

## Fire of Unity

Thank you for the participation, in this weekly Bible Study. They intend to reduce the population of McNeil Prison and scatter us as a group. What will our meetings over these recent years count for? What will we take with us to our new facility?

You men have been such a blessing to me – in teaching me how to teach and you have shown me my prejudice and short sightedness. I had to come to a prison to be cheered up and prayed for, by men like you. Through you, I have come to realize how big God is and how far-reaching His plan for all people is, as diverse as we are.

**There was another congregation that found itself (scattered through no fault of its own) many years ago – and look what came out of it.**

Acts 8 v 3 But Saul was burning with hate against the church, going into every house and taking men and women and putting them in prison. 8 v 4 Therefore they that were **scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.**

Notice it was **not the pastors** preaching the word....The congregation was filled with God. Can we set our face to God – with only one request –that we also be empowered to make a difference for the Kingdom and for His Glory?

What else are our lives worth and what else will matter when you and I are gone – worm food. We know this prayer, is planted squarely in God's plan for His church and is obedient to His Word, to make disciples of men.

The very first fire God poured on an altar for the people of Israel was in Leviticus 9 v 21. Moses had returned after the golden calf incident and the tabernacle was now complete. On the eighth day (after the seven days of ordination) Moses told Aaron, his sons, and the elders of Israel to bring offerings for the first services in use of the altar.

All the people were also told to be present. After the first carcasses were placed on the altar, Moses, Aaron and his sons went out to stand before the people while Moses informed the crowd that God was pleased with the offerings.

Lev 9 v 22 Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings.

Yet **no fire fell** and the glory of the Lord was still absent.

**Then Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people and fire came out** from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

It took **Moses and Aaron together in unity** going before God into the tent of meeting and then they blessing the people as a unified leadership. It was only after that the fire fell.

Let us look at that early group of disciples...another new beginning of a new leadership in the assembly of God's people. Acts was not written to mock us, but to show us what can be. Reading it just fills me with the "heartbreak of God" as He looks over His church and what could be. Like a parent weeping, as their child wastes their life on drugs and bad decisions. We could be Kings, yet we struggle as paupers, while Heaven's power is untapped and unused.

The only thing God tells us about that group, is that they **met in one accord**. They had come together in unity on the things that God felt was important. Matthew was a tax collector and in a former life he extorted money, to serve Rome. Simon the Zealot would have viewed Matthew as a traitor as he fought against Rome and her oppression. Peter ran a fishing business up north, far from the politics of Jerusalem.

Yet as disciples, politics was not what joined them, or separated them. **What made them disciples was that Jesus had called them. He unified them. He was the common denominator. They were people with no uniformity in career, temperament, education or some pre-existing theology.**

They came together in obedience to Yeshua and waited, knowing only they had been given a task and had no power or leadership to carry out it.

That is all God tells us about them — He did not tell us any more about them. The answer lies in the one fact God thought we needed to know. **They were of one accord.**

Ac 2:1 ¶ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with **one accord** in one place.

Ac 1:14 These all continued with **one accord** in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Ac 5:12 ¶ And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with **one accord** in Solomon's porch.

Ac 8:6 And the people with **one accord** gave heed unto those things which Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. (Describing the Revival in Samaria a gentile mission field.) The Revival was maintained by being in **one accord**— and was so continued **in one accord**.)

There is only one adjective – Only one description that God uses to describe this early group – This band of brothers that rocked their world. **One Accord – One purpose – One group – One Unity.**

Yet we come from Sunday and Sabbath keeping backgrounds and we are as different in our understanding and our maturity – as we are different in DNA and fingerprints. So what can we agree on?

We believe that we are saved and indwelt by God – that is how we are His sons....but surely we are not changing our world as they did in Acts. Can we honestly say that our meetings and prayers on Mc Neil have left a mark on the Island and Gods Name and Word was again feared and respected by the unbelievers?

It comes down to we are God's kids because **He made** us so. No Creed did so. We, like children, have to go back and ask our Father **who made us family** - Do with us, what pleases You.

We are living at the close of all time. The world was never more in need of God. Our little band of brothers on the Island is going to be scattered, as they close this prison. But surely God still answers prayer.

