

“ONE at Last”

Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 13:8-12; Romans 14:1-12

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- Personal experience with broken relationships
- Christ’s prayer for the unity of his body, the church
 - John 17:20-23-- *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for all who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”*
- Review of the purposes for the Judgment Seat of Christ
 - 2 Corinthians 5:10 -- *“we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body, whether good or bad!”*
 - **NO Condemnation**
 - **Clarification**
 - 1 Corinthians 4:5b-- *“bring to light what is hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsel of the hearts.”*
 - **Commendation**
 - Hebrews 6:10-- *“For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister.”*
 - Mark 9:41 -- *“whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”*

“ONE at Last”-- Conciliation

A. ONE, at Last, in PERSONAL CONFLICTS

- Quote from Theodore Epp-- *“At the judgment seat, difficulties and inequalities among believers will be ironed out. We have so many of these in our present day. All the injustices and misunderstanding among of God’s people among themselves will be settled. Those of the saints who are humble and who endured meekly and unresistingly accusations and malicious gossip for Christ’s sake, even from fellow believers will be manifested in their true light. They will then be vindicated in the eyes of all, and cleared of false charges. We must not overlook the fact that those who in their pride have done and said wrong things, unless they have confessed these things to God and renounced them, will face the consequences of such conduct at the judgment seat of Christ.”*

B. ONE, at Last, in DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES

1. **The Church has never been unified doctrinally.**
2. **Doctrinal Unity is an ongoing PROCESS.**
 - Ephesians 4:11-12-- *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelist, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”*

3. Doctrinal Unity occurs when “perfection comes”

- 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 -- *“Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”*
- a. Right now, we have partial knowledge. 1 Corinthians 13:9, 12
- b. When “perfection” comes we will have complete knowledge
- c. The identity of “perfection”
 - 1) Some believe it refers to the completion of the canon of Scripture
 - 2) Others hold that the coming “perfection” refers to the coming of Jesus Christ

C. ONE, at Last, in DISPUTABLE MATTERS.

- Romans 14:1-12-- *“Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: ‘As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”*

1. Body of Christ is splintered today over non-essentials.

2. We are to ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER WITHOUT PASSING JUDGMENT ON THE DISPUTABLE MATTERS!

- a. In Paul’s day, the disputable matters involved DIET and DAYS.
- b. Who is right in these disputable matters? BOTH
 - 1) Both are accepted by God.
 - 2) Both are accountable to God.
 - Romans 14:4-- *“Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.”*
 - Romans 14:10 -- *“But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

D. ONE, NOW?? How??

1. Seek to be reconciled to estranged brothers and sisters in Christ NOW!

- Matthew 18:15-- *“If a brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.”*
- Romans 12:18-- *“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”*

2. Accept those who differ in the non-essentials, and love them as brothers and sisters in Christ.