

Maintaining the Bond of Unity

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[0 : 00] Let's continue our public worship of God by singing in the Scottish Psalter and Psalm 122. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 122, that's on page 416 of the psalm book.

Psalm 122 on page 416. I joyed me into the house of God. Go up, they said to me.

Jerusalem, within thy gates, your feet shall stand here. Jerusalem as a city is compactly built together. And to that place the tribes go up, the tribes of God go wither.

Psalm 122, the whole psalm, to God's praise. I joyed me into the house of God.

Go up, they said to me. Jerusalem, within thy gates, your feet shall stand here.

[1 : 15] Jerusalem as a city is compactly built together.

Jerusalem as a city is compactly built together. Jerusalem as a city is compactly built together. Jerusalem as a city is compactly built together. Jerusalem as a city is marked by the river, your feet shall stand here.

Holy xup dominard, this young man of youth shall stand to me. Jerusalem as a city is broad, so rise up. Jerusalem as a city is famous that God knows. He was there, and they said to me in the woe.

Jerusalem as a city is located here. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[3 : 59] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Let's now join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray.

Amen. We come once more before you this evening, Lord, our heavenly Father, and we ask once more you would put our hearts and our minds in a place that is fit for worship.

We again confess that we come to this place even this evening, even perhaps having spent our morning together in worship. We come again this evening with so many things perhaps clouding our minds, so many things interrupting our thoughts and seeking to interrupt even our worship with you.

There are burdens and responsibilities which perhaps are good and needed, other thoughts which perhaps are not so good, and thoughts which are not needed to be thought at this time or in this place.

[5 : 08] We ask that both these things, that the real burdens and responsibilities that lay heavy perhaps on some shoulders here, but also the thoughts which mean nothing, that you would remove these things away from us.

We would spend just a short time of worship in your presence, knowing that we are here this evening truly in your presence, not because of ourselves, not because of anything to do with a building or of the service itself.

We are in your presence because you are in your presence because you are here with us, because your people are here. As your people worship together, we know that you have made your home in and with us.

This very moment we are worshipping you, knowing that you are hearing our worship, that our prayers are being heard by you, that our worship of our song is being heard by you.

Lord, help us to understand that and help us to conduct ourselves and our minds and our hearts in a way that will glorify you. We do thank you again for this time of worship.

[6 : 12] We confess that we often and so very often take for granted the many privileges you give us. And the privilege we have of worshipping so openly and so freely like this, it is a privilege that we have and we have had for many years now.

For many hundreds of years in our country we have had the ability to worship you so freely and so openly, without fear of punishment, without fear of the state coming and having against us.

But we do pray, Lord, for our dear brothers and sisters just now who have those fears, who have those very real fears of waiting as it were to hear the knock on the door.

Waiting to be removed away to prison cells, for simply daring to worship you in public, for simply daring to publicly proclaim your name. We pray just now for our dear brothers and sisters in parts of this world where the whole nation and the whole state is framed against Christianity, is framed against your good news, is framed and is built up against the gospel.

The government itself declares its hatred for your truth. Lord, we do pray for these dear brothers and sisters who worship you and who seek to serve you and who seek to live their normal lives in that climate.

[7 : 38] We would say, we remember just now especially in the week ahead, our dear brother, Dr. Adam, as he seeks to take some time away from his on-field work and tours the country to give talk and updates and to preach.

And to spend hope with some time relaxing. We pray for him and all the work that he does in his area of influence. We thank you, Lord, for the way you have made him and for the mission field you have given him.

We pray for him and for his family and for all who care for him and all who love him. Lord, that you bless them and bless their current plans and bless their future plans. We know so little of what takes place in his world.

We know so little what takes place, Lord, in his ministry. Of what burdens he has, of what he has seen and what he has done. Of what he has had to endure. We give you praise that you know his story.

That you are with him every step of the way and with his family. And we ask you be with them and you would encourage them and that they would know that we are praying for them. We pray the same for our brothers and sisters who at this moment are awaiting news of trials and who are awaiting news of what their future may look like.

[8 : 51] We remember especially just now our brothers and sisters in China. Those who are in prison cells just now even. For daring to worship you. For daring not to change their great gospel services to fit what the state may want them to say.

Lord, we remember them just now. We ask you be with them and encourage them. Even from their prison cells as they find themselves at times falsely accused of terrible crimes. For simply daring to share the gospel.

