEST TO GET ALONG...

YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME? JUST LOOK AT NATURE. ANTS AINT GOT NO PROBLEM BUILDING A COLONY TOGETHER. BEES AINT GOT NO PROBLEM MAKING HONEY TOGETHER. THE BIRDS DON'T SEEM TO STRUGGLE WITH LIVING IN A NEST TOGETHER. BUT WE AS HUMANS CONTINUE TO FIND WAYS TO DETACH OURSELVES, IN ORDER TO STAY SEGREGATED AND ISOLATED FROM EACH OTHER...

I SUBMIT THAT THE WORSE FORM OF SEGREGATION IN THE WORLD, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT'S NOT RACIAL SEGREGATION. IT'S RELIGIOUS SEGREGATION. WHY, BECAUSE EVERY SUNDAY IN CO-CALLED CHURCHES ACROSS THIS NATION, WE CHOP OURSELVES UP INTO DENOMINATIONS. AND THEN WE FIND REASONS TO JUSTIFY OURSELVES ABOVE THE OTHERS...

- AME AND CME
- UNITED METHODIST AND AME ZION
- MISSIONARY BAPTIST AND FREE WILL BAPTIST
- FREE WILL BAPTIST UP NORTH AND FREE WILL BAPTIST DOWN SOUTH.
- PENTECOSTAL AND HOLINESS

- CHURCH OF GOD AND CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST
- FULL GOSPEL BAPTIST CHURCH FELLOWSHIP
- CHURCH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

WITH LITERALLY 350 DENOMINATIONS IN AMERICA ALONE, THOSE ARE JUST A FEW IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY!

I WILL AGREE THAT THERE ARE SOME LEGITIMATE REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS HAVE SPLIT SO MANY TIMES OVER THE YEARS. BUT THE THING THAT SHOULD BIND EVERY BELIEVER TOGETHER, IN YOUR FAITH IS THE BLOOD, THE BODY, AND THE BOOK...

SEE, OF ALL THE SHIPS THAT SAIL THROUGH THE BODY OF CHRIST, THE ONE SHIP YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS, IS THE ONE CALLED DISCIPLESHIP. ARE YOU HEARING ME? CAUSE YOU SEE, BEFORE YOU CAN ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP AND SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP, ALL THOSE THINGS ARE MADE MORE CLEAR TO YOU, THROUGH THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP...

THAT EXPLAINS WHY WE DON'T GIVE NEW MEMBERS THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP, UNTIL YOU'VE COMPLETED YOUR COURSE OF ORIENTATION. IT'S NOT THAT WE WANNA HAZE YOU OR TAKE YOU THROUGH SOME KIND OF WEIRD INITIATION. WE'RE JUST NOT AUTHORIZED TO OFFER YOU MEMBERSHIP, UNTIL WE ARE CERTAIN ABOUT YOUR DISCIPLESHIP...

JUST SO YOU KNOW I'M NOT MAKING THIS UP, YOU NEED TO KNOW THE BACKGROUND OF THE WORDS OF OUR TEXT. THE APOSTLE PAUL IS THE AUTHOR OF EPHESIANS. AND IN [CHAPTER 1], HE TELLS YOU WHO HE'S WRITING TO. HE SAYS, "PAUL, AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST BY THE WILL OF GOD, TO THE SAINTS WHICH ARE AT EPHESUS, AND TO THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS."

NOW SOME OF YOU MAY BE WONDERING WHAT THE BIG DEAL IS ABOUT WHAT PAUL SAID. BUT WHEN YOU COMPARE THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS TO HIS OTHER

WRITINGS, YOU'LL SEE HOW HE PURPOSELY MAKES A DISTINCTION BETWEEN MEMBERSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP...

[1 CORINTHIANS], “ PAUL, CALLED TO BE AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH THE WILL OF GOD, AND SOSTHENES OUR BROTHER, [2]UNTO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH.” IN [2 CORINTHIANS] HE SAYS THE SAME THING.

