

**211128-1 Eph 4, 4-7, Keeping the Unity of the Spirit (Doctrine)–CThurman**

The focus of the previous verses, 1-3 concerned the heart of the child of God. First things must be first. The primary concern of every child of God must be to watch, to guard, and to keep his heart. He *must* keep His heart with all diligence.

*Pr 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

To be taught well in doctrine is of little value if the heart is not established with grace. Have you ever noticed that the word of God places much more emphasis upon spiritual things than upon physical things, and upon things of the heart more than things that may be learned. Emphasis is more upon how we know rather than upon what we know. First the Lord would have our love and devotion, then He would have us learn His doctrine. Now, I'm not discounting the importance of sound doctrine in the least, but sound doctrine profits us nothing if the LORD isn't first in our hearts. Too many Christians have good doctrine but spoil it with their corrupt ways, or bad behavior, or unchristlike conduct. The word of God emphasizes first the heart, then the head.

*Deu.6.4 ¶ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:*

*5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

*6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart...*

(In Deuteronomy chapter 10 there is a parallel. First there is the need for circumcision of the heart, then follows the circumcision of the flesh.)

Notice the order here, first, *how* we live, then *what* we know.

*Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Yes, let the word of Christ find in us a heart that will receive every word, every doctrine, all of its warnings and all of its comforts.

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*Heb 13:9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

The NT, Jewish believer not only struggled against the hold that the the old covenant religion of Judaism had upon him, but like every Christian struggles to do, he was also prone to attend to external issues, strange doctrines; looking to external things to the exclusion of issues of the heart. It is natural, not spiritual to look to things outside of us to do rather than paying closest attention to the condition of our hearts.

*Mt 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

We are inclined to focus upon the shortcomings of others rather than considering our own.

*Lu 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.*

*Mt.7.3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

Paul would have the Ephesian brethren turn to things that require the heart; things such as lowliness of mind, meekness, gentleness, kindness, bearing long with others, patience, waiting and forbearance, to be able to put up with the wrongful acts of others. This is the heart that is a proper vessel for good doctrine. (cf. Lk.8.15) He taught them first the heart issue of keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Now he will teach them the head issues of keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Let's read beginning at the first verse and read down to the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> verse.

**4 *There is one body, and one Spirit,***

[the church]

[that gives life to the body and directs us to the ... hope]

*one*, ἓν, nom. of the adj. εἷς.

**one body** – There is one body. Though there were many kinds of bodies: physical, living bodies of all kinds, bodies of water, heavenly bodies; but there was only one kind of body that Paul could be referring to here; that is the NT church of Jesus Christ. Earlier, before Paul had even arrived to Ephesus there was a church or possibly 3 NT churches in the city of Ephesus. However by the time that Paul wrote this letter there appears to have been only one church. Also, when the apostle John wrote his letter of Revelation to the seven churches of Asia, clearly seven individual, local churches, one of them was the church at Ephesus. But whether there is one church in a city or one hundred the word of God only addresses one kind of church: a local church. Some object to this by saying that the church is a spiritual body of believers. But my answer to that objection is quite simply: I am a physical, spiritual local human body. The church is compared to a human body.

*1Co 12:12 For as the body (the human body) is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body (and only one body): so also is Christ. (Meaning, so also is Christ's church.)*

When a plurality of churches is under consideration then the plural noun, churches, is applied. (cf. Ac.9.31; 15.41; 16.5; 19.37; Ro.16.4; 16.16; 1Co.7.17; 11.16; 14.33, 34; 16.1, 19; 2Co.8.1; 8.18, 19, 23, 24; 11.8, 28; 12.13; Gal.1.2, 22; 1Th.2.14; 2Th.1.4; Re.1.4, 11, 20; Re.2.7, 11, 17, 23, 29; 3.6, 13, 22; 22.16)

And the church that should be most important to the member is his church, the one of which they are a part. The notion of a universal church and everyone that believes is a part of it is a serious error. The universal church doctrine diminishes the importance of the church and the essential connection the members have to one another in it under their head, Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ has only one kind of church. It is a local body of baptized believing disciples. There is no such thing as a universal visible church (the Catholic Church), or a universal invisible church (the Protestant church). Peter said to the elders, the presbuteros, the pastors. The pastor's or pastors' of a church are charged to feed the flock where they are and over which the Lord has placed them.

