



1



2

Jesus' high priestly prayer -
John 17
 "20 I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but **for those also who believe in Me through their word;** 21 **that they may all be one;** even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. 22 And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, **that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.**"

- is for a **SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY** of diverse people authenticating the Gospel to a lost & lonely world.

COMMUNITY is a BIG DEAL

3

Three BIG DEALS

1. Spiritual UNITY,
Proverbs 6
 "16 **There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:** 17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, 19 a false witness *who* utters lies, **and one who spreads strife among brothers.**"

The Gospel is about
PEACEMAKING & BODYBUILDING.

4

UNITY in the Body of Christ gets a lot of attention.
1 Corinthians 3
 "16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 **If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.**"

James 3
 "17 But **the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.** 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is **sown in peace by those who make peace.**"

Ephesians 4
 "1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with **all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love,** 3 **being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**"

5

COMMUNITY does not mean UNIFORMITY!
1 Corinthians 12
 "4 Now there are varieties of **gifts**, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of **ministries**, and the same Lord. 6 And there are varieties of **effects**, but the same God who works all things in all persons."

COMMUNITY does not mean full CLARITY!
1 Corinthians 13
 "11 When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For **now we see in a mirror dimly**, but then face to face; **now I know in part**, but then I will know fully just as it also have been fully known. 13 But **now faith, hope, love, abide** these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Some things will be UNCLEAR.
Faith, hope, & love should be CLEAR.

6

2 Timothy 2

"23 But **refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.** 24 And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, **patient when wronged,** 25 with **gentleness correcting those who are in opposition,** if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,"

A healthy Body of Christ,
is a family team that has
wise shepherds who are
PEACEMAKERS.

P rincipled
E mpathetic
A ffirming
C ourageous
E difying

7

"A team plays for
the name on the
front of the jersey
not for the name
on the back!"

Dean Smith

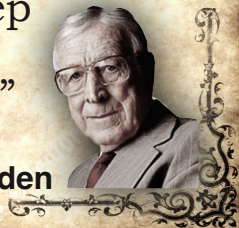


8

"A coach is one who can
give correction without
causing resentment."

"Don't let what you
can't do well keep
you from what
you can do well."

John Wooden



9

Peacemakers do not fear diversity
because they are
not:



are "Body
of Christ"
builders.



surprised
by conflict



shaken
by conflict



the source
of conflict

They see unity with diversity as a visual aid to the Gospel.

10

The first negative human emotions
expressed in the Bible are

Could this be
the Biblical
picture of
the human
dilemma?

Genesis 3:10
"I was **afraid**
because I was
naked; so I
hid myself."

**fear &
shame**



11

"Despite the biblical
passages exhorting
followers of Christ to "fear
not," it is possible to write
an entire history of
American evangelicalism
as the story of Christians
who have failed to
overcome fear."

John Fea
(historian)



12

**If we demand “worldly comfort”
we may not find it, following Jesus.**

Matthew 5

“44 But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you 45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 For **if you love those who love you, what reward have you?** Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?”

Diversity will bring conflict and discomfort.

**The temptation is to seek personal comfort
at the expense of Christian community.**

13

James 4

“1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? **Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?** 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because **you ask with wrong motives**, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

**The root of social CONFLICT is an inner FEAR
of diversity, driving us to seek COMFORT
at the expense of “BODY LIFE”.**

11 Do not speak against one another, brethren.”

**Be quick to HEAR and slow to SPEAK
in order to LOVE, LEARN, and LIVE.**

14

Three **BIG DEALS**

1. Spiritual **UNITY**,

2. built on **LOVE**

1 John 4:18

“There is no fear in love; but **perfect love casts out fear**, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.”