You would support them and be with them. We would know that their sufferings are not in vain. Their sufferings are serving to build your kingdom in that place. We ask that we see days of small things here.

As we see, as for us, what looks like to be a decline of church attendance. And a real decline of even basic Christian understanding in our own island and our own nation.

We do ask that you help us to serve you well on this day of small things. Yes, we pray for renewal. Yes, we pray for revival. But we always, Lord, confess and we remind ourselves that these things are from you.

[9 : 55] And the reality is that you have placed us in this day and at this time to serve us, just to serve you in the place you've placed us. Help us, we ask, to give us wisdom to serve you well.

Serve you well on this day of small things. To be faithful keepers of what you have entrusted us with. For though this day may seem dark, and though the prospect of gospel growth seems and feels so small, we give you praise that the glorious treasure of the gospel has lost no value.

The glorious treasure of the gospel which has been entrusted to us, your people. It has the same impact and the same worth it always had through days of revival and days of blessing to today.

The gospel is just as glorious. Our Saviour is just as beautiful. His work is just as complete. His gospel is just as powerful as it ever was.

Help us to understand that and to go forward even this new week. Not seeing the day of small things, but instead seeing every gospel opportunity you give to us.

[11 : 02] We do pray for gospel sharing and gospel giving opportunities. We pray for them in our own families, our own homes, our places of work. Lord, our day to day life in our villages, we ask that you would give us the wisdom.

Give us the wisdom to lay hold on these gospel sharing chances. As we engage in normal conversation. As we seek to engage as neighbours and as friends and as family members.

Help us to have the wisdom to see what it is you are saying to us in each chance, in each opportunity. We bring all things back to our Saviour. Not looking for our own wisdom.

Not looking to our own efforts. But looking to our Saviour. Not looking to save anyone by our own strength. But looking to Him. The one who can save all who come to Him.

Help us to have that sure and certain hope. We worship our risen Saviour. Our risen Saviour who has changed so many hearts of stone to hearts of flesh.

[12 : 04] The evidence before us this evening. As we sit beside brothers and sisters. As we look even to ourselves, our own lives. We see living stones, living evidences.

That we worship our Saviour who transforms lives. Who takes us from darkness to His own marvellous light. Help us to not lose heart in these strange days.

But help us instead as the days perhaps grow darker. To look more and more to the light of our Saviour. Who promises never to leave us nor forsake us. Regardless of what situation we may find ourselves in.

We pray to you, Lord, for the services next Lorde. We pray again for Adam. We also pray, Lord, for Mr. Cullen Campbell in the morning. We thank you for him and for his willingness. We thank you for the few lay preachers on this island, Lord.

The elders and those who aren't elders. But who still give their time to preach and to prepare services. We thank you for them. We ask, Lord, you bless them. We do ask we would see an increase.

[13 : 05] Not just in men called to full-time pastoral ministry. We also ask for an increase, Lord, if it's your will. In men who are willing. Elders and others who are willing to come and to preach.

Even short services around the island. To help the gospel cause in places where there is still such need. We thank you, Lord, for all the work you're doing behind the scenes. Work we will never see or know perhaps for many years.

We do ask once more you would raise up more servants. More servants who will go into pastoral ministry. Across our island. Across our denomination. Across all the denominations that seek to worship you.

In spirit and in truth. Lord, we do ask for our nation as a whole. We ask we would see Scotland once more. Come to know and come to love.

A saviour for our own, Lord. We know that we have come to a land. And we live and serve in a time where we see so little gospel hope. We give you praise.

[14 : 05] Where we see little hope. Where we see little chance. We worship you, the God. The God who is able to take from darkness light. The God who is able to take from no hope. Hope itself.

And the God who is able to transform and change the things and the people we think are lost. Help us to find all our hope and our strength in you this coming week.

Forgive us for our sins. We again confess. And we confess with full knowledge. Just how quickly we seem to fall into sin. Lord, we ask once more you would show us, Lord, the pain of sin.

Show us the horror of sin. And in that, Lord, show us then the beauty of our saviour. The one who has cleansed his people from all their iniquities.

Who has removed from us the full wrath that was due to us. Who bore that wrath on his own shoulders and his own body on the cross. Who became sin for his people.