*1Pe 5:1 ¶ The elders which are among you*

Which elders are located in several places in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia ...

*I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:*

*2 Feed the flock of God*

This is not saying that pastors should be feeding a universal flock of Christ. The imperative for them is that they feed that flock which is among them, where they are and with whom they walk.

*which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind...*

Again, notice the phrase 'all the flock.' Pastors cannot take heed for a universal flock, BUT they can take heed for 'all the flock' to which the Spirit of God has appointed them servants.

*Ac 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

In Ac.20.28 Paul was on his way to Jerusalem and arrived to the port city of Miletus. To this place Paul called for the elders/pastors of the church at Ephesus. Paul knew that once he arrived to Jerusalem he

would be arrested by the Roman authorities as a trouble-maker. Now he hoped to take this last opportunity to encourage and warn these Ephesian pastors (plural) of the church (singular) to continue as the servants of Christ though grievous wolves would eventually enter into that flock drawing away disciples after them. Paul's imperative was to the servants of that church, which was, not of the flock of God, BUT it was the flock of God. This was the entire church, the whole church there.

Aside from the many NT references to a plurality of churches also is the fact that the entire church can assemble together at once, in one place: the whole church.

Properly ordered churches know who are their appointed servants, and who are their members, as well as who are not members. To have a properly ordered church the members must be able to come together all at once and all into one place. If that is not possible the operation is not according to the Scriptures. For example,

*Ac 15:22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church (this is with reference to ONLY the Jerusalem church), to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren ...*

*1Co 14:23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place (this is not possible for a universal church), and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?*

The church at Jerusalem was a complete, NT church. All of the members in the city of Corinth of this church was the whole church there.

The new birth does not put anyone into any church. Baptism does not put anyone into any church. Just as regeneration is a prerequisite to baptism, baptism is a prerequisite to church

membership. Several Christian organizations have greatly erred to suggest the souls are added to the church through either the new birth or water baptism. It is simply untrue. Only the LORD adds members into a church through the instrumentality of the members of that church (through a vote). (cf. Ac.2.41) (If a vote may put members out of a church (cf. 1Co.5.13), then it is certain that a vote may put members into a church.)

*1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

*Ac.8.14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that [certain ones in the city of] Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:*

*15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:*

*16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) (They these had been born again and water baptized.)*

*17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. (This was the constitution of a local, NT church in the city of Samaria.)*

There is only one kind of church of the Lord Jesus and it is a local body of baptized believing new covenant related church members. That's it.

Be careful not to confuse the kingdom and the churches. They are not the same. The kingdom of God is a much larger sphere than that of the local churches.

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This should be sufficient to show the Lord's church as a local, spiritual body of members joined together under Christ to do His will in the earth until His second coming.

**one Spirit** – Yes, there is the spirit of the individual man. The Son of God took upon Him to become like all men, a personal, physical body, a soul, and a spirit.

*Lu 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*

This is referred to in the Scriptures either in the Hebrew רִיחַ , ruach, or in the Greek with the term πνεῦμα, pneuma. Man is a tripartite creation of God, body, soul and spirit. Spirit or spirit refers to that unseen part of the being.

*1Th 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Then there are also evil spirits, demons, fallen angels. I believe these terms all refer to the angelic order that fell with Lucifer when He sinned against God. (cf. Is.12.12-15; Lk.10.18; 2Pe.2.4; Jude 6) But here it must be that Paul is referring to the one and only third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost. 'Ghost' communicates that He is the unseen Host of God.

