

**Joke:** A wife who also happened to be a mom invited some people to dinner.

At the table, she turned to her six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I wouldn't know what to say," the girl replied.

"Just say what you hear Mommy say," she answered, smiling.

The daughter bowed her head and then began with,

"Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

---

### **One - Week 3 - Fault Lines**

If the church is going to transform the world, it must be united in our love for Christ and for each other. Anything short of that isn't God's plan and truthfully just doesn't work.

Welcome to the last week in this series called, *One*.

Throughout this series, I've been trying to look into what it means for us to become a community of one. . .a community united around Jesus and how that can transform the community and world that we are in.

Let me start today with a brief recap of what we have looked at thus far:

**WEEK 1:** We learned that you are a what? A masterpiece. And as a masterpiece you need to act like it. If we're going to be a community of one, we need to recognize what we are, whose we are and we need to treat others as the masterpieces that they are.

And the good news is that the world is drawn to that kind of love in action.

**WEEK 2:** We learned that we are all together, different; and that we are greater than the sum of our parts. We all have different gifts, abilities, talents, interests, passions, and dreams. And they can all be used to reflect Jesus back to the world around us. When we come together as a community, each doing our 'part' we become greater than the sum of those parts. And we become an unstoppable force in our world and to those around us.

And I told you I want to continue to make room for those gifts to flourish in this place.

This week, I want to look at one of the biggest roadblocks to seeing the community come together as one.

And we will be looking into the Book of Ephesians to do that. . .

But before we get there let me start here. . .

Did you have a favorite band growing up. . .Christian or not I give you permission to tell. Who was it?

Now, there have been some bands that has made it through thick and thin, and then there have been others that over time they just fell away or had some of the members go their own way.

Do you remember the. . .

- Beatles - For all you 60's music lovers
- How about Led Zeppelin, The Who or one of my favorites The Eagles - that's for you 70's music lovers
- There was Guns & Roses - for you 80's hair metal fans
- Or The Police - not the ones with flashing lights on the top of their car it was another 80's music group.
- Remember the Backstreet Boys that 90's boy band
- Even more recently - for all you Millennials - there was One Direction and the Jonas Brothers.

And then there are some others you just wish would break-up.

But it can be disappointing when you hear that they will be no longer putting out music together, can't it?

Now honestly, some of those bands got back together and made music again. But it's rarely as good as the original right?

And far more serious than your favorite band breaking up, and I might say worse as well, is when you've seen relationships come apart in your life.

- Your parents' divorce
- Your child's divorce

- Your divorce
- Friendships ending
- Siblings don't get along or even fight over that inheritance they are getting
- The families that are fractured over things that shouldn't even matter
- Even Political and ideological divides can cause rifts

We've all seen it. And we hate it when things we've grown to love or things we depend on... things we thought would last forever...just fall apart.

And often, when we're in the middle of that, we feel like those things or those relationships come crashing down suddenly. It seems like, out of the blue, the relationship just crumbled and fell apart and we can't figure out why.

But truth is those seismic events that rip apart your favorite band or that relationship. . .those events that leave a mark on our lives and - in many cases - leave us with painful scars. . .those events are rarely sudden.

Almost always, there have been fault lines below the surface for some time:

What is a fault line: In geological terms a fault line is. . .a long crack in the surface of the earth. Earthquakes usually occur along fault lines

Another definition of a fault line one that probably better describes what I want to share today is: a divisive issue or difference of opinion that is likely to have serious consequences.

- The Beatles didn't break up overnight. There was a lot of frustration and resentment among them. And eventual it all came to the surface. And some just went solo instead. The schedule become overwhelming, They couldn't agree on a new manager, the business side was just causing all kinds of difficulty. They were having rifts that caused trouble.
- Your parents divorce or your divorce wasn't as sudden as it felt. There were most likely issues below the surface for a long time that were never properly addressed or altogether ignored.
- That falling out you had with your brother, your uncle, your parents, or whoever it was. Honestly there most likely were some things going on. . . little hurts here, wounds there, things said or left unsaid and over time those fault lines finally ruptured.

As I mentioned earlier, In geological terms, a fault line is a fracture along which the crust has moved.