[GALATIANS 1:1-2]- “PAUL, AN APOSTLE, (NOT OF MEN, NEITHER BY MAN, BUT BY JESUS CHRIST, AND GOD THE FATHER, WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD;) [2] AND ALL THE BRETHREN WHICH ARE WITH ME, UNTO THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA”:

[1 THESSALONIANS 1:1] “PAUL, AND SILVANUS, AND TIMOTHEUS, UNTO THE CHURCH OF THE THESSALONIANS WHICH IS IN GOD THE FATHER AND IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST”:

WELL, PASTOR, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

THE **DIFFERENCE** IS, WHEN PAUL WROTE TO THE **CORINTHIANS**, HE WAS WRITING TO **PEOPLE IN A BUILDING**. BUT WHEN IT CAME TO THE PEOPLE OF **EPHESUS**, HE WAS SPEAKING TO THE **MEMBERS OF THE BODY...**

IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO HOOK UP WITH A BUILDING. BUT UNLESS YOU BECOME A MEMBER OF THE BODY, THE BUILDING WON'T TO YOU NO GOOD. THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEMBERSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP. CAUSE YOU CAN SWAP BUILDINGS AND GET ON WHOEVER'S ROLL YOU WANNA BE ON THIS YEAR. BUT WHEN I READ WHAT PAUL SAYS ABOUT THE REAL CHURCH, HE REMINDS US THAT THE CHURCH IS A BODY AND NOT A BUILDING...

SO WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE CHURCH IN IT'S TRUE CONTEXT, YOU UNDERSTAND THAT YOU CAN'T HAVE AUTHENTIC MEMBERSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP, WITHOUT FIRST RECEIVING THE TRUTH ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP. JESUS DIDN'T SAY GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND GET NEW

MEMBERS. HE DIDN'T SAY GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND HAVE FELLOWSHIP. HE SAID GO YE THEREFORE AND TEACH ALL NATIONS. AND THE WORD THAT IS USED FOR TEACH IN THE TEXT, IT SUGGESTS THAT WE BE DISCIPLES AND STUDENTS OF THE WORD...

SO WHEN PAUL SPEAKS OF THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, HE'S SPEAKING TO A BODY OF PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND WHO THEY ARE. THIS ISN'T A GATHERING OF INDIVIDUALS WHO GET TO RUN AROUND DOING OUR OWN THING. WE ARE A BODY OF BAPTIZED BELIEVERS IN CHRIST, WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED OUT FROM THE WORLD TO DO THE WORK OF THE LORD...

WHEN I SPEAK OF THE POWER OF ONE, IT REMINDS US OF THE FACT THAT GOD WILL NOT BLESS WHEN THERE'S A SPIRIT OF DISCORD. AT SOME POINT WE HAVE TO BE WILLING TO PUT SELF ASIDE, AND FOCUS ON THE REAL REASON FOR OUR BEING HERE, WHICH IS TO WORSHIP AND SERVE THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD...

WHEN ISRAEL STARTED BICKERING WITH EACH OTHER AND GRIPING AT THEIR LEADER, A JOURNEY THAT SHOULD HAVE TAKEN ABOUT A MONTH, IT ENDED UP TAKING THEM 40 YEARS. YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME DO YOU? IT IS A FACT THAT THE CANAAN LAND WAS ONLY 250 MILES FROM EGYPT. BUT THESE PEOPLE WANDERED IN THE WILDERNESS FOR 40 YEARS, ALL BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T GET ON ONE ACCORD...

BUT THEN YOU LOOK AT THE PEOPLE IN NEHEMIAH'S TIME, THE BIBLE SAYS THAT THEY HAD A MIND TO WORK. SO EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A BIG JOB TRYING TO REBUILD GOD'S HOUSE OF WORSHIP, EACH PERSON HAD THEIR RESPECTIVE PARTS, AND THEY GOT IT DONE WITH TIME TO SPARE...

