Coronavirus Social Distancing Daily Devotion #56

Unity

***Ephesians 4:3 (NASB)*** *3  “being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

We are all very different by God’s design. But often our differences cause us trouble when it comes to living life together. I have worked with many couples over the years who are wanting to marry. Usually when they come to see me, it is a wonderful and exciting time because they are looking forward to being together forever. And that’s the way it should be. There should be a great deal of excitement and a time to celebrate their relationship.

However, most of those couples have no idea about their differences. They know it intuitively and see it come out from time to time, but usually they hide it from themselves and one another. Mostly because they fear it will divide them in some way maybe permanently.

But the differences are what makes each one unique. Many years ago someone said to me, “If two people were exactly the same, one of them would be unnecessary in the relationship”. Certainly, it is better to have more similarities than differences, but differences are what makes life interesting or at least makes life a time of learning and growing into the people God wants us to be.

If it were not for our different ways of viewing life or how to do certain things or even how we think about life, we would not grow and learn what it means to have unity. Unity comes from understanding there are differences between us but also being willing to use those differences to help us see life from different perspectives.

The Apostle Paul understood the importance of finding unity amid differences. The Ephesian church was leaning about God and themselves. They were learning that within the body of Christ there are many different personalities and many ways people think and respond to life. One of his greatest concerns was that those differences would divide the church instead of uniting it. So before he writes our verse for today he uses himself as an example. Notice verses 1-2. **Ephesians 4:1-2 (NASB)** *1 “I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2  with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.”*

Paul first describes himself as being such a follower of God that he considers himself a prisoner. A prisoner is someone who has had their personal freedoms taken away. But Paul is not thinking of himself as a prisoner of God in negative terms but that he so loves God that he willingly as given himself and his desires to follow the Lord. And the main thing Paul has learned is that God wants unity in His church. God wants his people to be so united to Himself and each other that we do not let our differences, large or small, divide our unity or break our fellowship and love for one another.

Right now, during the pandemic, many people are divided on what is right and who is right about what they say and even about the effects of the virus. If Paul were here, he would be preaching the same message as he did to the church in Ephesus. We must be very careful not to let our differences of opinion or differences in who we believe about the virus to cause disunity in the body of Christ. If you notice, one of the things the Lord said is we are to be tolerant of each other. That is not a negative command but a command for us to accept the fact that there are times when we as God’s people will have different views about subjects, but we are to give each other grace in those differences. Unity is God’s heart for His people. Let us make sure we keep that in the forefront of our minds as we face our challenges as a church.