

Sabbath School Lesson #4 – Unity Through Humility – 17-23 January 2026

Christ prayed that we should be in unity with our fellow believers to mirror the unity of Christ and His Father (see John 17), and the apostle Paul prayed for the same unity when he says, “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Philippians 2:2). God has tempered the body together, “that there should be no schism in the body” (1 Corinthians 12:24-25). The apostle’s exhortation applies to us: “that there be no divisions among you” (1 Corinthians 1:10). The unity of belief in the church is not forged by the majority defining the creed to be believed. The church cannot make laws for itself or anybody. 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.” The secret of avoiding schism is to have the mind of Christ: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

Sunday: Disunity in Philippi – Read Philippians 2:1-3; what factors seem to have led to disunity within the church, and what does Paul suggest as a remedy? Strife or vainglory in Philippi was only a symptom of a much larger problem that affects even Adventists today. The large problem professed Adventists have with reading the word, is they do not let it work in them; they instead attempt the impossibility of working the word of God in themselves.

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (Ephesians 4:31). How many have read these words and have thought, ‘Oh, that it might be so!’ and how earnestly they have tried to put away that evil speaking, together with “the root of bitterness” whence it springs, and have failed, because “the tongue can no man tame, it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8). The same trouble has been found with the similar exhortation, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6). O, yes, if we only could; but how often have we resolved that we would not be betrayed into hasty speech, and have almost immediately been covered with shame because of the foolish things that issued from our mouth ‘before we thought’! Again we read the divine exhortation, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:3, 5). And similar to this is the exhortation, “Let brotherly love continue” (Hebrews 13:1). What a blessing or heaven there would be on earth if such a state of things only existed, even among those who profess the name of Christ! Yet how many who have set this blessed ideal before themselves, find themselves wondering how it is to be attained!

It is the man who is “carnal, sold under sin,” who is obliged to say, “To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Romans 7:18). God is just and kind. He is not a tyrant, and He does not set tasks before His people without showing them the way to perform them. He not only shows the way, but supplies the power, the trouble is with our reading of His commands and exhortations. Let us read one more and see if that does not begin to suggest the way out of the difficulty: “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Colossians 3:15). Surely we cannot control the peace of God. We cannot manufacture it, and put it within our hearts. No, only God can supply peace, and this He has already done. Jesus, the Son of God, said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you” (John 14:27). “I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints” (Psalms 85:8). The fact that only the Lord can put His grace into the heart, and cause it to rule there, should indicate to us that it is He who is to fulfill those other exhortations in us. It is not us to work the word of God, rather allow and give free reign the word of God to work righteous in us.

Monday: The Source of Unity – Read Philippians 2:3-4; what practical steps does Paul urge to have unity in the church? The principle which rules in the world is selfishness. Each one is spent on his own advantage, without reference to the interests of others. Not only so, but the world is full of men, many of them rich and powerful, who not only disregard the interests, but also the rights, of their fellow-men. The powerful dictate to the weak; the rich oppress the poor. The fortunate extort from their less fortunate fellows all that opportunity

offers, regardless of the misery which they may thereby inflict upon them. This is what we see all over the world today. We see the rule of the principle of self. By it men are divided into two opposing classes, and the conflict between them rages with ever-increasing violence. And so it must be as long as self continues to rule. It is a question of the survival of the strongest. The principle of the gospel of Christ is just the opposite. It is the principle of unselfishness. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:4). "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1 Corinthians 10:24). What a change would be produced in human affairs by the introduction of this principle. Instead of each individual working for himself, at the expense (as it so often is) of others, each one would have in view the interests of friends and neighbours. Instead of having only his own efforts upon which to depend for prosperity, he would have the united efforts of all those around him. Could the result be otherwise than the happiness and prosperity of each? It is rarely that an individual cannot be prosperous with the help of but one other person; how certain would his prosperity be, then, with the help and sympathy of all who know him! And this is what the gospel of Jesus Christ would do for the world if men would only let it. This age no more needs a different gospel than any other age before it.

Tuesday: Mind Implant or Mind Surgery? – Read Philippians 2:5; what is the practical process of having the "mind" of Christ? Minds of Seventh-day Adventist who still eat meats are beclouded against truth and cannot have the mind of Christ. "A diet of flesh meat tends to develop animalism. A development of animalism lessens spirituality, rendering the mind incapable of understanding truth" {RH May 27, 1902, Art. A, par. 4}. The practical process of having this mind "which was also in Christ" is to determine to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" knowing that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do" (Philippians 2:12-13) – with fear and trembling lest you be controlled by appetite and render your "mind incapable of understanding truth" (RH May 27, 1902 Par 4). As you practice health reform, your mind will increasingly become capable of understanding truth; as you understand the truth, the mind of Christ will "increase" as your carnal mind "decrease" (John 3:30) until you can say: "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20) – health reform in the truest sense of the term is key to this process in this our day.

Wednesday: The Mind of Christ – Read Philippians 2:5-8; why do we need the mind of Christ? To subdue our "carnal mind" – the mind of the flesh – "is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). The carnal mind is the mind dominated by the flesh. It is enmity against God, because the flesh is opposed to the Spirit. And the flesh will control the mind as long as it has any power. The flesh cannot be converted, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 15:50). Therefore it is the mind of Christ, that must take possession, for it alone is able to subdue the flesh and put it to death. The dead members then become simply passive instruments of righteousness. The mind of Christ can do this, because it led Him to humble Himself unto death (Philippians 2:6-8), and He literally put Himself to death, that is, He laid down His own life (John 2:17-18). When Christ is given unreserved right to dwell in us in His fullness, the power of His death and resurrection will crucify our flesh (Galatians 5:24) so that our members on the earth will be "dead indeed to sin" yet alive to righteousness as though already changed from corruption to incorruption. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15). A crucified carnal mind is subdued continuously; "self" is crucified.

Thursday: The Mystery of Godliness – What is this "mystery of Godliness"? That Christ may live in your flesh is "the mystery of godliness" (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ can dwell in all His fulness in every man, so that each one has the whole of Him, and yet even "the heaven of heaven cannot contain Him" (1 Kings 8:27). Until we realise that Christ is infinitely more and greater than all flesh, even greater than the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth, we do not know Him as we ought to know Him to appreciate Him as our Saviour. "The flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63). "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more" (2 Corinthians 5:16). When we know Christ as "a quickening Spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45), we have really entered into the holiest by "a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20) that He has consecrated for us through the veil. God grant that everyone reading this, the veil may quickly be done away.