Seismic waves are generated when the two sides of the fault rapidly slip past each other. For most earthquakes, the faults do not break the surface, so the faults can be "seen" only through analyzing the seismic waves.

Fault lines are often invisible. . .until the earthquake strikes. Fault lines can be hard to see, but they're there and they're potentially dangerous.

What does any of this have to do with being a community of one?

Everything!

It has everything to do with becoming and staying a community of Jesus followers, living in our world as a community of one.

Fault lines happen because we are broken and imperfect people who do life with other broken and imperfect people. Yes, even in the church.

In fact, these fault lines are, I think, one of the biggest reasons most churches (small 'c') and the Church (big 'C') in North America are failing to have the impact we are called to have.

These fault lines hinder the churches ability to live as a community of one.

One of the reasons the Church in America appears to be defeated is because many are divided.

Ask anyone what three things we are not supposed to talk about. . .what are they? Politics, religion, and money.

So we have a divided church, and I'm using that in a general term, I'm not specifically calling out this church, but rather the Body as a

whole, and what that means is we must be very intentional about preventing future and healing the current fault lines in our churches. If we are ever going to impact the world the way we are called to do so.

We must be intentional about preventing any future fault lines from forming.

And I've got good news. The Apostle Paul addresses this very thing in his letter to the community of Jesus followers in the city of Ephesus.

Ephesians is a letter to a Jesus community that was made up of both Jews and Gentiles. These two groups were natural enemies and Jews looked down on Gentiles.

- Gentiles didn't have the law.
- Gentiles worshiped multiple pagan god's.
- Gentiles practiced all kinds of sexual immorality.
- Many Gentiles lived the 'wild' life as they say.

And on the other hand, the Gentiles felt the Jews were uneducated country hicks with no sophistication.

- Jews to them were a weak, conquered, complaining people who were arrogant, distasteful and largely un-likable.
- Jews were stand-offish and didn't accept or even like other groups, plus they had those weird religious ideas and were well. . .judge-y

And with those attitudes, amazingly, through Christ, these two groups have come together as followers of Jesus in one community.

And much of the letter to this community of Jesus followers is aimed at telling the Jews that Jesus called the Gentiles to be a part of the family of God. And telling the Gentiles that they have been adopted into that family.

Paul also spends a good part of this letter telling both of them that being a part of this family means you can't live like you did before. He is saying, if you are going to be a follower of Jesus, you must come together as a community of one.

And so he says in chapter 4 the first six verses. . .

Ephesians 4:1–6 (NIV): As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:1–6 (TPT): As a prisoner of the Lord, I plead with you to walk holy, in a way that is suitable to your high rank, given to you in your divine calling. 2 With tender humility and quiet patience, always demonstrate gentleness and generous love toward one another, especially toward those who may try your patience. 3 Be



faithful to guard the sweet harmony of the Holy Spirit among you in the bonds of peace, 4 being one body and one spirit, as you were all called into the same glorious hope of divine destiny. 5 For the Lord God is one, and so are we, for we share in one faith, one baptism, and one Father. 6 And He is the perfect Father who leads us all, works through us all, and lives in us all!

Paul writes this letter from prison. He is in prison because of his commitment to Jesus and the way of life Jesus called and still calls His followers to live.

And as a prisoner for living a life modeled after Jesus and rooted in his faith in Christ, Paul is calling these two different groups, who both have faith in Jesus and want to live like Jesus, Paul is calling them to heal the fault lines in their community.

It's almost as if Paul is saying. .. "If I can go to prison because of my faith in Jesus and for my life of imitating Jesus that is radically different from the world around us, then surely you can work to heal the natural fault lines to become and protect the Jesus community as a community of one."

Let's look at a couple points Paul makes from our Ephesians passage:

- I urge you. This is no small request. No suggestion made in passing. Paul is urging, begging, pleading in The Passion Translation, dare I say almost demanding. That they what. . .
- Live a life worthy of their calling. In other words you're a masterpiece; act like it. Live up to your calling.

- And also make every effort to keep unity. Some translations say, eager to keep unity.

