

Unity - Part 3
"Unity through the House..."
February 20th, 2022

Intro:

- This is Week 3 - Unity - An invitation to the Road Less Traveled...
 - Jesus invites us to follow Him!
 - Easy to go down Wide Path, we should choose the Narrow Way!
 - The last 2 weeks have felt "Narrow," Yep!!! (Mt. 7:13)
 - In your Marriage, in how we view our Nation, others not like us
- I want to commend you for your Open Hearts toward this Very Complex & Tough Topic of "Unity."
 - If you've missed any... YouTube / Website
 - www.NLC.com/unity - Book Interview
- This weekend: "Unity through the Whole House!"
 - Why this matters... we're not just a bunch of Individuals sitting in 3 locations & online.
 - We are a House, a Body & a Family, made up of multiple & unique races, ages, generations, male & female, diff. economic places
 - & yet, we can come together & be ONE!

John 17:23 "I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

- A Divided World will know God's love when we are Living in Unity!!!
- Which sounds amazing...

PRAY

- So... God wants us to be United in His House!
 - The Problem is: We're Human / Self-Centered / Self-Focused / We get out of unity through Offense & Misunderstanding.
 - Often times, we look the exact same way that the world does!
 - Even though, Jesus prayed we would BE DIFFERENT!!!

1. God wants His Church to resemble Heaven!!!

A. Let me show what that looks like...

Revelation 7:9-10 "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

- Nation - GK - "People Formed by practicing particular Customs or a Common Culture..."
 - Tribe - GK - "A Clan or Race of People..."
 - People - GK - "The People of the Lord..."
 - Tongue - GK - "A People distinguished by their Speech..."
- There's gonna be every color & language & custom & culture there!

B. ? How do we make Our Church look like Heaven now?

- Maybe some of you grew up like I grew up... 97% white!
 - That is NOT what Heaven is gonna look like!
- But thankfully, SWFL looks different than that!

C. We make our church look like Heaven by being Inclusive of EVERYONE who makes up SWFL!

- 2020 SWFL STATISTICS
- 9% - Black - 3% - Asian / Mixed Race / Other
- 22% - Hispanic - 66% - White

D. Let me show you what that looks like! SHOW PEOPLE

- Notice: 2/10 - Under 18! - 3/10 - Over 65! - Hispanic
- Black People - Representing Heaven in this House

How do we get there? by being United around God's Priorities!

2. God wants us to be United around His Priorities. (What are those?)

*** A Real Heaven & Hell.**

A. People are living without Hope now & for eternity.

- There is a Virus that's greater than the COVID, it's called SIN!
- It's destruction is guaranteed.

B. Satan wants us to take our eyes off of Sin & Eternity & put them on Literally ANYTHING ELSE!!!

- Some of us in the Church today have lost sight of this Goal...
Reaching People who don't know Jesus!!!
- We've gotten distracted & focused on a lot of other "Good" things, but they are NOT the Hope of Heaven & Eternity!!!

C. NOAH ILL. - God Called him to 1 Purpose - Build a Boat to save Humanity from a Coming Flood!

- 3.1M board ft = (500 sf house) = 1,000 houses!!!
- But they all would have washed away when the flood came!

D. MIP: Church - God has called us to Build a Boat of Salvation to those who don't know Christ around us!

- That's what we are doing! - Everything is about THAT ONE AIM!!!

*** A Real Enemy.**

A. Satan is the Ultimate Distractor!

- His whole aim is to get us distracted from 2 things:
 - 1) Seeing People as our Purpose.
 - 2) Seeing him as the Real Enemy.

B. This is why he loves the fact that our world is so divided Red & Blue & Black & White right now!

- B/c as long as we think that "they" are our enemy, then we will never "Love" them & they will never know the Love of Christ!!!

Matthew 5:43-45a "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven."

- IOW, You look like your Father when you love those who don't look like you, think like you, act like you, talk like you, vote like you, believe like you!!!

C. There is a Real Enemy, Satan, & as a Church we are going to keep attacking him in Prayer & Warfare, b/c he's got nothing on us!!!

