

# The Bulletin

## Meeks Street Church of Christ

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September 24, 2023

### **“Congregational Unity”**

By Steven Deaton

Unity is something most people desire. We want to be with others or, more precisely, we want others to be with us. When others agree with us, believe like we do and do what we do, it gives a measure of comfort and security.

God made us social; He gave us a desire to be associated with others. He brings His children together in congregations and commands us to be united as His people. Paul wrote the church at Corinth and said, *“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”* (1 Corinthians 1:10).

This unity is not automatic. It requires diligent effort on our part. Thankfully, we see in God's word the way we can be united.

#### **Unity Is Founded On God's Word**

Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:17-23). He prayed that the apostles and all who believe in Him through their word would be "one." Notice that through the teaching of the word, the truth, people can be united.

The realization of Jesus' prayer is found in Acts 2. The apostles taught the gospel, the truth, and about 3,000 people were sanctified on that Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41). This new congregation of God's people at Jerusalem was united. The people worshipped together, ate meals with one another, and shared provisions with each other (Acts 2:42-46). This unity continued for some time, anchored in their shared love and commitment to truth (Acts 4:23-31; 5:42; cf. Acts 4:32-37).

#### **Threats To Unity**

Persecution is a serious threat. The arrest and abuse of the apostles could easily have led to Christians turning against one another (Acts 4, 5). However, they maintained their faith and trusted in God.

Sin within the church undermines unity. Ananias and Sapphira's sin not only separated them from God, but also endangered the harmony of the church (Acts 5:1-11). If the sin went unchecked, other sins might have been tolerated (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-7). Thus, the sin was removed and the congregation remained intact.

The mistreatment of brethren drives wedges in a church. The Jerusalem brethren had a problem when some of the widows were neglected (Acts 6:1-6). Instead of ignoring the issue, it was addressed with the result of an even stronger bond among the saints. It allowed them to press on in the work of converting the lost (Acts 6:7).

Another threat to congregational unity is false doctrine. Some brethren were pushing the doctrine of the circumcision (Acts 15). With some accepting and others rejecting this teaching, division was growing. To stop this rift, the brethren assembled and debated the issue (Acts 15:4-21). In this debate truth triumphed over error. The saints at Jerusalem, as well as Antioch and other places were encouraged and united as a result (Acts 15:30-32; 16:4, 5).

## Unity Leads To Growth

The devil uses division to hinder the cause of Christ. Jesus stated that the oneness of the disciples would help lead people to believe (Jn. 17:21). The opposite is true too.

If God's people are divided, it will drive the world to unbelief.

As the Christians in Jerusalem stood together, the church grew.

- o 3,000 - 5,000 (Acts 2:38-47; 4:4).
- o Believers increasingly added to the Lord (Acts 5:14).
- o Number of disciples multiplied (Acts 6:7).
- o Increased in number daily (Acts 16:5).

Harmony among brethren is crucial to the advancement of the cause of Christ. Peace is not to be had at the expense of truth. Rather, peace through truth leads to growth; saints will be edified while the lost are taught.

Each of us must do our part to ensure the unity of the congregation.

- o Stand in truth.
- o Do not waver in persecution.
- o Remove sin from your life & support its removal from the church.
- o Love the brethren.
- o Reject and resist doctrinal error.

In doing these things we will help our congregation fulfill the Lord's prayer that we all may be one.

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## **“Being Happy”**

By George Parsley

What is it that brings true happiness in this life? There are many things that can make us happy but that happiness is fleeting. One may be surprised at how much the Bible says concerning happiness. While the Bible speaks of sin and its consequences it also says much about happiness.

Notice the following passages:

*“Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”* (Deuteronomy 33:29).

*Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:”* (Ps. 146:5)

*“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.”* (Proverbs 3:13).

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”* (Proverbs 29:18).

*Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”* (James 5:15).

*“But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;”* (1 Peter 3:14).

*“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.”* (1 Peter 4:14).

There are many more passages that speak of being happy. As one looks and considers these passages there is one common thread, and that thread is an active acknowledgement and security in God.

When we have God in our lives it brings an inner peace which results in happiness. When we know that God has us in His hands and we are secure in that, then happiness is had regardless of what is in front of us or around us.

Living in the ways of the Lord brings true happiness in this life.

**News and Notes:**

Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Robbie, Sheila, Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Chad Harris, Eli Johnson, Burt Ward, Jamie Jones, Janet Boren, Fred Johnson, Mary Ann Holley, Larsen Plyler, Willis Fields (Brandi Meade's Dad), and Sam Kennemur (Upcoming surgery November 6th).

North East Church of Christ in Tupelo has a Gospel Meeting October 1st—6th.  
Southside Houston Church of Christ also has a Gospel Meeting October 1st—6th.