THAT'S THE POWER OF ONE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. NOBODY EXPECTS YOU TO DO EVERYTHING BY YOURSELF. WE JUST NEED YOU TO DO YOUR PART IN MINISTERING TO THE WHOLE. NOBODY IS ASKING YOU TO GIVE EVERY SECOND OF YOUR DAY TO WORK OF THIS CHURCH. BUT

JUST LIKE IN YOUR FINANCES, IF SOMETHING IS NOT AN ASSET, YOU HAVE TO FILE IT UNDER A LIABILITY...

SO GUESS WHAT? WHEN YOU ARE NOT A TITHER, YOU BECOME A LIABILITY TO THIS CHURCH. WHY, BECAUSE YOU ENJOY THE SAME BENEFITS AS EVERYBODY ELSE, BUT YOU REFUSE TO TAKE ON ANY OF THE RESPONSIBILITY. YOU SIT IN A SEAT, YOU TAKE A PROGRAM THAT'S PRINTED ON PAPER, YOU USE THE RESTROOMS THAT REQUIRES WATER, YOU ENJOY HEATING AND AIR THAT REQUIRES ELECTRICITY, YOU BURN LIGHTS, YOU WEAR OUT CARPET UNDER YOUR FEET. AND WHILE A THOUSAND PEOPLE ENJOY THE BENEFITS, ONLY A FEW HUNDRED ACTUALLY GIVE TO HELP SUSTAIN IT...

PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS MESSAGE IS NOT ABOUT MONEY. BUT YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW STEWARDSHIP IS APART OF YOUR DISCIPLESHIP. AND WHEN PAUL SAYS THAT WE OUGHT TO WALK WORTHY OF OUR VOCATION, IT MEANS THAT YOU SHOULDN'T ACCEPT MEMBERSHIP INTO A PLACE, UNLESS YOU ARE WILLING TO BEAR SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITY...

HE SAYS, WITH ALL LOWLINESS AND MEEKNESS, WITH LONGSUFFERING, FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE. ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT, IN WHAT, THE BOND OF PEACE...

I HEARD A POEM THAT WAS WRITTEN A WHILE BACK, AND I ADDED A LITTLE MORE TO IT. AND I BELIEVE IT CARRIES A LOT OF WEIGHT FOR THOSE OF US WHO ARE PRESENT TODAY. IT SAYS, IF EVERY MEMBER WAS JUST LIKE ME, WHAT KIND OF CHURCH WOULD JACOB CHAPEL BE? AND IF EVERY MEMBER GIVES AN OFFERING LIKE THE ONE I GIVE, WOULD THERE BE ENOUGH FOOD IN THE STOREHOUSE FOR THE LEAST OF THESE TO LIVE?...

OH, WHAT A POWERFUL CHURCH WE WOULD BE, IF EVERYBODY WAS ON ONE ACCORD. CAUSE AS LONG AS WE STAY DIVIDED ON STUFF THAT AINT GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BLOOD AND THE BODY, WE WILL NEVER SEE THE BENEFITS OF THE POWER OF ONE.

THERE ARE (7) UNITIES THAT PAUL OUTLINES FOR US IN THE TEXT, AND THEY ALL SPEAK CLEARLY ABOUT THE POWER OF 1.

- **ONE BODY**
- **ONE SPIRIT**
- **ONE HOPE**
- **ONE LORD**
- **ONE FAITH**
- **ONE BAPTISM**
- **ONE GOD AND FATHER**

WHENEVER YOU SEE PRIDE AND SELFISHNESS RAISE UP IN THE CHURCH, YOU NEEDED TO REMIND YOURSELVES THAT GOD IS ABOVE ALL, AND THROUGH ALL, AND IN US ALL. THAT MEANS MY AGENDA AND YOUR AGENDA ARE OUT THE DOOR. AND WHATEVER PERSONALITY CLASHES WE EXPERIENCING IN WORKING WITH EACH OTHER, WE HAVE TO CHECK THOSE ATTITUDES AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS...