[15 : 06] In his name and for his sake we ask all these things. Amen. Let's again sing to God's praise. This time from Sing Psalms. Sing Psalms and Psalm 23.

Sing Psalms and Psalm 23. It's on page 28 of the Psalm books. Sing Psalms and Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd.

No want shall I know. He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow. He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. By wandering steps he brings back to his way.

In straight paths of righteousness. Making me stay. And this he has done. His great name to display. Psalm 23. The whole Psalm. To God's praise. The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd.

No one shall I know. He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow.

[16 : 09] He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. My Lord is my shepherd.

He brings back to his way. When the cold waters Nobody needs me.

His life knows. He comes out. He goes to get other residue. Oh Oh Oh

Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Let's now turn to read in God's word Ephesians chapter 4 Ephesians chapter 4 It's on page 918 of the pew Bibles Ephesians 4 Let's hear again the word of God I therefore a prisoner for the Lord urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called with all humility and gentleness with patience bearing with one another in love eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace that 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 but grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift therefore it says when he ascended on high he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men in saying he ascended what does it mean that he also descended into the lower regions the earth he who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens that he might fill all things and he gave the apostles the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son 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 through by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine by human cunning by craftiness and deceitful schemes rather speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint which is equipped when each part is working properly makes the body grow so it builds itself up in love in love now this I say and testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds they are darkened in their understanding alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart they've become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality greedy to practice every kind of impurity but that is not the way you learned Christ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him as the truth is in Jesus to put off your old self which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds and to put on the new self created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness therefore having put away falsehood let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour for we are members one of another be angry and do not sin do not let the sun go down in your anger

and give no opportunity to the devil let the thief no longer steal but rather let him labour doing honest work of his hands so that he may have something to share with anyone in need let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths but only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion but it may give grace to those who hear and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed through the day of redemption let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you along with all malice be kind to one another tender-hearted forgiving one another as God and Christ forgave you Amen we give praise to God once more for his holy and his perfect word let's again sing to God's glory this time the Scottish Psalter and Psalm 98 the Scottish Psalter Psalm 98 verse 1 we'll sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he have done his right hand and his holy arm whom victory have won the Lord God his salvation have caused to be known his justice in the heathen sight he openly have shown

[23 : 16] Psalm 98 verses 1 to 8 to God's praise oh sing a new song to the Lord for wonder he has come for wonder he has come his right hand and his holy hour in victory have won his holy hour in victory have won the Lord God his salvation salvation have caused to be known his salvation his salvation

Oh Oh Oh

Oh Oh

Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Ephesians chapter 4 Ephesians 4 Looking at the section we have from verses 1 down to verse 16 For our time this evening We have to take a text we could take verse 4 but again the whole section we're taking verse 4 We're speaking verse 4 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 and so on Again taking in verses 1 down to verse 16 and then touching on a few verses after that also We're here tonight dealing with unity

Before we start this Just to be clear and it's important I think to say when you come to texts like this This is not in relation to anything that's going on as we're behind the scenes In fact it's quite the opposite Because we're taking a break from the other study we're doing Because this is a one-off sermon Because there's one-off time to choose a text This is almost the perfect time to talk about unity Because the best time to talk about it is when it's ongoing One of the worst times to preach about it arguably Is when unity starts to break off It's by that point You're almost too late So this is a good chance for us to remind ourselves To praise the Lord And to remind ourselves what it is we have just now And to define perhaps very briefly To define what our unity looks like Why it's so important that we keep unity going forward And why it matters so much

[29 : 08] Not just to us here locally But to the wider church on the island And even across the nation We're here looking I've said in Ephesians 4 And we've touched on various parts of Ephesians Even our short time together So far But here Paul is reminding Again this reasonably young church That there's many causes for fracturing Many reasons to fracture perhaps There's many temptations to fracture Many avenues for the devil to get a foothold And against all of that Paul reminds this young church As to the necessity The necessity of unity And Christian unity is something that Not just the Ephesians Needed reminding of again and again Not just the early church But of course as we all know To our own shame perhaps And to our own detriment And to us in terms of the church In our own island In our own nation

The church historically We have seen the fallout Again and again and again Personally On a congregational level On a denominational level On a national level The reality The damage That this unity does To the cause of Christ In our land We need to be reminded As to the importance of unity Just as much as these Ephesian Christians did Of these 2,000 odd years ago Nothing has changed Nothing has changed In our own personal interactions With each other as brothers and sisters If we're being honest How often do we fail If not publicly then privately To have that sense of unity How often do we fail to show each other The level of love that Paul requires And the Lord requires through Paul Of us even In these verses

