

October 8, 2017

Becoming One, Part Two

May the God Who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so with one accord you may—with one voice—glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:5-6

According to verse 6, the goal of Christian unity is not the submerging of substantial differences beneath a veneer of civility. Mere tolerance of diversity is not a worthy goal. What Paul expected was authentic communal worship. His prayer is with one mind, and one mouth, the diverse members of the Roman churches may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. One mind—homothymadon—appears to be a technical term for prayerful unity in the early church (Jewett, 2007).

The point of it all is not simply being able to live in peace and quiet without squabbling. That would be, so to speak, simply clearing the ground of rubble. The point is to build: and what needs to be built is the common life of praise and worship. 'With one mind' and 'with one mouth' go closely together, describing that glad unanimity of praise and worship which indicates both to the watching world and to Christians themselves that they are not worshipping a merely local deity, the projection of their own culture, but the One True God of all the world, the God now known as the Father of Jesus, the Messiah (NT Wright, 2004).

SAME MIND: Give yourself to understanding, (putting yourself in “their shoes”), work so someone else gets the advantage, cherish people; live in harmony with them. **ONE ACCORD:** In unison. Find ways to sing the same notes. Look for similarities, capitalize on those. **ONE VOICE:** A common heart and soul. Belonging to one another as we belong to God.

Next week: A People of Hope, Romans 15:13

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Trinity: *Doctrine stating there are three eternal and essential distinctions—three persons in one substance. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Who are co-eternal, co-equal, and share one divine reality.*

Reconciliation: *This is the sense that the alienation and estrangement from God implicit in sin is overcome when we come into a new relationship with God.*

Redemption: *Implies liberation from sin, and the receiving of a new purpose, namely, to love God with all our being, and our neighbor as ourselves. Our lives are redeemed from sin and for love (Dr. Diane LeClerc, Discovering Christian Holiness, 2010).*

On the basis of Psalm 69, Paul sets out a principle: even the Messiah was not able to 'please Himself', but instead had to take on Himself the insults which people were heaping on Israel's God. (Romans 15:3-4) Paul is saying that the self-humiliation, the renouncing of rights, which formed the path Jesus had to tread to complete His messianic work, is also the path which Christians must tread as they put that same work into practice. Christians are to live alongside people who do not think like them, and they must not try to force others into the position they themselves have taken. Paul is urging a still different point. He is insisting that all Christians should learn to thing the same about mutual submission in accordance with the Messiah (NT Wright, 2004).

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