SEE, IF A RINGMASTER CAN MAKE 4 ELEPHANTS WALK WITH THEIR FEET ON EACH OTHER'S SHOULDERS, AND THEN SIT DOWN IN A CHAIR AND CROSS THEIR LEGS, HOW IS THE WORLD CAN WE NOT GET INTELLIGENT HUMAN BEINGS TO WORK ON A PROJECT WITHOUT ARGUING?

I TELL YOU THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CLIQUE AND CHURCH. BECAUSE THE CHURCH DOESN'T HAVE AN AGENDA WORKING ON THE SIDE. PAUL SAYS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY, AND IN ALL THINGS HE HAS PREEMINENT DOMAIN...

YEA, THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A ZOO AND A SHEEPFOLD. CAUSE IN A ZOO, EVERYTHING IN THERE'S GOT TO BE SEPARATED. LIONS AND LAMBS CAN'T BE TOGETHER, CAUSE THE LIONS WILL EAT THEM FOR LUNCH. BEAR AND BIRDS GOT TO BE SEPARATE. MONKEYS

IN ONE CAGE, AND BABOONS IN ANOTHER. CAUSE WHEN YOU DEALING WITH ALL THOSE DIFFERENT SPECIES, THEY INSTINCTIVELY FIND A WAY TO DESTROY EACH OTHER.

BUT IN THE SHEEPFOLD... I SAID IN THE SHEEPFOLD, WE ALL SUPPOSED TO BE THE SAME SPECIES, EVEN IF WE DON'T HAVE THE SAME PERSONALITY. WE GOT SOME MEAN SHEEP, AND SOME NICE SHEEP.

- **MOODY- MEEK AND MILD**
- **HUMBLE- HAUGHTY**
- **AGREEABLE- ARGUMENTATIVE**

BUT IF YOU CALL YOURSELF A SHEEP, THEN THE LORD'S GOT TO BE YOUR SHEPHERD. AND AS LONG AS THE LORD IS YOUR SHEPHERD, WE OUGHTA BE GOING IN THE SAME DIRECTION!

AIN'T NO WAY IN THE WORLD THIS CONGREGATION CAN GO RIGHT, AND A FEW OF YOU ALL STILL GOING LEFT. YOU MUST BE PART OF SOME OTHER GROUP. CAUSE JESUS SAID THE SHEEP RECOGNIZE MY VOICE, AND THE VOICE OF A STRANGER, THEY WILL NOT FOLLOW.

YEA, THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN SEE HURTING PEOPLE, AND WALK AWAY NOT FEELING NOTHING. EVERY SICKNESS, EVERY BURDEN, EVERYTHING YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS GO THROUGH, THE MOMENT YOU'RE MADE AWARE OF IT, THERE'S NO WAY YOU SHOULD NOT FEEL COMPASSION...

PAUL SAYS WHEN ONE HURT, WE ALL HURT.

- **CRY**
- **IN PAIN**
- **REJOICE**
- **CELEBRATE**

AIN'T NOBODY SITTING BACK BEING A HATER. CAUSE THE POWER OF ONE SAYS THAT WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!

- **YEA, YOU'RE NOT JUST A BUILDING, YOU'RE A BODY.**
- **ORGANIZATION- ORGANISM**
- **ASSEMBLY- ARMY**
- **INDIVIDUAL- ENTITY THAT REPRESENTS CHRIST**

***I SUBMIT THAT THE POWER OF THE CHURCH IS NOT IN NUMBERS. BUT RATHER I BELIEVE THAT THE TRUE POWER LIES WITHIN A PEOPLE WHO CAN FUNCTION AS A UNIT.**

ILLUSTRATION

THE STORY IS TOLD OF A MUSICAL COMPETITION, IN WHICH GROUPS FROM ALL OVER THE CITY, WOULD COMPETE FOR A 6 FOOT TROPHY. AND, THERE WERE MANY GROUPS THERE, FROM ALL VARIATIONS OF MUSIC. BUT THE JUDGES FOUND A WAY, TO NARROW IT DOWN TO TWO...

