

## John 17:20-23.

## Christians United?

Spiritual unity is a rare commodity.

No wonder our Lord included it in His prayer for His church.

The bonds that tie us together.

### 1. We trust the same Saviour-17:20, 21a.

*20" My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.*

### 2. We bear the same witness to the world-17:21b.

*May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

### 3. We enjoy the same love-17:23.

*23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

#### 1. We trust the same Savior-17:20, 21a.

- We may not agree on every detail of doctrinal interpretation; but if we know Him and share His life, we can experience **unity**.
- It is possible to disagree without being disagreeable.
- **St. Augustine** said: "In essentials, **unity**; in non-essentials, **liberty**; in all things, **charity**."
- If each of us would only learn to regard others as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3), we would have an easier time promoting spiritual **unity**.

#### 2. We bear the same witness to the world-17:21b.

In the eyes of **God**, the church is not divided. But in the eyes of the **world**, the church is divided, and not only divided, but involved in **some serious family feuds**.

- Especially distasteful are those groups who claim to have *all* the truth.
- When Christians love each other and bear witness together, the world will see it.
- Jesus did not pray for a temporary artificial **uniformity**. He prayed for a permanent and sincere **unity** that would bear witness to Jesus Christ.

There is **variety** in the church, so we don't want **uniformity** of **method** or **organization**.

### **3. We enjoy the same love-17:23.**

**Love** is an important element in **Ephesians 4:1-16**, that major passage dealing with Christian unity.

- ***"With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love"*** (Ephesians 4:2).
- ***"But speaking the truth in love..."*** (Ephesians 4:15) ***"causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love"*** (Ephesians 4:16).
- It has well been said that truth without love is brutality ("I'm going to tell you the truth whether you like it or not!"), and love without truth is hypocrisy.
- ***"Speaking the truth in love"*** is still God's way to build His church.