

## One In Christ

Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1993

### John 17:20-23

*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 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 the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

I'm speaking to you today on the subject: "One In Christ." Now, here is our text; I'm reading from John 17. This is our Lord's Prayer, the high priestly prayer. This is the prayer that our Lord prayed for His people before He went to the cross. Someone said, "When you are reading, studying or preaching from John 17; *"Take off your shoes; you are on holy ground."* This is the Son speaking to the Father. He lifted up His eyes and said, *"Father, glorify thy Son that thy Son may glorify Thee."*

In verse 20, the Lord Jesus prayed and said, *"Neither pray I for these alone, but I pray for them also which shall believe on Me through their word that they all, (these and them) may be one."* Listen, *"As thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us, that they may be one even as we are one."* Our Lord is praying here in John 17 for all of His sheep, all of the elect, all that the Father gave Him, all for whom He died, and for all whose sins He bore in His body on the tree. All of them from righteous Abel to the last one, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, both Jew, Gentile, bond, free, circumcision and uncircumcision, that *"they all may be one as we are one."* *"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be one as we are, one in Christ."*

Now, people have tried in vain for centuries to bring all religious people and all churches and all professing Christians together. There have been all sorts, of what they call, "Ecumenical movements and organizations." They are trying to bring all denominations and all churches together, under one umbrella. Now, you have heard that and I have heard it in the World Council of Churches, and in World Organization of Churches. They say, "All religious people believe in God; all religious people believe in life after death and we are all inspiring for the same place; let's unite and everybody get together and we'll win the world to religion!"

It will never be done; it is impossible because religious people are not one. They are not one and can never be one because they are divided. They are divided over the essentials. They are divided over the fundamentals of faith. Just because men and women, boys and girls use the same Bible, doesn't mean that they agree on what that Bible says.

Our Lord said, *“They call me Lord with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.”* Those people can never get together. Religious people, denominations, cults, sects and organizations can never get together because they are not one. They can’t claim to be one or profess to be one, because they are not one.

They don’t agree on the inspiration of the Scriptures. Some believe the Scriptures are the Word of God, some believe that the Scriptures contain the Word of God, and some believe that the Scriptures are not even the Word of God, but the Words of the Apostles.

Some don’t believe on the character of God. Just a few nights ago, I heard an evangelist say on television, who is God? “Well, I will tell you,” he said; “God is as big as you let Him be, that’s how big God is; God is as big as you let Him be.” That’s not the God of the Bible!

They don’t agree on the fall of man. They don’t agree on what sin is. They don’t agree on who Jesus Christ is. Some believe that He is the Son of God and some believe that He is not the Son of God. Some believe that He was virgin born and some believe that He wasn’t virgin born. Some believe that He’s a prophet like Mohammad or Confucius, Buddha or the rest of them. Some believe that He is a great preacher and others believe that He was a reformer, a martyr, or an example. Some believe that He is God!

They don’t agree on the life and death of Christ. They don’t even agree on the resurrection. They don’t believe on the Holy Spirit or His work. They don’t agree on how God saves sinners. Some people say that they are saved by works, some by grace, some by making a profession of faith, some by accepting Jesus as their personal Saviour and some by other means. They don’t agree on those things; they don’t even agree on the resurrection. They don’t agree on anything that is essential. Religion, today, will never get together because they are not agreeing on the essentials of faith and they are not one at all.

Let me tell you this; what was it our Lord prayed? Listen to His prayer again, *“Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on Me through their Word that they all may be one.”* Everyone for whom He prayed, everyone for whom He died, everyone who believes on Him through the Word, they are one. In other words, what Christ is saying is that not all religious people are one, but all true believers are one.

Believers are not divided over the scriptures. They all believe that the scriptures are the Word of God. They are not divided over the character of God; they know He is Almighty, Sovereign, Eternal, All Wise and Holy. They are not divided over the fall.

They know man died in trespasses and in sin. They are not divided over who Christ is. He's very God of very God and God in human flesh. They are not divided over the need of sinners. They aren't divided over how God saves sinners; they know it is by His grace through faith in Christ Jesus. They are not divided over these essentials. They are one; they have always been one. They are one now and will always be one that they may be one as we are, *"I in them and thou in Me that they may be one."*

Our Lord said in John 10:16 (concerning His sheep), *"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also, I must bring."* It's just like, *"He must needs go through Samaria."* Just like, *"He must needs be lifted up."* Just like, *"He must go to Jerusalem and suffer and die;"* He must bring His people.

