

REAL Relationships: Oneness

Sermon series can be found at asburybham.org/sermons

Scripture Reading

1 Peter 3:8-12

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. For

*'Those who desire life
and desire to see good days,
let them keep their tongues from evil
and their lips from speaking deceit;
let them turn away from evil and do good;
let them seek peace and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their prayer.
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'*

Summary

A recurring theme in the New Testament is the unity of the church. Paul talks about the church being the Body of Christ composed of many members. Each member is unique and uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit. But the body is only as healthy as it is connected.

Peter says something similar to the churches under his care. After giving advice to husbands and wives in the beginning of the third chapter, he then addresses each member of the church and tells them that they must have unity of spirit.

They must love one another and exist in harmony by keeping a humble mind. They must care about one another and have sympathy in all matters. Remaining united, for Peter, is more than just agreeing on the same things. Remaining united takes hard work — paying attention to one another and making space for one another.

Our core relationships can be like this. We can develop unity, or oneness, as we build upon the common ground that exists between us. Each and every relationship is born from shared experiences or shared interests between different people. As we spend further time together and become more harmonious in our friendship or relationship, we grow closer together.

Being ONE never means that we lose our personal identity. It means that we grow closer together in heart and purpose. Oneness is a journey of allowing your lives to overlap as you address the negatives, lean upon the positives, and develop a shared mission together.

What do unity and oneness in relationships mean to you? How do you maintain your own unique identity while growing closer to others you care about?

Discussion Questions

- Another way to translate “unity of spirit” is “single- mindedness.” Paul says something similar in Philippians 2:1-11. Take some time to read that passage and consider what it means to be “like-minded” and to have “the mind of Christ.”

- How would you seek unity in decisions within a relationship? Even choosing which restaurant to go to for dinner is tricky. How can seeking consensus and compromise help move you and your core relationships towards greater oneness?

- Last week, we said that relationships require commitment. How is taking the time to be united a demonstration of your commitment? Would the lack of taking time to be united demonstrate a lack of commitment?

- A magic word for oneness is “with.” It is fine and important to do things “for” others. This shows commitment and love. Doing things “with” one another helps a relationship thrive and grow towards oneness. Think about your core relationships and what spending intentional time together looks like.

Prayer by Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)

Dear Jesus, help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Thy spirit and love. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus. Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be a light to others. Amen

Practice

In this sermon series, we are unpacking how our most important relationships can thrive through commitment, oneness, respect, and evolving together. This week, as we explore oneness within relationships, consider adding the following practices:

- What are some roadblocks that potentially rob you of your time with God? Write down the roadblocks. Spend time in prayer asking God to help remove the obstacles so you can grow in oneness with him.
- What are some roadblocks that potentially rob you of your time with others? Write down the roadblocks. Spend time in prayer asking God to help remove the obstacles so you can grow in oneness with others.
- Spending time in prayer and discernment is a way to build spiritual oneness in our core relationships. Who is God inviting you to pray over at this moment? Is there a situation in your life where God is inviting you to spend time in discernment?