And as we read and as we'll see later on As we know ourselves That Satan is Speaking carefully Speaking carefully Satan is More than happy More than happy To make full use Of our own Leaning towards disunity He will take What we've already started And make full use of it Again we've seen that We know that Our disunity Is often used as Such a destructive force In a congregation Across the island Across the denomination at times I'm sure we've all heard it We've all heard it We have heard it I can guarantee we've all heard it For our perhaps Non-Christian friends Family members If you all worship the one God Then why on earth Do you have so many churches And so many denominations And so on and so on And we can give a historical answer We can give a theological answer But the reality is It does do And it has done

And it will do Such damage to the gospel cause When disunity Takes place And is seen In our hearts And in our practice Now again This is not the time Nor the place Nor should it be To discuss The validity perhaps Or lack of Maybe some would argue For various splits And factors of the church Over the years That is not the time And this is not the place Not the place What we are saying Is that quite clearly In scripture Unity is of central importance To our saviour We actually talked about it this morning John 17 Again if you time Read that chapter again At home this evening A beautiful chapter But John 17 What is the theme Again And again And again It's the importance The imperative even Of unity Being the central Function Of what Christians are Unity with one another And unity With one another In and with Christ The same verse

We read this morning I'll read again briefly John 17 Verse 23 Jesus speaking Of course I in them And you in me So that They may be brought To complete Unity What takes place When Christians Live and serve In unity But Jesus carries on Then the world Will know And the then There is connected To us living And serving united Then the world Will know That you sent me And have loved me Even I love them Sorry Even as you loved me Then the world Will know That you sent me As we live Lives of unity As Christians Individually Across even our village Together Our brothers And sisters Next door As we seek To live a united life As best we Humanly can We show a witness To the world To our families To our friends That Jesus is real And he truly did come Then the world Will know That you sent me

[34 : 13] And have loved them Even As you loved me As we discuss unity We're We're not saying And we must never say That there is Never a place For disunity We must never Of course Compromise the gospel And there are times And in history We could argue There have been times Where disunity Where splits Have had to happen For clear Gospel reasons But when the issue Is that That high A level Of disunity Then the split Of disunity On a personal level On a congregational level It must always Still be done As we see In this chapter Must always Still be done In a brotherly Gentle Caring Caring If possible Loving Way Whether that's An individual Leaving a congregation Or a congregation Leaving a denomination Or However wide

And however big The disunity Must be But being honest I can come back To our verses here More often than not More often than not In our own lives As Christians Disunity Amongst brothers And sisters Comes down To one thing Doesn't it Pride Usually it's pride So as we look at Just very briefly Our verses here We can look just under Three very broad headings Very very broad Verses one Down to verse six Roughly We can see We must be united In the basics United In the basics Then verses seven To verse twelve Again very broadly We see unity In diversity Unity In diversity And then Finishing off Verses first Verse thirteen Down to verse sixteen Unity To maturity Unity To maturity First of all

Verses one To verse six Unity In the basics Using the word basics Here Very loosely There's nothing basic Of course Of what it is To be a Christian But by basics We mean quite clearly That we must be united In the building blocks Of what we are As Christians We'll see that later on In our second point There's space In the peripheries To be a bit Different in our thoughts And different in our opinions But when it comes down to it The very building blocks The very basics Of what we are as Christians We have to be united We have to be united In that Verse one I therefore A prisoner For the Lord Urge you And the you There is plural In fact all the you's In these verses It's plural I urge you all I urge you all I urge you all To walk in a manner Worthy of the calling To which you all Have been called The basics Walk in a manner Worthy of your calling

The calling of the Ephesian Christians As Paul wrote to them Is the same calling That we have This evening The calling is a great calling It's an immense calling We just like our Ephesian Brothers and sisters Of that time We're called to be ambassadors Aren't we?