*"They will hear my voice, He said, and they will be one fold and one shepherd."* They will not be divided at all, but one. True believers are one! I don't care where you find them, in Mexico, Australia or Tim-buck-two; they are all one and they believe the same thing. They may have different degrees of understanding, different degrees of knowledge, different degrees of grace, but I will tell you this; they are all looking to Christ, resting in Christ and trusting in Christ. They are all born of the Spirit of God. They all love the Son of God and are depending on Him alone for their salvation. They are one, one family, one fold and under one shepherd.

Believers are not one because they believe in one God; that is not why they are one, though they do. Believers are not one because they read one Book, though they do. That did not make them one. Believers are not one because they want to go to one place, though they do. That does not make the one. Believers are one because God made them one. They are one because they are all in one body, and that body is Jesus Christ and they all have one Head.

Now, you are looking at a body up here. This is one body; it has one head. This body has two arms, two hands, ten fingers, legs, feet and toes, heart, liver, and lungs. It is all one body. Although these are different parts and though they serve different purposes and though they have different functions, they are all in one body and they are one. This is my hand; this is my thumb; and this is my heart. That is the way the Lord Jesus Christ is. He says, *"This one is my sheep; that one over there is my sheep; this one doesn't look a thing like that one, but that is my sheep too!"* There is one body. Christ is the Head and you are the body. That's the reason they are one. They are one because they are one in Christ. He made them one in the covenant of grace.

*"They were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. They were blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ."* One Spirit baptized them into one body. *"They are*

*predestinated to be like Christ.*” They are called in Christ, accepted in Christ, redeemed in Christ, crucified in Christ, buried in Christ, risen in Christ, exalted in Christ, seated in Christ and *“In the fullness of time, God is going to gather them altogether in one, in Christ.”*

Is He divided? You wouldn't be foolish enough to say that would you? Is Christ divided? Is the Godhead divided? No, they are one. He said, *“That they may be one as we are one.”* The body of Christ is not divided. He said, *“I'm the Vine and you're the branches.”* There may be 15 branches on the vine, but they are all one in the vine.

When you go and buy a grape vine, you don't say, “There's a grape vine and there are 15 branches,” no, you say, “that's a grapevine.” All those branches are in that vine. You don't walk by a person and say, “There's a head and there's a body,” no; you say “there's a person, with a head and a body.” Even so in Christ, they are all one and in Him.

I want you to listen to this message, and when I finish and leave you today, you order the tape if you want to, or at least go back and study this scripture. I want you to read them to see if what I'm saying is so. Believers are one. Religious people are not one and church people are not one and organizations are not one and never will be because they are not agreed. They are not one in heart, spirit, purpose, understanding or foundation. They do not have one Head.

Christ's people are one in Him. No matter where you find them, no matter how old they are or young they are, they are all one in Christ. Paul says in the Book of Ephesians, Chapter 4:4-6, *“There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling, there's one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.”* There are right there (seven ones), talking about His people. In First Timothy, he adds this one, *“There's one God and one Mediator between God and men and that's the man Christ Jesus.”* Now, my friend, that is true (oneness).

I want us to look at those eight things together. I want you to really concentrate with me now and let's look at these eight things that Paul deals with in Ephesians Four and First Timothy One, (One in Christ). This is so clear and so beautiful.

First of all, he says this; *“There is one body,”* (one family and one church). Now, I know there are a lot of churches. I pastor the 13<sup>th</sup> St. Baptist Church in Ashland, Ky. I've pastored there for over 40 years. They are such dear people and I love them and they love me. We have a unity but it isn't a perfect church. I'm sure that in that church and within that large congregation that it is, there are some *“tares among the wheat;”* I'm sure of it. There are some who are not truly converted. There are some who are hypocrites.

There are some who do not know Christ; I hope not, but I am just confident that when you get that many people together, you are going to have some that do not know Christ.

