

## From Our Pastor...

### Unity: A Gift *and* a Goal

*Part 2 of the Series*

For more than twenty years, Ingleside has been a remarkably united church. Across those two decades, we have learned some important truths about our unity – some of which probably ought to be highlighted again today.

Last week, in part 1 of this series of articles on unity, I offered three answers to the question of why we should talk about this topic now. This week, let's focus on the fact that the Bible says that our **unity is both a gift and a goal**.

Do you remember what the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome? He said:

<sup>5</sup> May the God who gives endurance and encouragement **give you a spirit of unity** among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5-6, NIV, emphasis added)

Considering the great diversity in any congregation (including ours), to “be of the same mind with one another” (Rom. 15:5, NASB), or “to live in such harmony with one another” (Rom. 15:5, ESV), is definitely a gift from God. Unity is not something that can be orchestrated solely by human ingenuity and effort. In God's sovereign grace, he grants us unity in Christ. So, we offer to him praise and thanksgiving for the unity that exists among us. He gets all the glory!

The Bible also tells us, however, that unity is a goal toward which we should strive. Do you remember the words the Apostle Paul wrote to the church of Ephesus? He said:

**Make every effort to keep the unity** of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3, NIV, emphasis added)

Other translations of this verse say: “make it your aim” (Phillips), “do all you can to preserve” (Jerusalem), “spare no effort” (NEB), “be eager *and* strive earnestly to guard *and* keep the harmony *and* oneness of [and produced by] the Spirit in the binding power of peace” (Amplified NT).

Scripture is clear: we are to make it a priority to prize, pursue, and protect the unity of our church. What we do and say matters. Some words, actions, and attitudes promote unity, while others diminish it. God expects us to maximize the former, and minimize the latter.

As with any number of other biblical truths, at Ingleside we affirm both that **God is sovereign** (unity is his gift to us) and **we are responsible** (unity is a goal for us to pursue). The bottom line: **unity in the church is good for us and brings glory to God!**

I'm grateful for your partnership in the gospel and am convinced that *the best is yet to come!*

Your Pastor and Friend,



Tim McCoy