Called to be ambassadors Witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ Because Paul was willing To be an ambassador To be a witness For the Lord He is writing to them Quite literally we see here As a prisoner of the Lord Paul is in chains Writing this letter Paul is in prison Writing this letter Because Paul was willing To follow the call No matter where it took him Mentally we see that Spiritually we see that Physically we see that Whatever it took Paul followed his call The call of serving the Lord The call of being a witness An ambassador to his saviour Regardless of what it meant For him personally And because he followed That call At the very cost Of personal liberty The very cost Of mental At times Spiritual it seems Pain for poor Paul He still

[38 : 40] Served his Lord He stuck to the basics Of what his calling Was to be And what it was to do To serve the Lord To be a witness For the Lord And we see more Of these basics In verses 2 Down to verse 6 Roughly We see more Of the basics What it is To serve As a Christian In unity together To serve together As brothers and sisters In unity Humility Humility Paul calls them Or reminds them To serve With all Humility All humility As we said As we said before And I could well be wrong But I'm willing to Put my neck on the line here And say that Almost all Disunity That is not biblical Disunity That is based on Something other than Clear gospel truth It comes from

From pride It comes from Lack of humility I am right I am right And I will show you How right I am I don't care if I burn down My own life My own congregation My own denomination Etc etc etc I will show How right I am And it's happened We know it's happened We know it happens Humility Or lack of Is the greatest cause And Satan Of course we know His own Tendency All his tendencies Are towards sin But pride And we'll cover this God willing After my time away But pride Pride features At the very base Of who Satan is At the very core Of his fall Was pride And he loves pride He will happily Use pride He is good At using pride There are many issues Speaking of ourselves There are many issues Here in this building I'm sure We could discuss Through a list Of a hundred

Topics A hundred Christian beliefs And ideas A hundred things And we'd have I'm sure A good range Of opinions On one Or many Of these issues Quite happily I'm sure We'd discuss And have different views On different ideas And different answers To the different questions We would not all be One singular answer To the hundred Or so questions We could ask But As we see ourselves We're united In the basics Humility Humility But when discussions Arise When differences Arise In the congregation When the temperatures Begin to rise We could say When the words Begin to become A bit more harsh A bit more pointed When we perhaps Find ourselves Wanting to argue Our point More and more It's that point We must remember

Our own calling To be humble As Paul reminds The Ephesians To remember That it takes Real humility When you address That brother Or that sister Who you think Is so wrong In how they are Doing Or thinking Who you think Is so Different In how you Would understand The scriptural Command Or whatever it might be It takes real humility To stop yourself And think I am addressing Someone Who is a blood Bought brother A blood Bought sister Of the Lord Who deserves Not just my time But who deserves My love And my respect Because they are Loved and respected And held By the Lord God himself Therefore I will be humble enough To listen to their opinions Take it on board And to think about it If in our conduct If in our conduct We are not dealing With each other In humility We are not esteeming One another As it were More than ourselves Disunity begins To get

A grip Pretty quickly We are always In deep trouble When we find ourselves Not seeing Those around us As brothers and sisters Truly as brothers And sisters We must be willing To be humble That humility It costs us It costs us Doesn't it It costs us Sometimes Our own Desire to be right Our desire To be heard Immediately Our desire To have a point But across It means we have to Sometimes As we should As reminded in scripture To value Our brothers and sisters As more than ourselves As more than ourselves To esteem them More than ourselves As we all do that together Then we end up With a situation Where there is Robust discussion And good discussion And good variety Of discussion Where humility Still reigns Called to be humble

[43 : 41] Also called In our basics To be gentle To deal with each other In humility And gentleness This is tied in With humility Extremely closely As we recognise That we are dealing And addressing Brothers and sisters In the Lord As we find Situations arising We have to Be different Or have a different opinion Or a different situation With our brothers And sisters We begin to discuss Our differences Our different thoughts Of how something Should be done Or said Or whatever The situation May well be And it's hard Because there's no Situation in mind Just now Because with the Lord's Name to be glorified Alone We are united As a congregation Again this is no There's no examples here I'm just speaking generally To apply this to ourselves Just now In the future We can apply it Should the need arise Gentleness We should deal With each other Gently Unlike so many Places in the world Unlike so many Workplaces Perhaps in the world

In the church It should never be The loudest voice That wins the argument It should never be The loudest voice That wins the day As we discuss One another We must do so Gently In all Gentleness With all humility And that all Applies to both With all humility And all Gentleness Now to be gentle Doesn't mean That we're Pushovers It doesn't mean That we're weak It doesn't mean That we just give up Our opinions At the slightest Bit of pushback No That's not gentle That's weakness But it does mean That we deal With one another As those Whom the Lord Has set His love On Those the Lord Has set His seal On One who Are not deserving Of our own wrath But are deserving Of our love Because the Lord Has first loved That dear