So I urge you to attend the Prayer meeting Friday night. Come together without regard to whether we are from the S.D.A, Messianic or Protestant tribe. **None of that matters....but are we children of God and did He make us so?**

**Act 13 v 1** Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as 1) Barnabas, and 2) Simeon that was called Niger, and 3) Lucius of Cyrene, and 4) Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and 5) Saul. {which...: or, Herod's foster-brother} 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work where unto I have called them.

Again 5 different men from different cultures – Three prophets and two teachers, Romans Greeks and Jews – All very different in language and culture and upbringing yet coming together in prayer. **Again God starts a great work in Asia out of that Unity.** They came together in ministering to God in prayer – children worshipping a common Father.

So in the few months we have left, is there any better way we can spend our time than to Ministering to God with our prayers and our lives, in unity.

Ps 133 — How good and how pleasant it is, that brothers **dwelt together in Unity**. **Unity is like the Oil** of anointing of Aaron the High Priest poured out on him and runs down in abundance.

Two words need to be carefully understood in their original text.

“Pleasant”: This Hebrew word for “pleasant” is a musical synonym for harmony. I like most kinds of music, but when it just doesn’t come together, I will quickly turn the radio station.

“Dwell”: This Hebrew word means residency, a continuation, and a perpetuating harmony. In other words, unity is to dwell among us, not be an occasional visitor.

For us today – we could say Unity to God is like the Oil of the Holy Spirit which He poured out on Yeshua our High Priest. Unity in that Psalm is like an empowering – an anointing of a Priest – like the anointing of oil for David as King – **A setting apart for Service to God**.

**Unity is like the anointing of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost on those disciples.**

**So we can either:**

Hold on to “why we are better than others who are different in beliefs, or denomination!” Why we are right and that makes everyone else wrong. Hold that thought, all the way into Hell.

Or we like a family and a community can embrace those brothers, whom **God made sons** of Abraham and He called us all together to be brothers of Yeshua – in all our ignorance and our many flaws, from our many races, cultures and from various religious backgrounds.

In that unity of family – our prayers can come together and God can anoint us with the oil we so desperately need and set us apart for service to Him ...

1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood, a holy nation**, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

Re 1:6 And hath made us **kings and priests** unto God, his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

We are called to serve in these offices as Kings and Priests. We need the anointing only unity can provide for us. Ps 133 — How good and how pleasant it is, that brothers **dwelt together in Unity**. **Unity is like the Oil** of anointing of Aaron the High Priest poured out on him and runs down in abundance.

Nowhere but in the Family of God can you serve inside the inner court of Gods Temple with prayer and worship to the Holy One of Israel, despite you being locked up in Mc Neil Island prison. What could be more glorious?

Let us come together and ask for the Unity that God will honor. Pray together in the Unity which came from God’s calling so that God Himself can anoint us to be what God called and predestined us to be.

These ideas are not my own—another man followed those Apostles – only 300 years ago.

Nicholas Louis von Zinzendorf, a Count of Saxony, was an unusual nobleman. As a teenager, Zinzendorf was taking the grand European tour customary for young noblemen of his time.

While in the art museum of Dusseldorf, he saw a painting of Christ crowned with thorns. The Latin inscription read, “**I have done this for you; what have you done for me?**”

God did something inside Zinzendorf, for from that moment, he decided to dedicate himself to Christian service in some way. The opportunity to engage in service came three years later in 1722.

Zinzendorf heard about the carpenter, Christian David, who was promoting the cause of the **Unitas Fratrum...** in Latin that means **Unity of the Brethren**.

After speaking with Christian David, Zinzendorf invited the **Unitas Fratrum (Unity of Brethren)** to refuge on his estate. By June of that year, a small band arrived to begin the settlement on his estate. Word spread rapidly that Zinzendorf was harboring religious refugees on his estate, and the little community grew into a thriving village of various faiths. The **Unitas Fratrum** were designated from the rest by their country of origin, Moravia, so they came to be known as Moravians.