*** A Real Church with a Mission.**

A. Our Mission is the Mission of Jesus!

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

- That's what He is up to & He wants US to be up to that as well!**
- It's not just the work of a few! It's for all of us to do!**

B. We are praying for a Deep Conviction of the Holy Spirit to begin running through our church again that People really are going to hell when they die & will be separated from God for all of eternity!

D. This is why Being Planted is SO ESSENTIAL!!!

- B/c we're on Mission Together... Each one of us!**
- Satan wants to us to drift from Church to Church & make it all about us, instead of keeping our eyes on how we can reach others!**

Ephesians 4:1-3 "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

- Make Every Effort... to Stay United around God's Priorities!!!

3. God wants us to Love Others Unconditionally.

- **PETER ILL** - God had used Peter to see 10,000's of Jews to know Jesus.
- But God had more for him... to reach non-Jews (Gentiles) as well.
- Acts 10, he's praying & he has a vision...

Acts 10:11-13 "He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

v. 14-15 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

- He had a Bias that was keeping him from Loving Gentiles Unconditionally!!!
 - He had literally heard Jesus say "Love your neighbor," & here he was NOT loving a whole group of people!
 - He had literally been forgiven by Jesus & here he is being "Conditional."
- Knock on the door - Gentiles asking for him to come to them...

v. 28 "He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean."

- He goes w/ them & the next thing that happens is Peter leads a whole bunch of "Unclean" people to Christ!!!

v. 44-45 "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles."

- They had the same bias, but b/c Peter got past his bias w/ Unconditional Love, they got past theirs & there's an Outpouring of the H.S.!!!

A. Church family - We all can have Biases toward certain people groups in our hearts.

- Based on How we Grew up / Life Experiences / What we've Taught or Caught...
- It doesn't make us Racists or Haters... it just makes us human & this can divide us if we're not aware of it.

B. MWK - BIAS TOWARD "MUSCULAR PASTORS" ILL.

- For so long, we struggled & could barely survive & all these Big Church Pastors were all fit & in shape, etc.
 - I picked up a "Bias" toward Muscular Pastors!
- Somehow, having big muscles meant you had "Arrived" were "Better than me."
 - I wasn't able to Receive from them b/c of how they looked!!!
 - I literally resisted working out or getting in shape b/c I "Didn't want to be one of those Pastors."
- God dealt w/ me, "Really Matt, you're putting conditions on who you will & won't receive from?!?"

D. We all can have Biases - Peter had them, I have had them, & God wants us to deal w/ them.

? What do we do?

1) When we see it - We need to Repent & Change our Ways.

- As soon as I saw it, I repented of it!

2) When we can't see it - Ask the Holy Spirit to begin to Open your eyes to them.

- Watch for the H.S. to use your Triggers!!!
- When do you Feel a "Rise" or "Reaction" on the Inside?
 - Another word: When do you feel "Judgment" of some kind?
 - When do "Less than Christ-like" thoughts go through your head?

- ME & MUSCULAR PASTORS ILL.

- Maybe for you: Ethnic Group / Poor Peo. / Rich Peo. / Police / Men / Women / Smokers / Wore Masks/ Didn't / Vaccine / No Vaccine? / Liberals / Conservatives

F. If we're going to "Live as ONE in Unity" then we've got to become ever increasingly aware of our own Biases.

- We don't have to "Over-React," just "Respond in your heart."

Ephesians 4:3 "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

- Heaven is a Diverse Place & so is God's Church and...

- Unity starts IN US!!!

Challenge:

? How are you feeling right now?

- What's the Lie / Fear the Devil is trying to get you to hear & believe?

- What's the Holy Spirit trying to Stir up in you?

- Time of Prayer:

- Give God Permission to Show you any Biases you may have.

? Are you living like Heaven is Real? Real Enemy? Real Mission?

? Is there anyone who you've been "Against" that you need to begin seeing as your Mission Field, not your Enemy?

SALVATION

PRAY: May we Live MORE AWARE & MORE ON MISSION than ever before!

MAKE ROOM SONG