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Nathan Meade  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #1:** "The Epidemic Of Fatherless Homes"

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:**

**Workbook:** Fred Johnson  
1 & 2 Thessalonians  
**Author:** Mark Mayberry  
**Starting Page & Question:** Page #44, Question #4

**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:**

**Announcements:** Paul Busby  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Doug George  
**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 9:1-10  
**Song Leader:** Jerry Kennemur  
**Lord's Supper:** Danny Sheffield  
**Assisting:** — —  
**Singing Service:** Men of the Congregation Lead Singing  
**Invitation:** Jerry Kennemur  
**Closing Prayer:** Blake Briggs

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

September 27, 2023

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Paul Busby  
**Workbook:** Preparing To Teach Our Neighbors  
**Author:** Max Tice  
**Starting Page & Question:** Page #26, Question #1  
**Invitation:** Dan Cottrell  
**Song Leader:** Adam Harris  
**Closing Prayer:** Tim Harris Sr.

**Gospel**  
*Meeting*

At The Meeks Street Church Of Christ  
October 22nd—25th  
With brother Tim Henderson  
Sunday Morning at 9:00 (22nd).  
Monday—Wednesday 7:00 PM Nightly  
(23rd-25th).

# **“The Epidemic Of Fatherless Homes”**

Lesson Text: **Deuteronomy 22:22-24a.**

## **I. The Problem Of Fathers Who Leave.**

- This Is A Major Attack By Satan To Destroy The Home! **1 Peter 5:8; John 10:10.**
  - Satan Works Through Temptations And Evil Desires... **1 John 2:15-17; James 1:14-15.**
- Has Satan Done A Good Job In This Attack?
  - An estimated 24.7 million children (33%) live absent their biological father.
  - Of students in grades 1 through 12, 39 percent (17.7 million) live in homes absent their biological fathers.
  - 57.6% of black children, 31.2% of Hispanic children, and 20.7% of white children are living absent their biological fathers.
  - According to 72.2 % of the U.S. population, fatherlessness is the most significant family or social problem facing America.
- President Obama Even Addressed This Among Men in 2009.
- This Causes Severe Damage To The Home As God Designed It!

## **II. Why Do Fathers Leave?**

- They Are Only Interested In Fulfilling Their Own Selfish Desires- **Ephesians 2:3.**
- They Don’t Want Any Responsibilities, Commitment, Or Burdens In The Home.
- They Want Freedom To Do As They Please, Without Any Restrictions.
- They Leave To Go Looking For “Greener Pastures.” **2 Timothy 3:1-4.**
- They Are Incarcerated And Are Away In Prison.
- They May Even Be Forced To Leave Because Of Abuse.
- They Are Tempted By The Tempter To Leave— Sin! **1 Timothy 5:8.** What Other Sins?

## **III. What Are The Effects On The Home?**

- God Designed The Home With Two Parents For Good Reason!
- Two Oxen Yoked Together Share The Burden. What About When One Is Removed?
- Single Mothers Are Left To Raise Children Completely On Their Own. (15.04M Families 2022).
- Children Will Grow Up Without A Provider, Protector, And Father Figure In The Home.
- Some Things The Mother Cannot Teach Her Children By Herself.
  - How To Be A Real Man- **1 Kings 2:1-2; 1 Timothy 6:11-14.**
  - How To Be The Head Of The Home- **Ephesians 5:23.**
  - How A Husband Needs To Properly Treat His Wife- **Ephesians 5:25; 28-33.**
  - How To Be The Spiritual Leader Of The Home- **Ephesians 6:4.**

## **IV. What Fathers Who Leave Miss Out On...**

- They Will Never Have:
  - The Satisfaction Of Having A Stable, Happy Home-life With His Family.
  - The Joys Of Being A Good Father, Who Is Loved & Adored By His Family.
  - The Satisfaction Of Watching Their Children Grow Up And Have Their Own Families.
  - The Blessing Of Seeing Your Children Obey The Gospel And Be Faithful To The Lord.

## **V. What Can We Do To Help Fathers Do Right?**

- Teach The Bible On This Important Subject, And Often. **Proverbs 22:6.**
- Christ Needs To Be In The Home! **Matthew 6:33; Matthew 16:24-25.**
- Live Out This Teaching In Our Lives- Be A Good Example. **Philippians 2:15-16.**

DEAR ABSENTEE,

That name means you should be here, but you are not. When you left, pieces of my life went with you. I needed to know that I could count on you. We were supposed to build something together—lots of things together. You could've played with me. That would have helped my confidence grow. You could've been there to build me up after a hard day at school. Instead, I got really mad. You could've helped me build important life skills. Mom is doing her best to fill the piece that was always meant for two. But there are some things only a dad can do.

Signed,

The child you never knew