But all was not well in the little community of Unity? The various ethnic backgrounds and religious persuasions led to inevitable conflict, griping and dissension among its 300 inhabitants. By 1727, tensions had risen to a height. **“Differences of opinion and heated controversy on doctrinal questions threatened to disrupt the congregation.**

The majority were members of the Ancient Moravian Church of the Brethren. But other believers had also been attracted to the community. **Lutherans, Reformed, Baptists**, etc., had joined the community. Questions of predestination, holiness, the meaning and mode of baptism, etc seemed likely to divide the believers into a number of small and opposing sects.” Let us add Rapture timing, Assurance of Salvation, (O.S.A.S), New Perspectives on Paul, Calvinism vs Arminian — so that they sound just like our group here?

Fortunately, in the midst of this tension, Zinzendorf and others were actively engaged in intercessory prayer for the community, and on August 13, 1727, those prayers were answered.

On that date, Wednesday Aug 13th 1727 on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Av, 3 days before the month of Elul — the community assembled for a communion service. In the service, **the community felt the presence of the Holy Spirit.**

People wept and begged forgiveness of one another. They shared the cup and bread as **one community united.**

**“They had quit judging each other because they had become convinced, each one, of his lack of worth in the sight of God and each felt himself at this communion to be in view of the noble countenance of the Savior.”**

Shortly after this meeting, the Moravians began the hourly intercession in prayer.

This prayer vigil consisted of a rotating assignment of one man and one woman from the community praying every hour of the day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. This prayer vigil continued **without interruption for over 100 years. Imagine a 100 Year prayer meeting!**

From this near Pentecostal experience of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the intense devotion of the Hourly Intercession, the Moravian Church would launch a most extraordinary missionary movement.

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that **small community of 300** sent missionaries all over the world, they revolutionized and founded the idea of missions. The Moravians didn't confine their work to the West Indies. In 1733, Christian David led a band of Moravians to Greenland to help out Danish missionary Hans Egede. In 1737, George Schmidt went to South Africa to evangelize the Hottentots. Other Moravian missions in the 18th century included Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, the Carolinas, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and London. By the 19th century, the Moravians had expanded to East Africa, Alaska, Canada, Honduras, Nicaragua, California, Australia, Tibet (now moved to India), and Jerusalem. **From the humble beginnings in that small community, the Holy Spirit prompted the Moravian church to encircle the globe. They also influenced John Wesley and many other great men of God while a missionary in the America's.**

In conclusion we can be very similar. In unity we can go from students, like the Moravians to Missionaries. Just as the disciples went from fishermen to students to being Empowered Teachers to changers of the world. Can your God do that?

We are a band of refugees – from all walks of life and all faiths meeting at Mc Neil. We are shortly to be scattered by the Dept of Corrections to various facilities all over Washington.

We can come together – embracing the idea of **Unitas Fratrum – Unity of brethren** – in one accord.

In prayer we too can ask for such an outpouring of God's Spirit as they did, and the Apostles before them – and equip us for the missionary work, which each of us will be called to do, where we are going.

Let us use these last few meetings at Mc Neil to make the hours count, and prepare ourselves to be able to witness for God, grounded in the Power of God's word. Regardless of our gifts and our calling—**Unity and an anointing of God's Power is needed by each one of us.** Being saved and content is not our destiny or end. God called us to do more. Who else is on this Island to further his kingdom?

With only hours to live and Jesus great trial and murder to begin, He prayed while sweating drops of blood.

**What was so weighty and what was on His mind?**

Jesus' last recorded prayer — **was for you and me.**

John 17 v 20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me **through their** message, <sup>21</sup>**that all of them may be one,** Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup>I have given them the glory that you gave me, **that they may be one as we are one:** <sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me. May they be brought to **complete unity** to let the world know that you sent me and **have loved them even as you have loved me.**

Jesus did not pray for unity among his disciples but for those that would **follow after them – You and me.**

**Three times He asked God Himself that we may have unity and be one.** Our Unity tells all of McNeil—that God sent Jesus and that God loves us as He loved Jesus. Perhaps Yeshua knew there would be hundreds of different Denominations — all claiming to represent the God of unity and family and not willing to pray for each other, or to fellowship with each other.

**Will Jesus prayer for Unity be answered in our group or was He wasting His dying breath?**

**It is my belief He will sweep away what divides us in the next Revival.**