Driver That dear sister We're talking with We must be Humble In our unity And gentle As we address Brothers and sisters As Paul puts it With patience With patience Bearing with one another In love Bearing with one another In love To put it Plainly perhaps As Christians We must at times We must be willing To simply put up With one another We are after all A family I'm the only child I'm the only child But Emma has a family Of nine siblings And I have many friends In school Who had massive families One friend in school Who had eight siblings And one another Had ten siblings And I'm thinking I saw the reality That at times It takes the reality As a family unit To work well Just have to put up

With everyone else Around about you You must bear With each other In patience And bear with them In love Bear with them In love I love that the Lord Includes that In this list Again Scripture is realistic The Lord never Calls us Or instructs us To act in a way That is not necessary For us to do We are a family Of flawed people Brothers and sisters Yes United in the Lord Yes But we all still Have our quirks Not just talking About sin here All have our own Personality quirks And differences We do things different We say things different We see the world different We're brought up different And because of that There are times As Paul reminds The Ephesians We must be ready To bear With one another In love We must Show that Loving patience With brothers and sisters In doing so

We're eager Verse 3 Eager To maintain The unity of the spirit And the bond of peace
We're not just We're called to be We're called to be People To be a Brother and sister
Situation To be a family unit That are eager Not just willing We're eager To maintain Our
unity Eager As we see As we see situations Arise We must be ready To deal with
situations And to seek peace At all costs Again and again Seek unity Seek peace Seek
unity Seek peace And it's difficult Isn't it Especially that person We're dealing with Just
seems to be So wrong In what we're saying Then we're reminded Then Humility
Gentleness Peace Humility Gentleness Peace And if all else fails Bear with me In love
Bear with me

[48 : 49] In love We're not going to Caveat here too much But the caveat is We're not saying If
someone is sinning Against you Then you just take it No If someone is sinning Against
you You deal with that Biblically And there's Disciplined processes And that is dealt with In
a different way We're not talking about Sin here We're talking about Just disagreements
And fallings out And lack of unity Up to the point Of someone sinning Against you Up to
that point Gentleness Humility And bearing with them In love We're called To be one
together One Church One spirit And we see that Here for us Verses Four words One body
And one spirit One Lord One faith One baptism One God And Father of all Who is over all
And through all And in all Despite

Our fallings out Perhaps Despite our differences We are called And we're reminded here
As the Lord Works through this letter That Paul wrote to Ephesians We're called To a
reminder That in the basics Of the faith We're united We have differences On this opinion
And that opinion We would do this thing Different Or that thing Different But ultimately We
love Our one saviour Who has bought us With his one And for all Final sacrifice We love
him In the same way As our brothers and sisters And he calls us And he calls us
Individually But also together His own precious people One saviour One faith One baptism
And one hope One eternal hope That we'll spend our lives And lead our eternal lives
Together In unity In perfect unity Forever One faith One church

One baptism So united In the basics Then briefly Unity In diversity Verses 7 Down to
verse 12 See being united Doesn't mean Of course That we're clones The Lord has made
us all Very Very differently Each one of us here As As we know ourselves Different
personalities If I was to give One opinion Just now For example On something Some
secondary issue My view on X, Y, or Z Guarantee it There'll be about 10 different opinions
And I pushed you hard enough Pushed you hard enough 10 different opinions 12 different
opinions 20 different opinions Perhaps here tonight On how we should do That one thing
Or tackle that one issue Or work around That one situation The Lord has made us united
In our faith Yes One spirit One saviour One hope One faith But we're different people
Different personalities

Unity In Diversity Diversity Diversity Is not a bad Thing In fact It's part of course Of the
plan of God And we see that And Paul touches that Just briefly In this section here In
verse 16 Where Paul reminds us That we're We're part of a body Of course He touches us
More deeply In our sections of scripture But he does touch it Very very briefly here The
reminder We're all part Of a body Different parts Of one body Some of us Are a foot
Others of us Are a head Or a hand Or We all have different skills And different ideas And
different personalities The Lord has planned it To be that way And planned it perfectly To
be that way God has planned The diversity Of the church Of each member