**The Gospel is about
OVERCOMING FEAR**

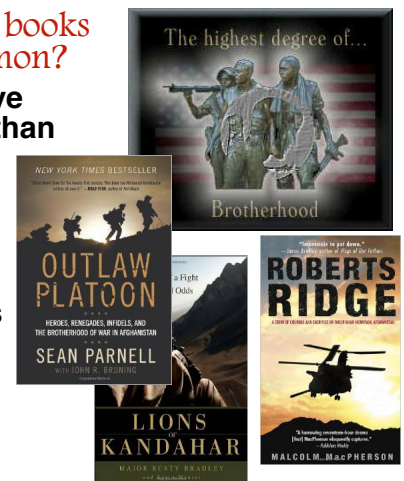
15

What do these books
have in common?

Stories of love
that is greater than

FEAR

“Our love for
those beside us
and behind us
is greater than
the fear of the
enemy before
us.”



16

Psalms 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.

3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

**I fear no evil, for
You are with me;**

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

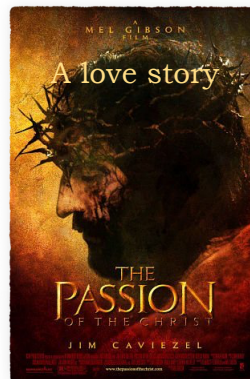
5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

17

**The Gospel ~ Love that is greater
than fear**



“Greater love
has no one
than this,

**thought love
was shaped**

that
one lay
down
his life
**but it's
actually like a**
for his
friends.”
John 15:13

18

Three **BIG DEALS**

1. Spiritual **UNITY**,
2. built on **LOVE**,
3. through the **WISDOM** of a **RENEWED MIND**.

19

Those who are not well grounded may distort Paul's teaching and miss the good news of **the Gospel of grace through faith**.

2 Peter 3

"15 ... Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which **the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.**"

Titus 3

"9 **shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law;** for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 **Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,**"

20

Guidance before and after Pentecost



21

Note how the Apostles addressed differences in matters of **MAJOR DOCTRINES (O.C. - N.C.)**

Acts 15

"1 And some men came down from Judea and began **teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."** 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had **great dissension and debate with them**, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should **go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.**

6 **And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.** 7 **And after there had been much debate**, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 **And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us;** 9 **and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.**

22

14 Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. 15 **And with this the words of the Prophets agree,**

22 **Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them** to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—

28 **For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to."**

34 **But it seemed good to Silas** to remain there.

37 **And Barnabas was desirous of taking John, called Mark, along with them also.** 38 **But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.** 39 **And there arose such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him**

Leaders made decisions after seeking wisdom, Scriptural support, testimonials, debate, & consensus from the broader church body.

23

GODLY DIVERSITY can bring divisions (gifts, styles, perspectives, priorities)?

1 Corinthians 1

"10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.** 11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. 12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." 13 **Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ... 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel,** not in cleverness of speech, that the cross of Christ should not be made void."

MAIN THINGS take PRECEDENCE over minor things.

24

Respect differences in matters of *CONSCIENCE*
(Like sabbath days & traditions)?

Romans 14

“1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. 2 **One man has faith that he may eat all things**, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. 3 Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? 5 One person **regards one day above another**, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind... 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ... 19 So then **let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.**”

CONSCIENCE takes precedence over comfort.

25

The temptations of Jesus
and all humanity

Fear

Matthew 4

HOPE

Change the circumstances!

“3 **Command** that these stones become bread.”

Claim the promises!

6 **He will command His angels concerning you** so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

Compromise the means!

9 All these things I will give you, **if you (prostrate yourself before) me.**”

26

Getting doctrine right starts with
getting priorities right.

- **Conflict** (from diversity) is a calling not a curse.
- **Peacemaking** between unity & diversity is a calling.
- Overcoming **fear** with **love** is vital to peacemaking.
- **Sacrificing** personal freedom is the Way of the Cross.
- **Wisdom** from within is what we should pray for.
- **Respectful** listening breaks barriers & builds bridges.
- **Leaders** need to model peacemaking wisdom.

27

“What we have to do... is to find a way to celebrate our diversity and debate our differences without fracturing our communities.”

Hillary Clinton

28

Hard Questions

Next week
 1Cor. 11:19

Church history
 (major & minor issues)

29