1. **A Fractured Body**

In the spring of 2020, I began to experience some significant discomfort in my left foot – the outer ankle and down the outside of my foot. I had been running nearly every morning for quite sometime, but the pain became so intense that I spent a couple of days at home barely able to walk.

I went to the doctor for x-rays and the doctor hit me with the bad news. I had a significant fracture of the ankle bone.

But there was a problem. The fracture was on the inside bone, and the pain I was experiencing with on the outside of my foot. In fact I had no pain on the fractured bone whatsoever. Not only that I had no idea how or when I fractured my ankle.

Because of this unknown fracture on the inside of my foot, my running gait was off kilter and was causing pressure, inflammation, and irritation to the outside of my foot.

The doctor prescribed for me a big ol’ walking boot that I was supposed to wear for 3 weeks. This walking boot was designed to retrain my gait so that I could run with endurance and without causing harm to my body again.

So my body was in pain and unable to run because I had a fracture that I was unaware of. So I needed to take some intentional and even inconvenient measures in order correct my gait so that I could continue running and exercising and bring strength and health to my body.

1. **The Great Fracture and the Great Physician**

Today the body of Christ is fractured in many ways – social-economically, racially, theologically, politically, relationally, etc. The unfortunate and heartbreaking thing about it is that most are either unaware or uninterested in addressing it.

Christianity, today, is the most fractured group on the earth. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o’clock on Sunday morning.”

**The Lord – our Great Physician – is wanting to bring wholeness, unity, honor, and genuine love to the Body of Christ by alerting us to the fracture and then gifting us with ways to re-train our walk so that we can run our race with endurance** and become light in a dark world.

But what does that mean? What does that look like? Why is it so important now? How do we walk in unity when there is so much that divides us?

These questions and more should launch us into a dialogue with the Lord through His word and in prayer.

1. **The High Priestly Prayer - The Longing of Jesus**

**(John 17:20-24)****20** *I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;* **21** *that they all my be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.* **22** *And the glory which You have Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one;* **23** *I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.* **24** *Father, I desire…*

John 17, often called the High Priestly Prayer, is longest of the recorded prayers in the Bible. In it Jesus prayer for Himself (vs 1-5), His disciples and followers (vs 6-19), and for all believers current and future (vs 20-26).

Although the other prayer of Jesus still apply to us 2,000+ years later, verses 20-26 give us specific insight into what Jesus prayed for when He prayed for us – you and me.

**(John 17:20)** *but also for those who will believe in Me through their*

[the disciples] *word;*

Let that sink in – Jesus prayed for you! **This is, in the words of the great Vizzini, “Inconceivable!”**

Jesus, the Savior of the World, the 2nd Person of the Trinity, the Alpha and Omega, Son of God, Son of Man, the Holy Head of the Church, the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Judge of the Nations, the Logos, Lion, the Lamb of God PRAYED FOR YOU!

But what did He pray for? What did Jesus prayer for when He prayed for you?

**Jesus prayed that the Church would walk in their identity as the fellowship of the undivided,** resulting in the world experiencing the overflowing love of the Father and receive Himself [Jesus] as the Messiah.

In other words, **He prayed for unity, revival, and a global outpouring of the Father’s affection.**

 **(John 17:23)** *…that they may be made perfect in one…*

This issue of unity just might be really important to Jesus and thus should be important to us.

Jesus peers prophetically through the corridors of time, sees His church and prays that we might walk in unity. I believe that Jesus understood by the Spirit that His church would be fractured.

Perhaps Jesus looked 2,000 years into the future and saw his followers **SOCIAL MEDIA** accounts and thought, *“O Father, I need to pray for unity. Our people have lost their minds! They’re more concerned about winning arguments than winning hearts. They’re more concerned with being right than being redemptive. They’re more concerned about getting likes than being Christ-like.”*

But unity will not come to the Church by accident. We must be intentional to humble ourselves, walk in love, and honor one another – especially those with whom we disagree.

Unity starts with humility.

1. **Unity**

Before we look at what unity is, let’s look at what it is not. **Unity is not uniformity.**

God is infinitely creative. He loves diversity – diversity of thought, color, personalities, opinions, styles, etc. No two snowflakes are alike. No two fingerprints are alike.

Also, unity is not about pretending we don’t have difference! In other words, **unity is not about being colorblind.** Can we strike this phrase from our collective vocabulary?! God is not colorblind, and He doesn’t want us to be colorblind. God is a colorful God. Jesus died in order to have a beautiful array of colors, ethnicities, languages, dialects, and sounds around His throne.

**(Rev. 5:9)** *And they sang a new song saying: You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For you were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,*

**(Rev. 7:9)** *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb…*

To be colorblind is to dismiss the depths of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross; it is to miss out on the radiant beauty of the Bridegroom God and His beloved, colorful Bride.

