**October 15, 2017 “Unity in the Spirit” Ephesians 4:1-6**

Our primary verse for today is found in verse 3, where the Word of God tells us to “be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. I personally think that the greatest testimony of the Church of Jesus Christ is not its mission outreach, nor is its ability to feed the poor and downtrodden but rather the greatest testimony is unity in the Holy Spirit.

Why do I say this? Every institution known to man of which I am aware functions in disunity. Take for example the United States Congress and consider how dysfunctional it is in nearly every aspect of its legislative role. Then look at the United Nations. Have you ever seen a greater dysfunctional mess? It was established to keep world peace and it has failed in that role over and over again. How many of us don’t work at jobs were there is constant bickering over this or that? Over how so and so doesn’t work as hard as they should but since they are the supervisors pet…?

I doubt if there is a greater example of disunity laid out for us than that of the present-day activities of many of those in the National Football League who when the National Anthem is played take a knee on the field supposedly to bring attention to the unfair treatment of black people in the United States.

This movement was started by a man named, Colin Kaepernick, who is supposedly bi-racial man. I say this, because his mother, Heidi Russo, who is a Caucasian woman was impregnated by an African American man when she was 19 years old. She gave her son up for adoption when he was born and he was adopted into to a Caucasian family who already had two children, a son and daughter but who had previously lost two other children due to heart defects. Interestingly, Kaepernick has never met his biological sire nor until recently did he ever meet his biological mother.

The family moved to California when Colin was 4 and he excelled in sports and academically was 4.0 GPA student. His adopted brother Kyle sent out DVD’s of Colin’s athletic skills to around 100 colleges applying for scholarships. He received a scholarship from the University of Nevada and was drafted by the San Francisco 49’ers and the Chicago Cubs. The last contract he signed with the 49’ers reportedly will pay him about 100 million dollars.

Most of us would look at a life like that and say, “what in the world does he have to complain about?” Yet his actions have led to a great upheaval and disunity between the NFL, the players and the fans.

Yet many in the Church of Jesus Christ act in nearly the same fashion. We have received far more than Kaepernick. Read the first ten chapters of Romans:

* Justified by faith alone
* There is now therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus
* Nothing will ever separate us from the love of God
* We are more than conquerors
* Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved

Read the first 4 chapters of Galatians

* Who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age

Read the first 2 chapters of Colossians

* Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints

Read the first 3 chapters of Ephesians

* That in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus

Is it any wonder Paul exhorts us to “walk worthy of the calling to which you have been called?”

1. Note the progression
   1. Humility
      1. I can understand why God saved me but why did He save Rolland?
         1. Masochist… poking himself and bleeding all over
         2. Drug addict… always shooting up
      2. Stop being self-centered
   2. Gentleness
      1. Defend the dignity of God
      2. Not yours
   3. Patience
      1. Not swayed by our circumstances
   4. Showing tolerance for one another in love
      1. Love does what?
         1. I Peter 4:8… a multitude of sins
         2. We have no problem that Christ covers our sins
            1. We just have a problem doing that to those around us
2. Preserving the unity of the Spirit
   1. Unity is never man made
      1. Congress
      2. United Nations
      3. NFL
   2. Unity is Spirit made
      1. How?
         1. One is the key
3. One
   1. Body
      1. Not several
      2. We can’t
         1. They not only hear in tongues they speak in tongues
         2. They baptize infants
         3. They use drums in their service
         4. They let kids take communion
         5. They make people tithe
         6. They make people come forward for prayer
   2. Spirit
      1. One Holy Spirit… that leads all of us to Christ
   3. Hope
      1. Look around you
         1. These are the people you are going to spend eternity with
         2. We are all going to the same place
   4. Lord
      1. There is only one Name given
      2. Acts 4: 12… “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given unto men by which we must be saved”
   5. Faith
      1. In Christ alone
   6. Baptism
      1. One testimony of who has saved you
   7. God and Father
      1. Note the Trinity
         1. Of all
         2. Over all
         3. Through all

But to each one of us… grace