Of the body of Christ Working together And working And making full use Of their callings And their giftings To serve The Lord In the ways He's called us To serve him We're all united Of course In the gift of grace We've been given In verse 7 The grace was given To each one of us According to the measure Of Christ's gift But when it says We see this We're going down to verse 11 As Paul At this time Of church history He lists off The various roles That the church has The apostles The prophets The evangelists The shepherds The teachers And so on And so on This is not the time To talk about The exact roles And we could say Of course The role of Apostle Has certainly ended With the time Of the first century Church ending And with the apostles When the last apostle Passed away The time the apostles

[53 : 53] Ended But That's not for Just any discussion But this list here Of apostles And prophets And teachers It's Paul just reminding The Ephesians That every person Is called to serve With the gifts The talents And the personality God has given you You cannot serve God In a way Because it's What you think You should be doing You serve him In a way he has made you And built you And designed you To serve him Each of us Are called to serve That much is clear But not all of us Are called to serve In the same way All called to serve In different roles And although different In structure All of course Are just as valuable I know this is not I hope it's not A problem with ourselves Here but If it is Let's say once more Is The role of a minister

More valuable In the kingdom of God Than the role of A Sunday school teacher If you say yes Then I think we've got A few more sermons To have to look at In this series Because it's not Is it Is it more valuable Is it different Yes Is it very different At times Yes Is the calling Different At times Yes Is the value Different Is the old Sister at home On her own Who can't get out Much But who prays For the gospel Cause In this area is she less valuable than the active Christian member who does all the work he can do in the area?

Of course not. Different calling, different ability, different role but the same eternal worth and value in the gifting, the calling the Lord has given that person.

The person who perhaps has no named role in church but who worships the Lord faithfully week after week. You come and you go and you worship and you love the Lord's people and in your own work you seek to be a great witness to the Lord.

Yes you fail but you keep trying to be a good witness to the Lord in your place of work. Are you somehow less valuable than the person who has so much time to kill and reading scripture and doing work around the village for the Lord's cause?

[56 : 19] Different roles, different structures, just as valuable. Just as valuable. God has called certain people to fulfil certain roles.

And again, there's different tasks, there's different jobs. Some are gifted at evangelism. Some are called to be pastors and teachers to teach and to shepherd the flock of God and so on and so on.

Some are called with incredible academic ability and they help teach the rest of us the deep things of theology, the deep things of the Lord. Different roles, different purposes for those roles, but not a different value.

Not a different value. We're called to serve. United in our one goal. Also united in our diversity.

Made the way God has made us. The personality, with the interests, with the abilities. At times, even with the quirks we have as people, God can use all these things for his glory to unite his people together.

[57 : 36] As we all seek to serve the Lord with our diverse skills, our diverse callings, we see it all leads to one unified purpose.

Why are we called to be united together as we seek to serve the Lord in this place? Verses 15 and verse 16. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ.

From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it's equipped, when each part is working properly, each part is working properly, makes the body grow, so that it builds itself up in love.

Apart from our public witness, apart from our public calling to be a united front into the world, why or what is the reason the Lord gives through these verses of why it's so essential for us to be united.

The Lord has made it in his wisdom. It's beautiful, really. Beautiful, really. The Lord has made it. So when we seek to work you together as one body, that is the only way we actually work.

[58 : 59] That's the only way we actually work, truly work. The end of verse 16. When each part is working properly, it makes the body grow, so it builds itself up in love.

How do we as a church seek to grow? In the word, of course. In the preaching, of course. But how do we see in these verses can we grow as a people?

We grow as a people by seeking to serve one another in love, by treating one another in humility, by treating one another in gentleness, by seeing one another as those who have been the blood-bought brother and blood-bought sister in the Lord, as we seek to unite ourselves together, as we seek to kill, to identify and to kill, if possible, any starting of disunity personally with brother and brother and sister to brother, here in the case of B, but also as a congregation to seek out and to kill any chance of disunity.

As we seek to live and serve and love one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord, working together as this one body with various talents and gifts and seeking to uplift one another and seeking then also to use the gifts we have in different ways.

As we do all that, seeking his glory, seeking our own family situation, our own family feeling, the Lord blesses that work.

[60 : 36] The Lord will cause us as a people, as a congregation, to grow together up in love. There's no ten-step scheme to doing it.