**Unity also does not mean that we all have to think, feel, believe, and enjoy the same things.**

**(I Cor. 12:4-7)****4** *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.* **5** *There are differences of ministries, but same Lord.* **6** *And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.* **7** *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

**(I Cor. 12:20)** *But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.*

**Most of the Church today acts as if unity will come only when we can get all the other groups to look and act like us. Beloved that is not unity, that’s myopic, egocentric narcissism, and it grieves the heart of God.**

O that we would pray with the Psalmist,

**(Ps. 139:23,24)****23** *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties;* **24** *And see if there is any wicked way* [way of pain] *in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

**If our efforts towards unity include trying to convert our brethren to our “side” instead of dying to our own over-inflated allegiances to certain doctrines, then it’s not a unified church we’re seeking, but a homogeneous club destined for division and discord.**

This does not mean that doctrines aren’t important, they are. But believers are way too quick to assume all of their doctrines are correct, while others’ need adjustments to mirror ours.

Unity comes when we die to ourselves, embrace humility, repent of perpetuating disunity, and intentionally pursue connection with one another.

It’s vital that we grow in our ability to affirm out areas of agreement, celebrate our diversity, and create harmony with one another.

What is Biblical Unity

**Unity is the “state of being undivided,” or “to be made one.”**

The Church, therefore, is called to be a fellowship the undivided. This means we are a people of genuine affection, honor, humility, and purpose – those who refuse to let go of one another when disputes arise; those who wholeheartedly run to the place of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation when a rift arises; those who prefer one another even when differences are present; those who engage in expressions of love and honor even with people we don’t even like.

Biblical unity is an eternal reality in the Godhead.

Jesus experienced perfect unity and unbroken fellowship with His Father and Holy Spirit from eternity past. The Trinity is and always has been perfect partnership – consummate communion. God was the first small group.

The outrageous thing about this is that Jesus calls us into this divine fellowship with Him and each other. Unity is not an option for us. Unity is no peripheral. **A unified bride reflects the eternal glory of her holy Bridegroom.**

Paul urges us in to pursue and keep unity.

**(Eph. 4:1-4)****1** *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,* **2** *with all lowliness, and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,* **3** *endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* **4** *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.*

The word urge in verse 1 literally means, “to call close-up and personal; to beg, to plead.”

In other words, Paul is getting up in our faces and pleading with us to not be jerks and fight to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

The word “bond” in verse 3 literally means, “that which ties together a joint; ligament.” When the bond of peace is broken, the joints separate.

But too often we are so caught up with being right, expressing our opinions, winning a debate, and/or taking a stand that we forget about the words, lowliness, gentleness, patience, love, peace, bond, unity, and oneness.

We must purse unity, fight for peace, and embrace humility. **And in the words of the Mandalorian, “This is the way.”** This is the way of Jesus, Who, while we were yet still sinners – enemies of God – Christ pursued is love, humbled Himself on the cross, and fought to reconcile (make peace) man to God.

Unity looks like:

 -Stop cutting off friendships because someone disagrees with you

-Stop creating an atmosphere of agreement in your relationships and replace it with an atmosphere of affection.

Yes, even when we aren’t the ones to cut off the relationship, we must ask ourselves the question, “Did I create an atmosphere in which the other person felt the need to disconnect?”

Just because we don’t “un-friend” someone doesn’t mean that we did all we could to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Jesus is calling us to be different in this world.

Let us be a people who embrace the Cross of Christ instead a Cancel Culture.

**A cancel culture is the antithesis of a Kingdom Culture.**

Cancel Culture says, "If you have any weaknesses or imperfections and you sin against me - even indirectly - you deserve to be cut off, silenced, and made to suffer for it."

The Cross of Christ says, *"precisely because you are weak and imperfect, and while you are sinning against God and nailing Me to a tree, I am praying for your forgiveness, crying out for mercy, and bleeding for you so that you will not be cut off; dying so that you can have connection and communion with the Father forever. I don't want you to suffer, but rather experience the unending pleasures of God forever."*

**Cancel Culture seeks retribution, while the Kingdom Culture seeks restoration.**

**Cancel Culture promotes aggression, while the Kingdom Culture pursues acceptance.**

**Cancel Culture is about separation, while the Kingdom Culture is about adoption.**

**One involves fear, the other forgiveness.**

Fellow believers, let's magnify the Cross of Christ, walking as people of the Kingdom, in this season and refuse to take part in the Cancel Culture.

**(I Jn. 4:10,11)****10** *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins* **11** *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

**(I Jn. 2:9,10)** *9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. 10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.*