*Ge 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

*Mt.3.16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:*

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*17 And lo a voice (of the Father) from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

*Ac 2.33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

*1Pe.1.1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,  
2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

The Spirit of God is the primary Agent that brings the sinner to Jesus Christ through the new birth.

*Joh 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

*Joh 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

The Spirit of God, who is the Great Comforter of the saints, testifies to us of Jesus Christ.

*Joh 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me ...*

He teaches and reminds us of all that we should know concerning the Person of Jesus Christ, His word, His will and of eternal things.

*Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

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And He is an earnest to the saints until the time they might receive the inheritance with Jesus Christ. (cf. 2Co.1.22; Eph. 1.14)

*2Co.1.22 Who (God) hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

*Eph.1.14 Which (Holy Spirit) is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

<i>even as ye are</i>	<i>called</i>	μιᾶ	<i>in one</i>	<i>hope of your</i>	<i>calling;</i>
	summoned				summons
	verb, καλέω, v.1				noun, κλήσις
					vocation, v.1
		<i>one, μιᾶ, fem. of εἷς.</i>			

**Ye are called** – God called these Ephesians to Him in a way that He did not call others. This was called an effectual calling. It was not resistible. In fact it is irresistible. It is the ‘I’ in the acronym T-U-L-I-P. As is to be expected there is some confusion about this because there are instances in the Scriptures that show men resisting the overtures of God’s grace.

*Ac 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*

It is true that no man is willing, that no man is naturally inclined to come to Christ. Man left to himself, left in his original, dead in trespasses and sins would never come to Christ.

*Jn.5.39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

*40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

Man in his fallen condition cannot receive the things of God. He hasn’t the ability on his own.

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*1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

However, God's calling upon some is after His eternal purpose. This calling is effectual.

*2Ti.1.9 Who (God) hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which [grace] was given us in Christ Jesus (when was this grace given us?) before the world began ...*

Here we read that God's calling was not according to our works BUT according to two things: his purpose and grace, a grace which was given us in Christ before the world began. The the grace of God was given to us that believe ... in eternity. This agrees with the doctrine of election which in fact is a reception of this same grace which was given us in Christ *before the foundation of the world*. (cf. Eph.1.4)

The calling by God is irresistible. There has never been a dead man that ever strove with God to resist coming forth from the grave. NEVER! Everyone called forth lived. Scriptures record three in the **OT** (cf. 1Ki.17.17-24, Elijah and the widow of Zarapheth's son; 2Ki.4.32-36, Elishah and the great woman of Shunem's son; 2Ki.20, 21, the dead body cast into a tomb touching Elijah's bones); and three that Christ personally raised **during His earthly ministry** (Mk.5.22, 23, 35-43, Jairus' daughter; Lk.7.11-15, the widow of Nain's son; Jn.11.1-45, Mary and Martha's brother Lazarus); and three during the **apostolic age** (Mt.27.52, 53, the many raised after Christ's resurrection; Ac.9.36-41, Peter raising Tabitha; Ac.20.9-12, Paul raising Eutychus). Not one soul resisted the will of God to come forth from the dead. And so, there has never been a sinner that God called forth to come to His Son in faith that resisted His will. Every God-called sinner receives everlasting life and believes in Jesus Christ to the saving of the soul.

*Joh 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*

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*44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

Will any man, woman, boy or girl that receives the gracious call to come to Jesus Christ fail to come? Well, let's read again.

*Joh 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*

If we believe the Bible, we know that no man *can* come to Christ of His own will.

*Joh 6:44 No man **can** come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Whose fault is it if man doesn't come to Christ, but the man's. It is no fault of God that man is become a sinner. But it is certainly the free grace of God that any should be saved.

Men may resist a general call, but not an effectual call, otherwise it could not be said that the call was *effectual*. The effectual call forms a central part of the salvation experience. As sure as God foreknows one with a special and intimate knowledge, so he also predestinates the same to a certain end. And in the order of things, as God has revealed them in His word, after foreknowledge and predestination is the calling of God.