There are churches all over the land and it is true of all of them. They all have their spots, their “*tares*,” and their hypocrites and so forth. But, this church, God’s church; this body has no “*tares*,” no unbelievers, no hypocrites, and no Judas’, oh no! It says here, “*And Christ is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things, He might have the preeminence.*” That is the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the church, which He purchased with His own blood. This is the church whose names are written in heaven. This is the one church, the true church and God’s church. It’s the Lord’s church and He said, “*I’ll build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” There’s not a lost person in that church.

Ephesians 5:23 says, “*The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might present it, the one church, the one body, and the one family to Himself, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle.*” It is the church of the firstborn. “*There is neither Greek nor Jew, male or female, rich or poor, old or young.*” It is one church in Christ, one body, the church. They are all one. Can you doubt that? No, you can’t doubt that, not at all. There’s one body.

Secondly, there is one Spirit. This is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Scriptures say, “*If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.*” Everybody in this church is converted and everybody in this church has the Holy Spirit. “*If any man hath not the Holy Spirit, he’s none of His. By one Spirit we’re all baptized into one body.*” Isn’t that what the scripture says? “*No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit.*” Every true believer is baptized with the Holy Ghost. Every true believer is baptized into the body of Christ. Every true believer prays. He loves Christ, he loves God and he loves other people.

I heard a preacher not long ago say, “That 99% of the Christians in this land are not walking with God.” Whoa now! Hold on here! 99% of the church members may not be walking with God, but Christians are. They have one Spirit. They are baptized into one body. The Holy Spirit regenerated them; they are born of the Spirit; the Holy Spirit convicted them of “*sin and righteousness and of judgment.*” The Holy Spirit revealed Christ to them and took the things of Christ and revealed it to them. The Holy Spirit is their comforter and their teacher. The Holy Spirit has sealed them in the body of Christ and they cannot be taken out. The Holy Spirit is “*the earnest of our inheritance.*”

He's not the Spirit of confusion and the Spirit of division. He's the Spirit of truth and there is one Spirit, just one. Every believer has that Holy Spirit and they love each other. They are not in competition; they are all seeking the glory of God. They do not want attention, they are not glorifying and exalting themselves; they are preaching Christ. That's right!

Thirdly, there is one hope. *"There's one hope of your calling."* There's one body, one Spirit and one hope of your calling. Salvation is a calling. We are the called of Christ Jesus. *"Whom He justified, He called."* God is calling out a people for His name. Paul said, *"He called you by our gospel. You see your calling, brethren."* God calls His people. He called *"Zacchaeus, come down."* He called Matthew and He called Saul of Tarsus. He will call you if you are one of His people. *"Whom He foreknew, He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. Whom He predestinated, He called. Whom He called He justified."* It is a *"Holy Calling."* It's a calling to be like Christ.

What is the hope of your calling? In First John 3:2, *"Beloved, now are we the Sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we'll be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is and every man that hath this hope purifieth himself."* I'm talking about every man that has this hope. What hope? This hope is to be like Christ. *"There's one hope of your calling."* That one hope is to be like Christ.

That's the three-fold desire of every believer. It's a commitment to Christ, communion with Christ and one day, conformity to Christ. Oh, we have our ups and downs, troubles and difficulties and trials, but, *"Christ in you that is the hope of glory."* The one hope of His calling is to be like *"Him."* It is not to meet momma in heaven, although I love my momma. That's right, it's not to see how many crowns or stars I have, it is to be with Him. *"That is the hope of this calling."*

There are no degrees in that glory. All are like Christ. We will all love the same; we've been redeemed the same and we'll all have the same station, (perfection) and the same reward. *"Christ is our reward."*

Fourthly, He says, *"That there is one Lord."* There's just one. Believers are brothers who love each other, who respect one another, who help one another, who learn from one another, but there is just one Lord, one Master, one King and that is Christ. He said, *"Be not called Father;"* you've got one Father. *"Be not called Rabbi; you've got one master,"* you're brethren in Christ. *He's Lord by God's decree."* God made Him Lord.

