

***Sabbath School Today***  
**With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

***The Holy Spirit and Spirituality***  
**Lesson 9. The Holy Spirit and the Church**

Paul proclaimed Jesus with the blessing of the Holy Spirit. His plea for the church members in Corinth to “speak [teach] the same thing, [have] no divisions among you,” and “be perfectly joined together in the same mind” (1 Cor. 1:10) is not idle talk. This is God’s ideal for His church, and a little known prediction in an out-of-date book states categorically that such blessed heart- and mind-unity will be realized in the church before Jesus returns: “They will see eye to eye in all matters of religious belief. They will speak [teach] the same things; ... they will be one in Christ Jesus.” [1]

How people in a church can truly believe the same thing (unity) is important, because Jesus said that the only way the world can be brought to believe in Him is when His followers “all may be one, ... that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me” (John 17:21). Something He calls “Thy truth” is the only thing that will unite them (vs. 17). Paul calls it “the truth of the gospel” (Gal. 2:5, 14). The success or failure of Christ’s mission for the world therefore depends on that “truth” bringing His people who profess to “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” into one (Rev. 14:12).

If you are perplexed today as to what you can believe out of all the conflicting confusion, take heart. Jesus made another promise that is 100% true (sincere Jews were perplexed as to whether this upstart young Rabbi from Galilee was right, or whether the venerable elders from the headquarters offices were right): “If anyone will do His will [the Father’s], he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be from God, or whether I speak of Myself” (John 7:17). If the common people would follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, saying a willing “amen” to each new ray of light flashed upon their pathway, their thinking would become clear. And there you have the Light flashing on your pathway today!

All the wonderful promises that Jesus made before His death must and will be fulfilled. But there is one *great* promise that has not yet been fulfilled, and many Christians think it never will be. They are wrong! He will not fail.

That great promise is in John 16:13: “When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.” We usually think of the Holy Spirit as giving us happy feelings or of giving great power in witnessing and producing baptisms; we think that understanding “all truth” is of lesser importance. But over 200 times the Bible speaks of the importance of truth. In ordinary life, law courts, juries, judges, seek constantly to know the truth. Jesus says that it is so important that “the truth shall make you free” (8:32).

What can bring about a unity and clarity to understanding these important truths? Surely when that great fourth angel of Revelation 18:1-4 begins to “lighten the earth with glory,” the message that calls every sincere person “out of Babylon” will be a message of pure, unadulterated truth. We pray daily for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. An excellent place to begin finding the answer to that prayer is in honest, sincere, and humble listening to the Bible to permit it to tell us what the truth is in all these controverted areas. Jesus did not promise, “The Holy Spirit will *try* to lead you into all truth,” or “He wishes He could lead you into all truth.” No, He said He *will* do so. The Holy Spirit right now “leading” us into the truth that will bind us together in loving harmony of belief. Let’s listen to Him!

All the “concepts” of the 1888 message point to unity among God’s people. Ellet J. Waggoner, one of the 1888 “messengers,” has written:

“The Bible is full of the idea of unity in the church of Christ, but we do not read so much about uniformity. This unity is to be the unity of life and growth, and not a mere outward connection. In Christ’s prayer to the Father for His disciples, He said, ‘And the glory that Thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one’ (John 17:22, 23). Here we see that the glory of the Lord is to effect the union of believers, and the union is to be that of the Father and the Son.

“The union of the Father and the Son is union of spirit. We can not comprehend this union, but we may know that it is not a forced union, but that it results from their very nature. They have *one life*. Their thoughts and purposes are the same, not because they come together and compare notes and agree to be alike, but because one life is in them both. So the union of believers is to be a vital union, or it is not any union at all. It is not accomplished by strife and debate and decisions of majorities, but by yielding the mind to Christ and hearing His voice. They are to be united by the mind and Spirit of Christ. The life of the Father and the Son in each member of the church will produce the most perfect union in the whole body. ...

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all’ (Eph. 4:4-6). The apostle’s exhortation is, ‘that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment’ (1 Cor. 1:10). But let it be borne in mind that this union is not artificial, but natural; not the human nature, however, but the divine nature.

“The unity of belief in the church is not forced by the church coming together and the majority defining the creed to be beloved. The church can not define doctrine, nor make laws for itself or anybody else. The church of Christ is made up of all who obey the Lord’s commands not a body to issue commands. The Head directs, the body obeys. God speaks; each one must listen to His voice, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and no one can give faith to another. ‘It is the gift of God.’” [2]

The Holy Spirit right now is “leading” us into the truth that will bind us together in loving harmony of belief. Come, today; and be a part of Christ’s solution, not a part of His problem. Get in full unity with His truth, and you’ll be one with Him.

—*From the writings of E. G. White, E. J. Waggoner, and Robert J. Wieland*

**Endnotes:**

[1] Ellen G. White, *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 124.

[2] Ellet J. Waggoner, “The Unity of the Church,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Oct. 21, 1902; see also “Unity and Uniformity,” *The Present Truth*, April 20, 1893.

**Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

[https://youtu.be/r5\\_93CkPnas](https://youtu.be/r5_93CkPnas)

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