*Ro 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

*30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

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How irresistible is the will of God? Let's read the outworking of the effectual call at work upon Saul of Tarsus, a man that hated Jesus Christ and Christians with an intense hatred.

*Ac.9.1 ¶ And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,  
2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.  
3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:  
4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?  
5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.  
6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.  
7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.  
8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.*

Paul was going as hard as he could in the other direction the day the Lord saved Him. Beyond question he was not seeking after God. No, God found Him.

*Ro 3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

So, I ask, whose is seeking who.

*Lu 15:4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?*

*Lu 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

God reaches down into the sinner's dark, blind, stone-cold, lifeless heart and He bestows upon it life from above. The sinner's will is instantly changed from what it was before so that he is willing to follow Christ. Once he was lost but now he is found; once he was blind but now he can see. Once he was headed down the broad road to destruction but now he had come through the strait gate and the narrow way that leads to life.

**one hope** – There is one hope. I could be wrong, but this hope that Paul raises here seems to refer to the singular hope of the resurrection; that at some point every child of God that has ever died shall experience. Even though they die they shall stand again in their human bodies, but without sin to see with their very own eyes the Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly there are a number of other hopes that the children of God have, but the hope of the resurrection, particularly the first resurrection, is the greatest hope before the eyes of the saints of the churches. They hoped to be counted worthy *to obtain* that *age* which was coming at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

*Lu 20:34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:*

*35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:*

*Lu 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

*2Th 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;*

*4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:*

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*5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer ... (God had judged them faithful to suffer these things to bring them into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.)*

4 ἓν σῶμα καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν

**5 One Lord,                      one faith,                      one baptism,**  
[Jesus Christ]                      [His doctrine]                      [identification to Him]

At this point this is a reference to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one Lord, the only Lord to which the saints are subject. He is the Lord of lords. (Deu.10.17; Ps.136.3; 1Ti.6.15; Re.17.15)

*Ro 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.*

I'm not sure to which faith this might refer. It could be to believing faith in Christ and God, or it could be the faith, which refers to the doctrine of Christ and His word. I'm inclined to think that it refers to the faith of the saints.

*Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

This faith is a reference the doctrine of Christ or the doctrine of God. (Jn.19.19; 2Jn.1.9, Christ's doctrine; 1Ti.6.1; Tit.2.10, God's doctrine) And this one faith is derived solely through the Scriptures. We must emphasize that this doctrine is derived solely through the Scriptures, being governed by the NT.

Again, there are many baptisms. Baptisms, such as coming into trial (a baptism by fire), coming into the membership of one of the Lord's churches

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(baptized into one body [cf. 1Co.12.13]) is something that the Lord alone performs. BUT there is only one baptism that the saints of God have anything to do with and that is *water baptism*. This baptism is so clear in the Bible. The element used in baptism, how it is applied is beyond dispute except strong bias against the truth.

*Joh 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.*

...

*Mt.3.16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:*

*Ac.8.36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?*

*37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

*38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.*

*39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

It is commanded of all that believe. (Ac.2.38) It does not put anyone into a church, but it is certainly a prerequisite to being properly joined to it.

*Acts 2.41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (Of all of them that were baptized three thousand were joined to the Jerusalem church.)*

*Ac.8.14 ¶ Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:*

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*15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:*

*16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)*

*17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

Baptism is the answer of a good conscience before God.

*1Pe 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ...*

In short, could I say that, it is from this point of faith, after baptism that the child of God takes his first visible step of faith in Christ. Of course there should be more steps that follow that first step. But it begins here.

5 εἷς κύριος μία πίστις ἓν βάπτισμα

ἐπὶ

διὰ

ἐν

**6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

over

There is one God and Father.

*1Co 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.*

To Him all things are subjected through Christ.

