

**Infants, Tossed About?
Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Let us put aside the differences that separate us; Christ wants us to be united. If I believe that God has given me the gift of being able to find love in the arms of more than one woman, who are you people to tell me it is wrong? God has given me this gift, I know it in my heart.

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” We must have unity at all costs, the differences between us are not great enough that they should cause us to go separate ways. So what if I believe God was feminine, and you don’t. Don’t you believe that God is big enough to embrace both our understandings of God?”

Let me ask you a few questions, my beloved brothers and sister in Christ. Do you think it is acceptable to God to believe that Father and Son were actually mother and daughter? Are we allowed to change who God has revealed Himself to us as? Is it acceptable to say that in 2018 we are wiser than God, and we now know that sexual relationships outside of the marriage bed are acceptable? Is it acceptable to teach that there is no resurrection of the body? Can we deny the miracles in the Bible as just myths? Is it appropriate to teach that Mary was actually pregnant with Jesus because a Roman soldier raped her?

Which of those things do you want your children to be taught? How much is too much false teaching?

Someone who believes such things comes to you and says, “Ephesians teaches us, Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Let us have peace between us, let us come to the altar together, what we have in common is more important than what separates us. We all believe in the same Jesus, no matter what denomination we belong to, nor how differently we believe. As long as our children go to church, as long as it is a Christian church, that is just fine. We are all OK.”

Sorry, I would rather have my children go nowhere for church than to go to a church where the things that they are taught are C-R-A-P!

Unfortunately though, “why can’t we just all get along” is the common theme of many who claim to be a part of Christ’s church today. And, of course, it is the rallying cry for almost all of those outside of Christendom today. We are to all “COEXIST,” for many want to believe that all paths lead to god.

You might be thinking to yourself, “Well, Pastor, that’s what the text says.” Yes, it does. But to stop with only that small portion of one verse is to miss the entire counsel of God. We must take that portion of that verse and listen to it in context. And, that verse of our text continues:

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 He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors, and some as teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 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 fullness of Christ.

There is only one faith, and we are all to reach unity in that one faith. It is for this reason that God gave us

the many workers in His church who bring to us God's Word, that you might hear that Word and be built up into that one faith. We are to grow in our knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Are you mature? Paul continues explaining what that means:

As a result, we are no longer to be infants, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

So, are you mature? Or are you infants, tossed about by the waves, carried about by every slight breeze of some new teaching, led astray by the crafty and deceitful scheming, the trickery of men?

There are many winds of false teaching. In fact, the winds are blowing very strong in these days. And, there are many infants in the church, tossed about every wave and wind that comes along. False teachings, things taught against in Scripture, often taught against by Christ's own tongue, and fought against by the church for many centuries, are now being brought back and touted as new teachings. Dear friends, there are even works of fiction being brought into the church, and treated as if they were truth. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

For many years, a very common religion has ruled the hearts and minds of many Christians, a religion that tries to pass itself off as science, but it is still an unproven theory - the theory of evolution. I am not talking about the micro-adaptations that take place within individual species as they adapt to changes in environment. I am speaking of the change where different species evolved from different species.

It takes quite a bit of faith to look at your body, see all the complexities in it, and think that it was **NOT** created by design, on purpose, by God. You can look at your shoes and know they did not just "come about by a chance, random, process of evolution," they were created by a mind, designed that way on purpose.

Thankfully today, there are more and more scientists, many of them not even Christian, who are claiming that the earth is very young, probably only ten thousand years old.

Did God create in six 24-hour days? There are winds of teaching that say, "No." Some will say that God might have done it, but He used millions or billions of years.

Interestingly, there was a debate long ago, even before Darwin came on the scene, about how long God took to create everything. Back then, there were those who tried to teach that God did not take six 24-hour days. They claimed that God did not need that long. Those false teachers said that He did it all in a few moments.

Of course, maybe you see the obscure teachings out there, the "on the fringe" teachings and know they are blatantly and obviously false. You stand firm in the face of them. You may not believe God is a woman, or that Jesus was in love with John, or married to Mary Magdalene, or that Jesus did not truly rise from the dead.

But there are teachings out there that are being tolerated in churches which claim to be in the name of Christ that are more in keeping with the culture, as these congregations and even church bodies are tossed about by changing winds of doctrine. In an effort to get along in the world, they go along with the world.

As Paul warned, there are many people who want to have their ears tickled, so they demand teachers to tell them what their itching ears want to hear – or they will leave the church. And so, some pastors and church bodies do just that – in hopes to keep their churches full. (2 Tim. 4:1-6)

How about you, are you tossed about by every wind of doctrine? How about your belief in regard to salvation? Do you believe that you must do your part? Maybe you deny that your sinfulness is as bad as it really is, and that you're OK in God's eyes.

Here is where Paul informs us that the truth needs to be spoken to us in love, so that we will, in all things, grow up into Him who is the Head, Christ. You were called by God - to be one in faith. That's right, there is only one faith. Faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Faith that says, "Nothing of my own I bring, simply to the cross I cling."

All I can bring to the oneness of unity is my sinfulness. It is in love that the truth of God's Word points out my sin and drives me to my knees in repentance. There I confess my sins, the fact that I have been tossed about and led astray. I have sinned, it is by my own sin, my own most grievous sin. You and I find ourselves in the same straights, our sinfulness overwhelms us. We'd like to wiggle free of them. We'd like to deny our unbelief in which we followed a particular false teaching that was appealing to us. We'd like to deny our unbelief when we tried to claim that our sins were not sins.

Now comes the time we can speak of the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. We have One Lord, our charter of salvation - Jesus Christ who came from heaven to purchase forgiveness for us in His own flesh. He personally came and sought us, He made each of us a new creation through water and the word. It was with His own blood that He bought us all, joining us together into one body, His church. It was for this, for the life of His church that He died - for you, for me, that we might be one.

You and I are One not because we deny our differences, but because we embrace that which brings true unity - our sinfulness and our need for a Savior, Jesus Christ. Yes, we have one Lord, one faith, one baptism. For it is true, it is only as God is over all, through all, and in all of us that we are one.

It is as the Holy Spirit works in the Word that we are brought together and united. He moves us to confess our failing, our false beliefs, yes, our sinfulness. He brings us to maturity - attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

It is never about me or what I believe, it is always about Christ Jesus for me, and through me, and in me. It must never be about you or what you believe, it is about Christ Jesus for you, and through you, and in you.

In a world that has people constantly running after their own identity, where people are striving to define themselves as individuals, and searching diligently in themselves for their self-esteem, that unity is such a comforting thing. I do not stand alone. I am joined to Christ, my head. I am no longer an infant, but complete in Him - completely forgiven. My self-esteem is based upon my unity to Christ.

Dear friends in Christ, find your comfort in this - you are no longer tossed around by the winds of teaching. You are no longer an infant but are completed in Christ Jesus who is your head.

As you and I are both united in Christ, we are one body together. You and I are one with one another, not because we have chosen to deny the differences, but because that which would divide us, our sinfulness, is abolished in Christ Jesus.

What a joy is it to know that the church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord; that you and I are one in His church, and that she is his new creation by water and the Word. That from heaven He came and sought her, to be his holy bride; with his own blood he bought her, and for her life – for His Church, for you and for me – He died. Amen.