



Strength in Unity

Message for January 2021 – 38

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH REFORM MOVEMENT

YOUTH DEPARTMENT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

My dear youth:

I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and ask that his blessings, love, and direction be upon you in abundance.

The origin of controversy

Everyone knows the phrase: "strength in unity." It is something accepted worldwide as an immovable truth, but it is not usually practiced, which is why there are so many problems in the world. Unity is important in the realm of God, in fact unity is what characterizes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are so united in every way that they are "one": **"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."** Mark 12:29. Jesus confirmed this when He said in His prayer to the Father: **"...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."** John 17:21. Angels are intimately united with their Creator in such a way that they live to obey Him in everything: **"Bless the Lord, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word."** Psalm 103:20.

Lucifer was united to his Creator, but he rebelled against Him, introducing divergence, dissension, disagreement, jealousy, envy... thus a contaminated spiritual atmosphere was generated in heaven. Lucifer's disunity with God caused a terrible crisis and Lucifer was thrown to earth with those who joined him.

Human disunity

The first humans were united. Adam and Eve loved each other and reflected the character of God. This love was extraordinary. They were united with each other and with God. They loved their Creator and believed His word, but when they doubted God, disunity was introduced and the fall came. Disunity, enmity, lawsuits, wars, have been present since Adam and Eve fell into sin. Our world could well be called the "world of disunity." Satan introduces disunity in society, in families, in work and government environments, and even in the church, thus he achieves his goal that people hate each other.

He makes daily plans so that people are suspicious of each other, doubt, or envy each other. He twists the words that are said, causes the other to misinterpret them, pushes people to think wrong things and make wrong decisions. In the church he sows seeds of discord, hatred, resentment, and selfishness. So many congregations instead of being a space of peace and love, where the Spirit of God is manifested, are battlefields where people fire their weapons to *kill* the other.

The tribes of Israel, while united, were able to make a more compact and effective front against their enemies. But with Rehoboam and Jeroboam, separation came, and unity was broken. Ten tribes remained to the north while two remained to the south. This was the work of the devil to weaken Israel, God's people.

Disunion in the church

Disunity was always present among the worshipers of God. The disciples of Christ let disunity between them rule them: "**Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.**" Luke 22:24. This discussion and others, I don't perceive to be amicable. This weakened the group while Jesus endeavored to maintain unity among His disciples, in fact He prayed about this matter to the Father, remember the prayer in John 17.

On the occasion of the Lord's Supper, the disciples continued to nurture that spirit of disunity that led them to feel more important than the other. Thus they could not fulfill their mission well; the devil controlled their emotions and feelings, even their ideas.

The Lord Jesus knew that this spirit of disunity was a great impediment for His disciples to fulfill their mission. Its success depended on there being unity in love, in doctrine, in purpose. A disunited church dishonors God and the gospel message, the enemy knows this and that is why he will do everything in his power to achieve the goal of dividing those who claim to be sons and daughters of God.

The union of God's people

It is essential to understand how important unity is among those of us who profess to love God and that unity must first begin among us with God; if there is no consecration, disputes will easily arise. Second, unity must be seen in the family, in marriage, and it is necessary to fight for this to be the case. Marriage is a priceless treasure that God gives to humans, but Satan will endeavor to break it. Let us

remember that there are no magic formulas for marriage or family, only the love that comes from God and is housed in the heart will produce true unity: **“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.”** 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

Only love can hold marriage, family, children, and the church together. The love that comes from God will be the amalgam that will allow us to win the battle against disunity. Likewise, unity must be seen in the church. When we see a united church we like to be there. One has to be a peacemaker, a person who unites others with oneself and with others. At the time of Pentecost the disciples had conquered pride and personal selfishness, and were seeking, not their own good, but that of the other. Their hearts were united, strife and divisions ended, and they were able to receive the early rain of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1).

The latter rain will fall on a united people, like the Pentecost of the disciples. Those who foster division will never receive the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us: “Union is strength; division is weakness. When those who believe present truth are united, they exert a telling influence. Satan well understands this. Never was he more determined than now to make of none effect the truth of God by causing bitterness and dissension among the Lord’s people.” *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pg. 236.

Factors of genuine unity

It is important to bear in mind that unity among us will never come if we are not **converted**. This is a first point. “Those who are truly connected with Him cannot be at variance with one another. His Spirit ruling in the heart will create harmony, love, and unity.” *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, pg. 497.

The second factor is the **devotional life**. Without prayer or study of the Word there is no growth and it is easy to be deceived by the enemy. He will create impressions that will divert our mind or lead us to make a wrong decision. The devotional life must be activated and maintained.

The unity of **doctrine in the faith** is a factor of unity in the church. We cannot be united in doctrinal diversity, because the Lord urges us not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. Unity must be in diversity of characters and temperaments, but we must never sacrifice the truth. Only the truth will set us free (John 8:32).

Conclusion

May the Lord help us to strive to promote unity and maintain it; it is the greatest treasure that mortals possess, since we are sociable beings, by nature. May God bless us in His love and may we remain united in our families and in the church. That is my wish and prayer. Amen.

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For reflection:

1. What is one of the favorite activities of the enemy?
2. Why does Satan introduce contention in the church?
3. What can we do to promote unity with those that surround us?

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