*1Co 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.*

This is the first Person of the Holy Trinity.

He is not the Son or the Holy Spirit. He is the Heavenly Father. He has a Son which He sent into the world to die for His elect. He has a Holy Spirit that He sent at the request of His Son to come to His elect until the time of the resurrection.

*Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

*Ac.2.32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God (the Father) exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

To the Father all our prayers should be offered:

Our Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to pray to the heavenly Father. This imperative is all that we need to know to whom we should direct our prayers. Some pray to the Holy Spirit. Some pray to Jesus Christ. There is not a single text of Scripture showing by precept or example praying to any other than the Heavenly Father. Doing so is at best presumptuous, at worst disobedient.

*Joh 16:26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you ...*

*Mt.6.9 ¶ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

*Lk.11.1 ¶ And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.*

*2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*

Yes, we should pray *with* the Spirit and with the understanding.

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*1Co 14:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.*

Several Scriptures imply prayer to the Father. For example,

*Ac.4.24 And when they (the saints of the Jerusalem church) heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:*

...

*27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus (so this prayer was to the Father), whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together ...*

*Col.4.3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds ... (Again the implication is that prayers would be made to the Father.)*

*1Th 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*2Th.1.11 ¶ Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:*

*12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

And there are explicit examples of prayer being directed to our Heavenly Father.

*Eph 1:16 ... Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you ...

1Th.1.1 ¶ Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 ¶ We give thanks to God (v1, God the Father) always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers ...

6 εἷς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ὑμῶν

κατὰ

**7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure**  
each

*every*, ἐκάστῳ, dat. sing. masc. of the pronoun ἕκαστος, tss. *each one, every, every man, every one.*

*is given*, ἐδόθη, 3ps. aor. ind. pass. of δίδωμι, to give, to deliver.

*measure*, μέτρον, a noun, always tss. with the English, *measure* (13); so measurement.

**of the gift of Christ.**

*gift*, δωρεᾶς, gen. sing. of the noun δωρεά, always tss. with the English *gift* (11); the verb is δίδωμι, to give.

**unto every one of us** – not some of us, but to each one of us. First of all, ‘grace was given to each one of us. It appears by what follows that the grace is to equip each of us to be functioning members of this body of which contribute to the goal of keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And the grace we received was measured to every member of a church of Jesus Christ. Some have much. Some have less. But all have some.

*1Co.12.13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

*14 For the body is not one member, but many.*

*15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*

*16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*

*17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*

*18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

*19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?*

*20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.*

*21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

*22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:*

*23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.*

*24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:*

*25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*

*26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

*27 ¶ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

*28 And God hath set some in the*

There are some strong gifts in this church. The Lord has given some of us a good measure strong faith. To some a large dose of comfort, encouragement. To another a great portion of the gift of mercy. Still another a strong commitment of love. We see some of you with a fuller measure of joy than others might have. There are varying strengths of gifts

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to help others, or wisdom to guide or direct, or of patience, boldness, etc. Christ lavishes upon us all something to contribute to the welfare of this church. He was pleased to do so. Because we received this by His grace then we have no reason for boasting one against another.

*1Co 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*

To him to whom much is given much is required.

*Lu 12:42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?*

*43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

*44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.*

*45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;*

*46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*

*47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

*48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

***is given grace*** – To each member the Lord Jesus has measured a proportion of grace that contributes to the preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. You and I have grace to serve the Lord in this church to that end. We should all willingly contribute our part. I'm not sure, but the gifts of Christ and the fruit seem to me to be the same. I'm not sure but I think

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we are gift with certain pronounced gifts (fruit) while we may learn to grow in others also. We are complete in Him. I think we can grow to be a perfect man, meaning conformed more fully to the image of Christ.

*Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ...*

*Jas 3:2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*

Let us strive together to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, keeping that good doctrine of Christ in this congregation. We must guard ourselves from letting these things slip little by little.

Ἐνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