

May – 54

To Be United



INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH REFORM MOVEMENT Youth Department of the General Conference

My dear youth,

The Word of God teaches us that where there is sincere unity among brethren, blessings flow: “... **For there the Lord commanded the blessing—Life forevermore.**” Psalm 133:3. The formula is clear, you just have to follow it. But could it be that it is easy to reach this essential objective of fraternal unity? Let's see.

Disunity before Pentecost

If we analyze the unity that existed among the disciples of the Master, long before the early rain occurred at Pentecost, we will see that it was deficient. The Bible says that on one occasion, there were probably other similar situations of disunity, there were many problems between them that accentuated their disunity: “**Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.**” Luke 22:24.

It is evident that the cracks of enmity, mistrust, selfishness, furrowed the hearts of each disciple. They all wanted to stand out above the other, to be more important in the group, to have greater relevance. This is the quintessential human tendency, we love to be the first in everything. The work to which the disciples had been called was of colossal dimensions, encompassing the entire world. But they did not understand, they had no vision and no heart (Mark 14:9-11); they sought their convenience, pre-eminence (Mark 10:35-45); they did not know themselves (Mark 14:17-31); they were not concerned about the needs of others (Mark 6:35-37); they

were fearful and cowardly (Mark 14:50); people of little faith (Matthew 8:26). They needed to burn all the dross from their hearts: "In order successfully to carry forward the work to which they had been called, these men, differing in natural characteristics and in habits of life, needed to come into unity of feeling, thought, and action." *Acts of the Apostles*, pg. 20.

The key to unity

In the Word we are presented with the key to achieving unity: "**But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**" 1 John 1:7. The disciples grasped this truth and applied it in their lives. The results were soon seen. "**These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...**" Acts 1:14. "**And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...**" Acts 2:4.

"After Christ's ascension, the disciples were gathered together in one place to make humble supplication to God. And after ten days of heart searching and self-examination, the way was prepared for the Holy Spirit to enter the cleansed, consecrated soul temples. Every heart was filled with the Spirit, as though God desired to show His people that it was His prerogative to bless them with the choicest of heaven's blessings...."

"Notice that it was after the disciples had come into perfect unity, when they were no longer striving for the highest place, that the Spirit was poured out. They were of one accord. All differences had been put away. And the testimony borne of them after the Spirit had been given is the same. Mark the word: 'The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.' The Spirit of Him who died that sinners might live, animated the entire congregation of believers." *Evangelism*, pg. 698.

From these inspired texts we understand that the unity among the disciples was the result of their personal consecration. They could never have managed to be receiving vessels of the rain of the Spirit if they had not been united, and that unity was the result of their conversion.

The unity of the church of God

The promise is that in the end times, before every believer receives the latter rain, the church must come to a point of complete unity. It will not only be being together as a people, but together and united in the same spirit, thought, doctrine and action. And this state will be the result of our fidelity and consecration to God: "As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain." *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pg. 508.

Unity in the church is a matter of personal consecration of the members. It is impossible to be united just by exercising good manners, being kind to one another, respecting others, yes, this is basic, but it is not what will produce unity in Christ and will maintain it. "I tell you that there must be a thorough revival among us. There must be a converted ministry. There must be confessions, repentance, and conversions. Many who are preaching the Word need the transforming grace of Christ in their

hearts. They should let nothing stand in the way of their making thorough work before it shall be forever too late.” *Last Day Events*, pg. 189.

Christian unity is the result of “walking in the light,” as John says. This expression is quite significant and alludes to that class of people who are well equipped to walk through life enlightened, both in light and in darkness, because in the latter situation they have the lamp that par excellence best lights their feet, which is the Word of God (Psalm 119:105).

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place on a church that is united in doctrine, mission, and brotherly love. Each of the members of the body of Christ must put aside their differences and all work for the same goal, then they will see the blessings of God flow and the power of the Spirit to fulfill our mission. It is not that we should melt into each other losing our individuality, it is not that; but we must learn to be united despite our diversity. You can do this with God's help.

Conclusion

The presence of the Spirit in the human soul does not annul our peculiar way of being, our temperament, but it does control it and submit it to its direction. All the disciples went through this experience and came into perfect unity. Could it be that we also want to come to enjoy that unity?

“From the endless variety of plants and flowers, we may learn an important lesson. All blossoms are not the same in form or color. Some possess healing virtues. Some are always fragrant. There are professing Christians who think it their duty to make every Christian like themselves. This is man's plan, not the plan of God. In the church of God there is room for characters as varied as are the flowers in a garden. In His spiritual garden there are many varieties of flowers.”

“Diverse in mind, in ideas, one subject is to bind heart to heart—the conversion of souls to the truth, which draws all to the cross.” *Evangelism*, pg. 99.

May the Lord empower us, dear youth, and help us to consecrate ourselves wholeheartedly to Him, so that we may attain the perfect unity of the Spirit. Amen.

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of the General Conference*

For personal and group reflection:

1. Were the disciples of Jesus united?
2. What was each of them looking for?
3. How did they arrive at the unity of the faith?
4. What is the key for the church to receive the latter rain?

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