



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



Unity in Christ

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them that they may be one even as we are one.”
John 17:20-22

What Does Unity in Christ Look Like Today?

How do we embrace our Lord's prayer in a world full of division? We are plagued by prejudice, angry spirits, pride, selfishness, hatred, hurts and mean-spirited people. We live in a time of genocides where differences in ideas have led to the deaths of millions. We live in a country where 9 am – 12 pm on Sunday is the most segregated time in the week because few people attend services with others of a different color. In many families, there are relatives who do not speak to each other because of their differences.

And still Christ prayed for unity. Would the God who created both the heavens and the earth be unable to see the fulfillment of this prayer among believers? I think not! Did He not understand the impact of our fallen nature? Yes, He understood. As an omniscient God, He knew that we would be divided by denominationalism, the color of our skin and differences in our views and provided a way for us to still be unified in Christ. Some brothers will still like vanilla ice cream and you may still like chocolate. But what God does is an even greater work in us!

The Life-Changing Blood Transfusion

As Christians, we are all redeemed by the same blood and will go to the same Heaven. We are all a part of the same heavenly family. We may disagree, but unity in Christ allows us not to become disagreeable. We may have differences, but we are all made in the image of God. At the cross, we received a blood transfusion from Christ which changed us from the inside-out.

If you're like me, you've been hurt by others. You've found it so much easier to migrate to people who are less hurtful. You may even have found it less threatening to surround yourself with others who always agree with you or look a lot like you! But when a blood transfusion is given, its sole purpose is to give life so that all the members of the body can function together. In a like manner, through the transfusion of Jesus' blood at Calvary, those of us in the Body of Christ can function like a healthy body!

- Dr. L.W. Edwards



The Grace Difference

Can you believe we're more than halfway through the year and another school year is about to begin? Our students are growing up in a world that is increasingly diverse. Yet some argue it falls short in providing racial equality.

Students' feelings about race and fairness came to light after a group of students; represented by the organization Students for Fair Admissions, Inc.; sued Harvard University and the University of North Carolina for discrimination in their admissions process. Each university receives tens of thousands of freshmen applications each year, but students noted African American and Hispanic applicants were given preference over Asian American and white students in an effort to meet racial quotas. The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately ruled in favor of the students and struck down the practice of race-based affirmative action in college admissions.

Affirmative action is the use of policies, laws, programs and procedures to provide educational or career opportunities to some who might not otherwise have access. [President Barak Obama](#) and [Justice Sonia Sotomayor](#) have credited this practice with their academic opportunities. The practice was designed with good intent, but it came with some unintended consequences. Opportunities given to one group often came at the expense of another group. Instead of producing respect for the winner, it often caused resentment for the loser because the winner was given an unfair advantage. Instead of creating unity between different cultures, it provoked racial tensions and division. Consequently, it fell short of providing real fairness. In an effort to balance the ship, affirmative action created a tidal wave that threatened to sink it.

The Value of Grace

When God decided who qualified for admission to Heaven, race was not a factor in His selection. He had no quotas to meet or personal preferences that would cause Him to favor one group over another. Unlike universities with limited space, Heaven has no space constraints. God is willing and able to receive all who want admission. He has only one requirement: faith in His Son, Jesus. Admission to Heaven is not something applicants can earn, but is a gift of grace. This free, unlimited and undeserved gift instantly levels the playing field for all comers.

Under grace, no one can claim a racial advantage or disadvantage. No one can claim to be better or worse than anyone else. There are no VIPs, no inner circles, cliques or elites. There are no upper-classmen, first-class men or ruling classes. All are undeserving — yet all are accepted.

Grace is so inclusive it seems unfair. Actually, it is. We are sinners who deserve judgment, not kindness. When God's sinless Son, Jesus, took the judgment we deserved, He turned our sense of justice upside-down. We received access to God and eternal life; He received death. That wasn't fair.

Only someone who understands how far God went to give us access to Heaven can fully appreciate grace's value. And only someone who appreciates its value can share it with others.

The Beauty of Grace

Grace is a diamond which shines brightest when set against a dark background. That's why it sparkles with rare beauty in a world where people expect to get what they deserve. You see, no one expects to receive love from an enemy. Or blessing in return for cursing. Or good will for hatred. Or prayer for abuse. When this is how we respond to the unfairness of life, we show the world grace in action. We create cultures of grace in the places we live, work and worship. We show them the love of Jesus.

The Difference of Grace

Imagine what a world this would be if, instead of getting even, we treated others the way we wanted them to treat us. How many racial conflicts would be resolved if we practiced grace's kindness and good will? Grace creates an environment where friends in conflict are reconciled and new relationships are formed, as Henry J. Van Dyke wrote in the famous hymn:

*Mortals, join the happy chorus,
Which the morning stars began;
Father love is reigning o'er us,
Brother love binds man to man.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us Sunward
In the triumph song of life.*

Regardless of your views of the Supreme Court's decision on student admissions, one thing is certain: Even when the world seems unfair, grace makes a difference. Those who have received admission to Heaven by grace through faith ought to lead the way in sharing this undeserved kindness with others. Let's use it to show others who Jesus is. Let's use it to make a difference today.

- Cam Edwards

