

Sabbath School Lesson #3 – Unity in Christ – 11-17 July 2026

Christ wants us to be united. The plea of Paul to the Corinthians apply to Seventh-day Adventists: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 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 Corinthians 1:10). “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:5-6). The secret of Unity in Christ is to have the mind of Christ: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

Sunday: The Problem of Cliques in the Church – Read 1 Corinthians 1:12-17; how does this passage help us understand how absurd it is to form cliques around local leaders; what is Paul’s solution? In Corinth, professed Christians had formed cliques. Paul’s solution was to emphasise that Christ is not divided, Christians are one in Christ. Paul ask questions to lead the Corinthians to see the absurdity of their cliques. The question is asked, “Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?” (1 Corinthians 1:13), the answer obviously being in the negative. In that Christ is given to every man, each person gets the whole of Him. The love of God embraces the whole world, but it also singles out each individual. A mother’s love is not divided up among her children, so that each one receives only a third, a fourth, or a fifth of it; each one is the object of all her affection. How much more so with the God whose love is more perfect than any mother’s, and who Himself is love (Isaiah 49:15)! Christ is the light of the world, the Sun of Righteousness. But light is not divided among a crowd of people. If a room full of people be brilliantly lighted, each individual gets the benefit of all the light, just as much as though he were alone in the room. So, the life of Christ lights every man that comes into the world, and in every believing heart Christ dwells in all His fullness. Sow a seed in the ground, and you get many seeds, each one having as much life as the one sown. So, Christ, the true Seed, whence everything of worth comes, gives to all the whole of His whole life.

Monday: Centred on Jesus – Read 1 Corinthians 1:10; what do you think Paul meant by “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”? What he meant is illustrated by the human body, it is the most perfect example of unity, it is the example the Bible gives us. Christ is the Head of the body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many” (1 Corinthians 12:12-14). In the body, all work together in perfect harmony for one object. It is in the body of Christ. “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”

This gives no ground for the idea that there may be divisions in the church of Christ, one division believing one thing, another division believing and practicing another thing. “God has tempered the body together, that there should be no schism in the body” (1 Corinthians 12:24-25). “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Paul’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 Corinthians 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 believed. The church cannot define doctrine. The church of Christ is made up of all who obey His 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.”

Tuesday: Wisdom and Maturity – Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; this describes the spiritual immaturity of the Corinthians, but how does this apply to the church today? We are told: “Paul writes to his Corinthian brethren: “Ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” It is impossible for minds distracted by envy and strife to comprehend the deep spiritual truths of God’s word.

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." We cannot rightly understand or appreciate divine revelation without the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given" {ST January 18, 1883, par. 19}. "Those who are appointed to guard the spiritual interests of the church should be careful to set a right example, giving no occasion for envy, jealousy, or suspicion, ever manifesting that same spirit of love, respect, and courtesy which they desire to encourage in their brethren. Diligent heed should be given to the instructions of God's word. Let every manifestation of animosity or unkindness be checked, let every root of bitterness be removed. When trouble arises between brethren, the Saviour's rule should be strictly followed. All possible effort should be made to effect a reconciliation, but if the parties stubbornly persist in remaining at variance, they should be suspended till they can harmonize" {ST January 18, 1883, par. 20}. "Upon the occurrence of trials in the church, let every member examine his own heart to see if the cause of trouble does not exist within. By spiritual pride, a desire to dictate, an ambitious longing for honor or position, a lack of self-control, by the indulgence of passion or prejudice, by instability or lack of judgment, the church may be disturbed, and her peace sacrificed" {ST January 18, 1883, par. 21}. "Difficulties are often caused by the venders of gossip, whose whispered hints and suggestions poison unsuspecting minds, and separate the closest friends. Mischief-makers are seconded in their evil work by the many who stand with open ears and evil heart, saying, "Report, and we will report it." This sin should not be tolerated among the followers of Christ. No Christian parent should permit gossip to be repeated in the family circle, or remarks to be made disparaging the members of the church" – Ellen White {ST January 18, 1883, par. 22}.

Wednesday: Christlike Servanthood – Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; what does this teach us? We are told: "Every Christian is a steward of God, entrusted with His goods. Ministers and laymen have a work committed to them as individuals. All who are connected by faith with Christ have ministry to perform. Those who have not taken their position on the Lord's side should do so without delay, for they will have to render an account to God. Christ paid the ransom for them as verily as for every professed Christian. If they despise the gift, the question will be asked, Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you" {13LtMs, Ms 65a, 1898, par. 9}. "Ministers of Jesus Christ, are you faithfully setting before families their accountability to seek and to save that which is lost? Do you enter into this work, educating young men by taking them with you and teaching them how to work? "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." [1 Corinthians 4:2.] He may not be an eloquent speaker, but he can present the truth in the clearest simplicity. He can work intelligently, doing his best according to his ability; and if he is faithful, God will give him wisdom, and increase his talents" {ibid, 1898, par. 10}. "Remember the words, "Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." [Verse 2.] Let us be sure that we are not robbing God in any jots or tittles, for much is involved in this question. This is plainly shown in Malachi. Here we are told that a blessing is given for a faithful disposition of the tithe, and a curse for a covetous retention of the money which should flow into the treasury. They ought we not to be sure that we are working on the right side, so dealing with God when handling the property entrusted to us that no shadow of reproach shall fall on us?" {ibid, 1898, par. 11}.

Thursday: A Lifestyle That Reflects the Cross – Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 and Colossians 1:24; what does this teach us about what it means to suffer for Christ's sake? "In the world, ye shall have tribulation." This is just as distinct a promise of Christ as is any other in the Bible. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." In this world trouble should be expected as a matter of course. It is indeed necessary for us to have trouble, and we should know that "we are appointed thereunto" (1 Thessalonians 3:3). "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29). Since it is given to us to have tribulation, it must be a good thing, for God "giveth us richly all things to enjoy." You say that it is absurd to enjoy tribulation? Do not say that, lest you be found casting discredit on God's Word. Listen: "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings" (1 Peter 2:13). So, tribulation is given to us to enjoy, as anything else.