

HUMAN BONDS OR ONENESS

When we experience the purification which God is restoring to the Church, the glory of the Lord will begin to rest upon us. This manifestation of the glory must take place. Therefore, the Lord is speaking about a oneness of spirit we all must come into.

The whole difficulty in the Church has been that people do not understand what Jesus meant when He spoke of oneness; much less do they know how to attain it.

So they created human bonds with one another. When people do that, they usually slip into the “personality cult” to some extent, and the church becomes more exclusive because the relationships within it are on a personality level.

When people come into a church, they eventually experience great difficulty. At first they feel one with everyone and love everyone. Then they soon begin to gravitate toward only one or two.

That is exactly what happened in the Corinthian church, where people said, “I am of Apollos,” or, “I am of Cephas,” or, “I am of Paul” (I Corinthians 1:12). They would bond to one ministry or another, and such bonds were so much on a human level that they could not endure.

When people relate on that level, they will in time become disillusioned. No matter how inspired they once were or how much the Lord has moved upon their hearts, they cannot thrive in a church that exists only by human bonds. If they create human bonds and know one another after the flesh, preferring one ministry over another, sooner or later the relationships break down.

It has been very common for a pastor or an elder to make a bond with some new convert and say, "This is my spiritual son." That spiritual son is taught to relate to this ministry whom he loves. However, because there is a bond instead of a spiritual oneness, that relationship will never go beyond a certain point until the new convert comes into a pure oneness with the Lord. Consequently, the Lord may sever the bond in order to create the oneness with Himself.

If our relationship to the Lord is right, it will pull others into a relationship with the Lord too. When we relate in oneness to the Lord, then everyone we relate to will come into a oneness with the Lord.

This is exactly the picture Jesus presented in John 17. He said to the Father, "You and I are one." He prayed that the disciples would also be made perfect in one and come to know the Father as He knew the Father.

Jesus Christ did not bring people into a relationship to Himself alone; He always related them to the Father. In John 14:23 He said, "Love Me and keep My commandments, and My Father will love you, and We will come to you and make Our abode in you."

When we comprehend this, we can understand the apostle Paul. Never did he pull men unto himself. He very carefully rebuked those who were following after one leader or another. He wrote to the Corinthians, "I thank God that I did not baptize any of you, except a family or two" (I Corinthians 1:14–16). He did not want people to exalt him because he was an apostle.

Wherever a true ministry has been established and has authority resting upon him, you find the focus upon that ministry definitely receding, so that the focus can be upon the Lord. Then the relation-

ships that come forth within the people who sit under that ministry are brought into a oneness—a oneness with the Lord.

We are coming into a oneness of spirit with the Lord. As we come into this oneness we will begin to experience the power of it. We know from the Word that the world will never believe that God sent Jesus into the world until that oneness exists (John 17:20–21).

This oneness of spirit has to precede the exploits; the oneness has to precede Christ being glorified in the earth. If our relationships are based upon bonds, they will never bring the glorifying of Christ that will make the world believe.

When a wrong bond exists or a ministry tries to bond men or women to themselves, the flow of ministry will stop there. When another comes to minister to those people, they will find that the door is closed; they cannot minister to them. But if we are one with the Lord, we can bring others into that oneness.

Jesus' prayer in John 17 was not an exclusive prayer. He prayed, "Father, I do not pray for these disciples only, but for all of those who are going to believe in Me through their word." Thus He was reaching out, down through the years, over color distinctions, over denominational divisions and every other distinction, praying that they would love the Father and come into oneness.

When we come into this oneness and see it in our hearts, then we will suddenly see the end of our "individual kingdom" and the coming forth of His Kingdom!

The miracle of Pentecost did not come only because of the sovereign will of God. It did not come only because Christ had prayed to the Father, and therefore He sent it. The miracle of Pentecost came

also because the disciples did what they were told to do: they came into this oneness, so that they were “all in one accord in one place.”

When we trace the fantastic moving of God in the early Church, we are aware that in every instance there was a oneness among the believers.

Oneness is not the result of miracles. Oneness is the climate and channel for miracles to happen. Oneness is not only an effect; it is a contributing cause of the moving of God in the earth.

Worship becomes the principal channel by which oneness of spirit with the Lord really comes about. The quicker we move into this high plane of worship before the Lord, worshiping Him with all of our heart, the sooner we will come as individuals into that oneness with the Lord. Then, and only then, the oneness with one another also becomes a possibility.

There may be strong bonds between us, but if we do not have the oneness with the Lord, we cannot be truly one with each other. Only when we walk in the light as He is in the light can we have fellowship with one another and be cleansed from all unrighteousness by the blood (I John 1:7).

In effect, this same truth was voiced by Christ when He prayed, ... *that they may be made perfect in one.* John 17:23a. We will be made perfect when we are one!

The great experiences in the future will be collective experiences, that is, experiences which we have together. We read in the Scriptures that the disciples were all in one accord and the Spirit fell upon all of them at one time. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they

began to move in a oneness as a result of all of them experiencing it together.