WELL, THE CHURCH CHOIR, WHICH HAD OVER 50 MEMBERS, THEY STUNNED THE CROWD, WITH THEIR FLAWLESS PRESENTATION. THEY HAD FOLDERS, THAT HELD ALL THEIR MUSIC. AND THE SONG THEY SANG, WAS FULL OF POWER, AND IT FILLED UP, THE AUDITORIUM. YES THEY DID. THE CROWD CHEERED, AND THE JUDGES NODDED. AND ALL, THAT WAS LEFT TO DO, WAS LISTEN, TO ONE MORE CHOIR...

I HEARD, THE ANNOUNCER SAY, HE SAID NOW WE'LL HEAR, FROM THE FRANKLIN QUARTET. THERE WERE 4 BROTHERS, FROM THE OLD COUNTRY CHURCH. AND THEY SANG THEIR SONG, WITHOUT MUSIC, AND WITHOUT A DIRECTOR. YES THEY DID.

AND WHEN THEY SANG, AND THE COMPETITION WAS OVER, THE JUDGES ANNOUNCED, THAT THEY'D REACHED

THEIR DECISION. THE ANNOUNCER, WHEN HE OPENED UP THE ENVELOP, HE LOOKED AT THE JUDGES, AND THEY ALL GAVE A BLANK EXPRESSION.

THE WINNERS, BY THE JUDGES DECISION, ARE THE FRANKLIN QUARTET, FROM THE OLD COUNTRY CHURCH. THE CROWD COMPLAINED, AND THEY DEMANDED AN EXPLANATION. AND EVEN THE CHURCH CHOIR, THEY ROLLED THEIR EYES IN DISGUST. YES THEY DID.

I HEARD, ONE OF THE JUDGES SAY, HE SAID I UNDERSTAND, YOU ALL DON'T AGREE WITH OUR DECISION. BUT CAN I TELL YOU, WHY WE CHOSE THE OLD COUNTRY CHOIR.

BECAUSE THAT COUNTRY QUARTET, THEY FELT WHAT THEY WERE SINGING.

THE CHURCH CHOIR, HAD MUSIC IN THEIR FOLDERS. BUT THE QUARTET SINGERS, HAD MUSIC IN THEIR HEARTS. YES THEY DID.

THE CHURCH CHOIR, HAD A DIRECTOR IN FRONT OF THEM. BUT THE QUARTET, HAD A DIRECTOR INSIDE OF THEM.

WHEN THE CHOIR SANG, WE KNEW THEY HAD REHEARSAL. BUT WHEN THE QUARTET SANG, WE KNEW THEY HAD RELIGION. YES MY LORD.

I STOPPED BY HERE, ON MY WAY TO CALVARY, TO LET SOMEBODY KNOW, ABOUT THE POWER OF ONE.

YOUR STRENGTH, IS NOT IN THE NUMBERS. YOUR STRENGTH, IS IN WORKING TOGETHER.

THE LORD, DOESN'T NEED A CROWD. ALL HE NEEDS, IS A WILLING CONGREGATION.

THE CONGREGATION, OF THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD, WE KNOW SOME THINGS, THAT THE CROWD CAN'T UNDERSTAND.

THE CROWD, MAY SEE THE OBSTACLES. BUT THE CONGREGATION, CAN SEE AN OPPORTUNITY.

- **ASK THE QUESTIONS- KNOWS THE ANSWER**
- **SEE THE ROAD- KNOWS THE WAY**
- **SEE A CROSS- WEAR A CROWN**

IT WAS EARLY ONE FRIDAY MORNING, 1 MAN, CARRIED ON THE CROSS.THEY STRETCHED HIM WIDE AND THEY HUNG HIM HIGH.

HE DIED....ONE MAN FOR THE WHOLE WORLD..

BUT EARLY SUNDAY MORNING, HE ROSE WITH ALL POWER IN HIS HANDS.