How do we make every effort to keep our unity?

- With humility - Consider others before yourself.
- With gentleness - have kindness, consideration, and meekness and what that means is we're not forcing our will, our opinion, or our desires on others.
- Be patient - be long suffering, don't be so quick in avenging wrongs.
- Bearing one another - having compassion, after all we are called to help carry one another's burdens.

And this last one is the one that puts everything in prospective

- Do all of this out of love.

If you want to heal the current fault lines and prevent future ones. . .then you have to be intentional. . .you have to do the hard work of being humble, gentle, patient, bearing each other's burdens in love, and trust me I know that's not always easy.

But to prevent fault lines in our relationships, we must be intentional about building unity.

And that's the point. That's the one thing I want you take away from this message today: To prevent fault lines in our relationships we must be intentional about building unity.

So how? How do we become intentional about building unity?  
How do I build unity to begin with?

Well, on a personal level:

- Consider others before yourself.

Philippians 2:3–5 (NIV): Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Let me share once again from The Passion Translation

Philippians 2:3–5 (TPT): Be free from pride-filled opinions, for they will only harm your cherished unity. Don't allow self-promotion to hide in your hearts, but in authentic humility put others first and view others as more important than yourselves. 4 Abandon every display of selfishness. Possess a greater concern for what matters to others instead of your own interests. 5 And consider the example that Jesus, the Anointed One, has set before us. Let his mindset become your motivation.

If you recall a couple weeks ago, I mentioned to. . .

- Do nothing out of selfish ambition.

- Do nothing out of vain conceit. That by the way is thinking more highly of yourself than is right. Making sure that your precious pride doesn't get hurt.

So often the question we pose is "what do I want?" When all along it should be "what do they need?" And included in that, we must practice forgiveness and reconciliation.

One of the reasons we feel like or see disunity in our families, in our workplaces, in our social or political interactions, and with that. . . think social media for a moment Facebook or Twitter, and even in our churches is that many Christians today don't live any differently from the world, but rather have chosen to live just like the world.

And that's not what God has called us to. . .He says come out and be separate.

And quite honestly, if you have nothing more to show me than what I'm already doing why would I want to change what I'm doing?

Truth is, we don't truly live like Christ, completely sold out to Christ. And so those around us don't see Christ.

That's good preaching let me say that again. . .

We don't truly live like Christ, completely sold out to Christ. And so those around us don't see Christ.

And rather than graciously forgiving one another, we have a tendency to point out how we've been wronged and insist those who have wronged us come and make it right.

And listen church if we harbor that attitude of you owe me, then you will never be in the place of unity. Because someone that owes you something may never meet your expectations of what is required to pay back what is owed.

And so Paul tells us something later in Ephesians 4:

Are you ready for this? You sure? Ok here it goes. . .

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV): Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

That means. . .

- When you're wronged.
- When you're hurt.
- When you feel neglected.

We are called to forgive as Christ forgave us. . .and that by the way is completely. God hasn't held back anything. Sent heavens best to allow us to come in right standing with Him.

So, we offer forgiveness. . .

- Not when they say sorry.
- Not when they deserve it.

- Not when they feel bad enough.
- Not when they make up for it.
- Not when they pay you back for what you feel owed to you.

We are to forgive fully and we are to seek reconciliation with others.

Forgiveness means I'm not going to hold this against you.

Reconciliation means I'm going to work to restore the broken relationship I have with you.

Now let me pause here and say this because I need you to understand something.

First is this. Forgiveness we can and must give to everyone.

And even though we are according to Scripture called to be ministers of reconciliation not every relationship will be or should be reconciled.

First off, will be because unlike forgiveness it takes two to come into reconciliation? And secondly, as for should be, if you were abused by someone I wouldn't expect you to just seek to restore a relationship with the abuser.

Now if God sets them free and they become a follower of Jesus maybe, maybe, you can slowly with counsel and help and companionship begin, but even with that you need to walk in wisdom.

I just wanted to clarify before you call me and ask what about. . .

Now let me get back to our message. . .

One way to stay in step with God is to stay in tune with the Holy Spirit.

