

Building Up One Another

Message 4: Be Likeminded One Toward Another

Yesterday, several of us began work on the new garage. Someone had a plan in mind, and all of us cooperated to make that plan happen. You might say that we had to be likeminded or united to put up that building. If we did not agree about the plan, we would not have been able to accomplish anything.

The Bible urges Christians to be likeminded and to agree with one another. People working on a project must be likeminded in order to get anything done. Church members in particular ought to be of like faith and practice; we ought to be likeminded.

We're continuing our Summer Sermon Series this morning on the one anothers of the Bible. Today we're looking at...

Romans 15:5 *Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:*

If we have to be likeminded to put up a simple building, we certainly must be likeminded to work together as a church.

We ought to pray for what Paul prayed for here—likeminded unity among believers.

And we ought to strive for what Paul is promoting here—likeminded unity.

Notice several things about being likeminded one toward another.

I. God is the *source* of likemindedness.

A. “Now the God ... grant...” The grammar here for the verb “grant” (aor optative of δίδωμι) implies that this is a prayer or a wish for the future.¹ Paul is expressing his hope and prayer that God would grant likemindedness to the church.

B. So in some respects, unity is a gift from God. We should pray for it and seek it. We ask God to grant it to us. Likeminded unity is a blessing God gives to those who pray for it and seek it.

C. We are not merely passive in this process; we have to pursue likemindedness and peace. We pray for it, and we work for it.

D. Jesus prayed for unity for the church.

John 17:21-23 *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:. ... that they may be made perfect in one; ...*

1. Given human sinfulness and failure, we will never be united in the church like the Persons of the Trinity are united. Our union will never be complete, total, or perfect.

2. Still, we can experience a high degree of likeminded unity, and we ought to work toward it and praying for it.

E. Sadly, the natural state for mankind seems to be disunity. Division, discord, splits, fights, and disagreements commonly divide people. This is true both in the secular world and in the church.

A divided church never accomplishes much for the Lord. Unity is a requirement for the church to accomplish its goals.

F. Unity is one way we differentiate ourselves from the ungodly culture. The church should stand in stark contrast from the world by being united. The church ought to be different because it is likeminded, unlike so many other aspects of society.

App: Likeminded unity is a blessing from God. We ought to pray for the church to be likeminded. If we lack unity in the church, it could be that we are not praying for it or seeking it.

Trans: May God grant us a higher sense of likemindedness than we already have.

¹ Robertson's *NT Word Pictures*

II. Unity is the *result* of likemindedness.

- A. The word “likeminded” is based on a root word (φρονεῖν) literally meaning “to think, to understand, to direct one’s mind toward something.”
- B. The original language here has “think the same.” (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν) In this context, it means “to agree together, to have the same view, to be harmonious.” God expects us to function in likeminded unity.
- C. Our culture values independent thinking. We typically want to be free to form our own opinions and think our own thoughts.
- D. But as members of the church, we pursue harmony, understanding, and agreement. We are people of like faith and practice. We hold very similar doctrinal beliefs and views. That’s the expectation—we are all directing our minds toward the same beliefs and goals. We come into agreement and unity because we are all focusing our thoughts on the same biblical truths.

App: I wonder sometimes when people get upset and leave the church whether they even tried to follow these commands about likemindedness. Were they submitting to Christ and his commands? Did they attempt to be agreeable? Did they try to bring their thinking into conformity with the consensus of the church? Or were they so committed to their own point of view that they were not willing to change their way of thinking?

It could be that people leave because they don’t want to be likeminded. They perhaps are not even trying to be in unity with the people of the church.

App: Our highest and primary concern is to think God’s thoughts after him. God is our highest authority. We submit our thinking to him.

2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Even our thinking is to be Christ-like and coordinated with God’s Word. Christians must develop a “Bible-soaked logic” or biblical world view. We conform our thinking to what God has revealed to us in Scripture.

As church members, we are obligated to try to bring our thinking and ideas into conformity with both God's word and with the other members of the church. That's what likemindedness is – "think the same thing."

That means we value the same things, we believe the same things, we pursue the same goals. We should be intentional about reaching consensus and agreement instead of demanding our own way.

On the other hand, church membership does *not* require that we agree to absurd or ridiculous ideas. We are not required to give up our powers of discernment or good judgment. We are not required to submit our thinking to the cult leader. We must not blindly follow the blind. But we must submit our thinking, first of all, to Christ and his word. And then we seek to be agreeable and find consensus with the other people of the church who are also committed to following Christ.

Cf. Acts 17:11

Trans: The word "likeminded" reminds us that the church should strive to find agreement and unity.

III. The glory of God is the *goal* of likemindedness.

Rom 15:6 *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- A. This is a statement of purpose/intent: "in order that ye might ... glorify God" (ἵνα ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἑνὶ στόματι δοξάζητε τὸν θεόν)
- B. The highest and ultimate purpose of all things is to bring glory to God (1 Cor 10:31). The purpose of the church is to bring glory to God. The goal of likemindedness in the church is that we might "glorify God." Likeminded agreement and unity in the church glorify God.
- C. Notice the "one mind and one mouth."
 - 1. The word "one mind" (ὁμοθυμαδὸν) means "with one accord, with one passion, with one purpose."