I hear preachers say, "Make Jesus your Lord." Well, it's too late; God beat you to it. He's already your Lord. He's Lord by creation; He's Lord by death, "*He died that He might be Lord.*" We own Him as our Lord by faith and public confession. "*If thou shall confess with thy mouth, Jesus to be Lord, thou shalt be saved.*"

Salvation is not "stand up for Jesus;" it is to bow down and worship Christ the Lord. The gateway into the kingdom of God is not your accepting Christ as your personal Saviour, but bowing to Jesus Christ as your Lord. An old preacher use to say, "I know who your Saviour is; tell me who your Lord is. Who is Lord of your life?" If He is not your Lord, He's not your Saviour. I'm just telling you the truth. It's time somebody sounded the note.

Here's the fifth thing: "*There's just one faith.*" You'll hear people say, "We're not of the same faith." What did you say? There's just one faith. Believers are one because they have one faith in Christ Jesus. It may be a small faith or great faith; but it is one faith. It may be a weak faith or a strong faith, but it is a common faith. It may be early faith or late faith, but it is one faith. There is just one faith. "Keep the faith." That's right, it is the only one. It's the faith; He is the author and finisher of our faith. It has the same object, "*He that believeth on the Son hath life.*" That's right; He's the one soul object of faith. "*Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.*" It arises out of the same need, (sin). It has the same foundation, (the Word of God). He hath said, "*That I may boldly say.*" It has the same rest; "*Come to me; I'll give you rest.*" There's just one faith.

In the sixth place: "*There is one baptism.*" Now, many believe that this is the baptism of the Holy Ghost (perhaps). We're all baptized into one body by the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). There is one baptism into the body of Christ. We're submerged and immersed into the body of Christ. There is one baptism under the gospel and that is water baptism by emersion. "*Go ye into all the world and make disciples, teaching all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Go ye, into all the world and preach the gospel. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*"

John was baptizing in a certain place because there was much water there. Jesus came up straightway out of the water. Phillip and the Eunuch went down into the water. Baptism is a burial. In order to truly picture and be identified with a death and a burial and a resurrection, you have to put the body beneath the water and come up out of the water. Baptism is not for infants. Baptism is for believers. Christ said, "*Make disciples and*

*then baptize them.”* That comes first, (believing); the scripture says, *“He that believeth and is baptized.”*

When the Eunuch wanted to be baptized, he asked Phillip, he said, *“Here’s water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?”* Phillip said, there is one requirement, *“Do you believe with all your heart on the Son of God?”* He said; *“I do.”* Baptism is for believers. It is a confession of Christ, it is identification with Christ and it is a declaration.

Baptism is not only a confession of Christ, and identification with Christ in its death, burial and resurrection; it is a declaration to this world that I am dead and buried with Christ and then risen with Christ to walk in newness of life. That’s right, they are one!

It’s not a fad; it’s death. Salvation is not a fad. I hear people saying, “Come and try Jesus.” You don’t try death. When you die you are dead. Well, “come and try death.” No, *“I’m crucified with Christ.”* You don’t try crucifixion. Well, some say, “Try Jesus.” Do you go to the cross and try to die? No, you commit and when you’re crucified, it’s over! You’re dead.

In the seventh place, *“there’s one God and one Father”* of all believers. There’s one God and He’s the Father of only the believers, that’s all! He’s above all; He’s sovereign. He’s through all, which is by His providence, He works through all things for our good and for His glory. He is in all. He dwells in us. *“I and my Father will dwell in them.”*

Lastly, there’s *“one Mediator.”* *“There’s one God and one Mediator between God and men and that’s the man Christ Jesus.”*

You might say, “Brother Mahan, pray for me.” Well, you pray for me. I have no more authority in prayer than you do. The authority is in Christ. There’s one God and one Mediator between God and men and that fellow with the robe on, has no more authority in prayer than you do, if you are a believer. That’s right! That preacher that has been preaching for more than 50 years has no more authority in prayer than you do. He can’t command heaven. That fellow on television that talks about healing you; he’s popping off; he doesn’t have any healing power, the healing power is in Christ.

That’s right, there’s one Mediator, one Advocate and there is one Intercessor and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. There is one body. Believers are one. Somebody says, “They ought to be one.” There are! There are one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father and one Mediator; and they will be one forever. I want in on that by God’s grace, don’t you? It is real!