There's no great trick to make a congregation work well together. How does a congregation work well together? We do it by focusing our minds on our Saviour, by focusing on Him, on who He is, on what He means to us, what He calls us to do, what He calls us to be, and our love for Him.

As we said this morning, as we find ourselves hopefully focused more and more on who He is, what He has done, what He is doing, what He promises to do, as we have more of Him and less of us in our minds and our practice as Christians, there's less space, we could say, for the devil to get a foot to hold.

There's less space for disunity to creep in. If we do find ourselves for whatever reason feeling a lack of harmony, either with brothers and sisters or with perhaps a wider congregation, it is our own personal imperative as Christians, our own personal duty as Christians, to work through this section here to see are we dealing in humility, in gentleness, in patience.

Again, we said never allow yourself to be sinned against. We're not saying that. I must be clear here. Never allow yourself to be sinned against. If you feel someone is sinning against you, deal with that. Bring it up to the elders, bring it up to myself.

[62 : 16] We work through that. That's a whole different sermon. Up to the point of sin, if you're seeing or sensing some sort of disunity between yourself and someone else in the church here, in the family here, it is your job and my job as Christians, as brothers and sisters, to seek to work through that with humility, with gentleness, with patience, with love, seeking the Lord to be glorified.

As we all individually and together seek the Lord to be glorified in our unity, he will bless that. He will bless our work in this place and bless our witness in this place.

We pray as he blesses our work and our witness, we would see days of refreshing and days of renewal. Less of us, less of us and more of him.

It's the goal of John the Baptist. It's our goal too as Christians. Less of us, always less of us, always more of him. Again, we praise the Lord for unity.

Let's never take for granted the unity that we have. Let's not take for granted. We praise the Lord for that. It's a gift that comes from him. It's good to have a look at these things just now whilst the days are good.

[63 : 33] Because dark days may well come, hard days may well come, but right now let's praise the Lord and let's seek to keep on going, acting in love and humility of one another, putting our Saviour first, one faith, one church, one baptism and our one goal of seeing this place know Jesus.

On seeing our friends and our family members and our neighbours and every home around us come to know Jesus and come to love him, come to serve him for themselves.

If that goal itself doesn't help us to put into perspective whatever issues might arise in our hearts against brothers and sisters, then it should. His goals first.

The goal of the gospel being known and loved and spread in this place first. Working of one another in love, humility, forbearance and patience.

It's about our heads and a word of prayer. Lord, we ask you would make your word as it were real to us this evening. We thank you, Lord, for the gift of your word and we thank you for the challenge of your word.

[64 : 41] We know that there are so many passages in your word which challenge us perhaps, which call us to look at our own lives from a different angle, which call us to review where it is we stand before you and to review what it is we do.

And we do, Lord, thank you once more in prayer for the gift we have of unity within our own congregation, within our own church family here. We ask that gift would continue for many years to come.

We ask, Lord, you would keep away the evil one and his attempts of sowing perhaps disharmony and disunity within our bounds here. We pray also, Lord, for unity for our brothers and sisters next door.

We pray for them just now especially in their time of vacancy. We ask that in a time of vacancy that you keep them united so that they would with one united front seek to serve you in their own capacity in this place.

Lord, you forgive anything I have said that was not in accordance to your word. I give you praise, Lord, that the power is in your word and not in the jar of clay, Lord, who stands here. Help us to seek you first in all we think and say and do and to see your glory and to see your majesty being known and seen in this place as our priority and nothing of ourselves.

[65 : 59] Let's call these things in and through and for Jesus' precious name's sake. Amen. Let's bring our time of worship to a conclusion.

Singing to God's praise from Psalm 133, that glorious psalm, Scottish Psalter, Psalm 133, that psalm which we all know speaks so beautifully to Christian unity.

Scottish Psalter, Psalm 133, Psalm 133, Behold, how good a thing it is and how becoming well together such as brethren are in unity to dwell, like precious ointment on the head that down the beard did flow, even Aaron's beard and to the skirt stood off his garments go.

Psalm 133, sing together. Psalm 133, And I become in well To get the sun Now spread the night In unity to hell The precious honey That hold the air That the earth of the earth Did fall

In unity brought fear And through the scars Did all this silence go As there was truth The truth of God On the side of heaven Is there forever The blessing of God Command Thy blood Shall bear At the end In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

[68 : 56] And the love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit For you now and forevermore Amen