If you want to be in unity with the people around you. If you want to be in unity with your family and your neighbors and your church community. . .then you need to stay in tune with the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:16 (NIV): So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

When we walk by the Spirit. . .When we stay in tune with the Spirit it is so much easier to be in unity with those around us.

Gratifying the desires of the flesh - insisting on having my way, being worried about my expectations, focusing on my rights. . .that's how fault lines form.

But when we're in tune with the Holy Spirit we can achieve unity.

Why? Because the Holy Spirit for one is given to lead us into all truth. And we know that the truth will set us free.

How do I know if I'm in tune with the Holy Spirit?

Paul tells us what it looks like.

Galatians 5:22–23 (NIV): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

When you're in tune with the Spirit and your life looks like love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control then finding unity. . .building unity. . .healing fault lines that just becomes a natural by product of that.

I love how the Passion Translation has this verse listen to it. . .

Galatians 5:22–23 (TPT): But the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit within you is divine love in all its varied expressions: joy that overflows, peace that subdues, patience that endures, kindness in action, a life full of virtue, faith that prevails, gentleness of heart, and strength of spirit. Never set the law above these qualities, for they are meant to be limitless.

And on a corporate level:

And I know this all sounds great for my marriage or my relationship with my kids or with that really hard to love person at work.

But, how does this apply to the church becoming a community of one?

When you are focused on considering others first. . .when you make a habit out of forgiveness and reconciliation. . .It's really hard to be in disunity.



It's really hard for fault lines to develop or to grow beneath the surface.

But the real insurance against fault lines is for us to focus on being in tune with the Holy Spirit.

Let me give an illustration of the tuning fork to help bring out my point. . .

- **What is relative tuning?** Relative tuning means I'm in tune with myself.
- **What if we all tune to a tuning fork (or tuner)?** Then we're all in tune with the source AND with each other.

If we're all in tune with the Holy Spirit, we will be in tune with each other. That's how we become a community of one

Over the past few weeks, we've talked a lot about being one. We've talked about the inherent value we have when we are created in the image of God and we've talked about celebrating the differences we all have.

Today we've taken it a step further talking about the fault lines that grow when we don't see each other in God's image or celebrate our differences. When we become divided over these things, sometimes so minor of things, it's incredibly difficult to have unity with each other.

So, as we wrap up this series I would like you to consider a few areas where we can personally impact the unity and health in ourselves and others.

On a personal level – where do you need to start building unity?

- Ask the question, “what do they need?”
- Do you need to go to someone and seek or even offer forgiveness?
- Are you in tune with the Holy Spirit? Are you pursuing love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?

And by the way Galatians called these the fruit not fruits of the Spirit.

And on a corporate level – where can you build up and encourage unity among this community we call church?

- Are you working to build unity here? Or you holding on to grudges, and hurts that cause you not to be involved, give, or whatever else may be on your list. Are you praying and seeking to be in tune with the Holy Spirit?

I don't want anyone to miss out on the power and benefit of coming together in fellowship with other believers.

In the book of Acts we see the early church absolutely devoted to meeting together.

Look at it for a moment. . .

Acts 2:42–47 (NIV): They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Once more from The Passion Translation...

Acts 2:42–47 (TPT): Every believer was faithfully devoted to following the teachings of the apostles. Their hearts were mutually linked to one another, sharing communion and coming together regularly for prayer. 43 A deep sense of holy awe swept over everyone, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. 44 All the believers were in fellowship as one body, and they shared with one another whatever they had. 45 Out of generosity they even sold their assets to distribute the proceeds to those who were in need among them. 46 Daily they met together in the temple courts and in one another's homes to celebrate communion. They shared meals together with joyful hearts and tender humility. 47 They were continually filled with praises to God,

enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord kept adding to their number daily those who were coming to life.

And these were people and groups who had immense differences. Yet still, by the power of the Spirit and the bond of Christ, they were able to come together in their common faith.

How many look at verse 41. . .

Acts 2:41 (NIV): Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

So, make a commitment to the local fellowship. Be devoted to the church, to community, and most importantly to Christ.

That's how we become and stay a community of one, united in Christ. Which in turn will transform our world.

Prayer