Quote: The word is a compound of two words meaning to “rush along” and “in unison.” The image is almost musical; a number of notes are sounded which, while different, harmonise in pitch and tone. As the instruments of a great concert under the direction of a concert master, so the Holy Spirit blends together the lives of members of Christ’s church.²

That’s a wonderful word-picture of the unity of the church. Everyone is seeking to glorify God and is rushing along to fulfill that goal. Everyone is singing from the same sheet of music harmoniously. We have the same set of values and priorities. We have one mind.

2. And that results in being of “one mouth.” That is, we have the same message; we say the same thing; our message is consistent. We proclaim and stand for God’s Word and the Gospel.

Unity in the church glorifies God. God is glorified when we when we have the right purpose, the right values, and the right message.

Thus, it follows that division in the church does not glorify God. Division is dishonoring to God. When God’s people, who are all part of the same spiritual family, have different purposes and different messages, they fall short of glorifying God.

Trans: Our goal should be to bring glory to God by being of one mind, one purpose, and one message. Those who violate this principle are dishonoring God.

IV. One another is the *extent* of likemindedness.

- A. Likemindedness pertains to the assembly, the people.
- B. .5 The word “you” is plural here (ὁμῖν) —“you all” they would say in the south. I.e., you people. Vs. 6—“ye”
- C. What people is that? “one toward another” (ἐν ἀλλήλοις) – literally “in/among one another.”
- D. If we look at the context, Rom 15 clearly pertains to the local church.
 1. .1 the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak.
 2. .2 please your neighbor—i.e., people living in community.

² Online Bible GrkEng Lexicon, #3661.

So the people in view here are members of the church.

Ac 4:32 *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: ...*

Trans: We should pursue unity among the people of the church. Everyone in the church should be of one heart and one soul. We may disagree with other people in other church or denominations, but in our own local church, we should have a high degree of likeminded unity.

V. Jesus sets the *limits* of likemindedness.

- A. Our likemindedness with others is limited by this phrase: “according to Christ Jesus” (κατὰ χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν). Unity in the church is focused on Christ, his word, and his work. Our common faith in Jesus is what brings us into unity. The source and ground of our unity is Christ and what we think about him.
- B. Likeminded unity *by itself* is not the goal. We *could* be likeminded and unified about all sorts of things—sports, politics, recreation, hobbies, etc. Many civic organizations are likeminded regarding various issues of life. E.g., Elks Club, Chamber of Commerce, flower club, archery club, political parties, etc. That’s all fine and good, but it’s not what brings Christians into unity with one another.
- C. What we are unified around is our common belief in Jesus—i.e., Christology, the doctrine of Christ. Our beliefs about Christ sets the extents or limits of our likemindedness. It’s fine and good to agree about other things. But in the church, the subject of agreement is Christ and his teachings; we are united around Christ and his word, especially the message of the Gospel.
- D. And we are not likeminded with those who teach error on these issues.
2 John 1:9 *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*
- E. What are the primary doctrines of Christ? The most significant doctrines of Christ pertain to his person and work. We must have solid agreement on these teachings. These are the doctrines that the cults have wrong; they are wrong in their Christology.
 - 1. The person of Christ—who is he?

- a) He's the eternal God, the 2nd Person of the Trinity. We believe in the deity of Christ. That's a fundamental of the faith that most of the cults deny. We do not compromise on the deity of Christ.
 - b) We believe in the humanity of Christ; he was a genuine human. 100% God, 100% man – the God/man.
 - c) He's the king of kings and lord of lords. He has all authority over all things.
2. The work of Christ—what he did
- a) He lived a perfect life.
 - b) He died a sacrificial death. 2 Cor 5:21
 - c) He provides eternal life for those who repent of their sins and put their faith/trust in him.
 - d) We believe that salvation is by grace alone, by faith alone, and through Christ alone.

This is our basic Christology—our beliefs about the person and work of Christ.

- F. We might disagree about many things, and we do. But when it comes to the doctrine of Christ, we should be unified. Our unity is spiritual—we all agree regarding Jesus. What we believe about Jesus sets the extent or the scope of our unity.
- G. We are not united with those who “abide not” in the biblical doctrine of Christ.
- H. Regarding other issues, we can tolerate some diversity. We must not allow trivial disagreements to threaten our essential unity.

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

We must intentionally avoid arguments over petty issues (e.g., decorations, scheduling, programs, etc.). We can certainly discuss the issues of the day, but members should feel free to hold their own opinions on nonessential issues (adiaphora).

Some of the biggest conflicts in churches revolve around personal issues and personality conflicts, not doctrinal disagreements. We must be able to put aside personal differences and seek likeminded unity on the things that really matter—the Gospel, the work of the church.

Ps 133:1 *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*

Paul's prayer for the church should be our goal: likeminded unity. God's intent and expectation for us is that we are united in doctrine and message. We glorify God through our likeminded unity. We strive to agree together, have the same views on the fundamental doctrines of the faith, and live in unity and harmony.

Our responsibility is to pursue unity with the other members of the church. Our common faith brings us into unity, and we must seek likemindedness among the brethren for the sake of Christ. That means that we must pursue agreement and unity based on our common faith in Christ.

If we are not likeminded, we are not glorifying God. We glorify God by being a unified, likeminded church.

It's hard to accomplish anything if we are not likeminded. E.g., the garage/shed project.

Reflecting the words of Paul, may God grant us to be likeminded toward one another according to Christ Jesus, that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.