

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2017: *The Holy Spirit and Spirituality*
Lesson 9 “The Holy Spirit and the Church”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 1:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3-7; Acts 17:11; Ephesians 4:5, 6; Acts 2:4- 11.

Memory Text

“Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:3-5, NASB).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Holy Spirit Unites Us With Christ
- III. The Holy Spirit Unites Us Through Baptism
- IV. The Holy Spirit Unites the Church Through the Word of God
- V. The Holy Spirit Unites the Church in Faith and Doctrine
- VI. The Holy Spirit Unites the Church in Mission and Service
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Ephesians 2:18, 20-22 and 1 Peter 2:4-10. What do these passages tell us about the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the creation of the church? What does it mean that we have access to the Father “through Christ?” (Ephesians 2:18) How many metaphors of the church do you find in these passages? How many others can you think of? Read Colossians 3:12-14. How can one exemplify these attributes and contribute to the unity of the church? What does it take for a church to get along? (Sunday’s lesson)
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:13. How does baptism unite us with both Christ and the Spirit? What is the role of specific denominations in building spiritual maturity? Read Romans 6:3-7. What is symbolized through biblical baptism? If you have been baptized by immersion, how has your baptismal covenant impacted your spiritual walk with Christ? (Monday’s lesson)
3. Read Acts 17:11, John 5:39, 46-47, and John 8:31-32. What is a distinguishing mark of a true disciple of Christ? Read John 17:17-21. According to this passage, what is the basis for unity among believers? Why is the Bible so crucial to this unity? Is there

a place for questioning what we think the Bible teaches? Where is the line between questioning what people think the Bible says and questioning the Bible itself? (Tuesday's lesson)

4. Read Ephesians 4:5-6. What is Paul telling us here about unity and where it comes from? When most Christians say "be faithful to God's Word" do they mean faithful to the Bible or faithful to the way their church reads the Bible? Can most members really do anything else? How does a lay person balance the teachings of the Bible and the teaching of their church? What do you do when the church is split on the meaning of the Bible? (Wednesday's lesson)
5. Read Acts 2:4-11 and 16-21. What was the result of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the New Testament believers? How does 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 amplify the issue of unity in diversity? How much is diversity in the church needed to reach diversity in the world? Read Acts 2:42-47. In what other things were the New Testament believers united? How is it that they gained favor with "everybody?" What is the practical value of praising God? (Thursday's lesson)
6. Some argue that what will really unite the church is service, not doctrine. In fact, they argue that doctrine tends to divide people rather than unite them. Can there truly be unity in service when there is no unity in doctrine? How crucial is a commonly shared faith in united and effective mission to the world? (Friday's lesson)
7. In contrast to the previous question, how much room is there for theological differences in the church? Few people are going to understand the truth in exactly the same way. How can we be united as a church while, at the same time, allowing for minor differences that will arise? (Friday's lesson)
8. What is the ultimate source of human diversity? To what degree is diversity a reflection of God's character and to what degree is it a reflection of sin in the universe? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The kind of unity God desires cannot be commanded or produced by force or fear. In the course of human history, many tyrants have tried to maintain unity by terror and brutality. But that kind of at-one-ment does not last. Look at what has happened in a number of countries just in recent years.

The kind of at-one-ment God desires is described in the New Testament as a unity that is "inherent in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God." (Ephesians 4:13, REB) People who love and trust the same Jesus and the same God are naturally attracted to each other. The same truth about God that sets them free from tyranny and fear binds them together in the firmest kind of unity. Friends of a friendly God enjoy at-one-ment with each other.

This is where the meaning of the cross is so important. There can be no friendship and at-onement where there is fear. Calvary says there is no need to be afraid of God. When God says, “Be my friend,” he’s not saying, “Be my friend or I’ll punish you severely; I’ll even put you to death.” You don’t talk that way to friends—especially if you want to keep their friendship. And friendship is the whole purpose and meaning of atonement. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 165. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter12.html>

It is the mission of the Christian church to help produce such people. In his letter to the believers in Ephesus, Paul explains Christ’s purpose in establishing his church: “He appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God’s people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ [a symbol for the Christian church]. And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ’s full stature. Then we shall no longer be children, carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful men, who lead others into error by the tricks they invent. Instead, by speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the head” (Ephesians 4:11–15, GNT).

There is no closer unity than this oneness that is inherent in our faith. Growing up together in love and admiration for the same Christ and the same God, we are bound together by the very truth that sets us free! God’s true church is made up of individuals who in the highest sense of freedom choose to band together for mutual encouragement and for greater efficiency in spreading the gospel to all the world.

God still waits for his children to grow up like this. He needs better spokesmen than Jonah proved to be. Reluctant teachers of the truth, moved only by fear or obligation, are themselves a sad denial of the content of the Good News. God waits for loyal people who are proud of the Good News, who “look eagerly for the coming of the Day of God and work to hasten it on” (2 Peter 3:12, NEB). {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 142-143. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-13>

Now there isn’t oneness when a powerful leader is saying, “Do what you’re told or I’ll break your arm!” It may look like unity as in Hungary when Russia sent the tanks in. They forced unity. It wasn’t worth a nickel. You can only win oneness. When you’ve won people back, it isn’t just

trust in God, there has to be trust in each other. . . . That's the essence of atonement—being at one. And we go from being “at one” here to being “at one” there. And we will still be different up there. Can we have this at-one-ment, this oneness? Jesus talked about it a great deal. “I pray you all may be one even as I and the Father are one.” Friendship is atonement and people can understand that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, *We've Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough*, #7, recorded July, 1989, South Dakota Conference Ministers Meeting} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAMPED>*

But now on the good side, looking again at the friends who are admitted to the kingdom; it says in the Bible that God's friends enjoy a special kind of unity which is invaluable to the church in times of stress, and will be as the end comes and we face what we've called the shaking time. Look at Ephesians 4 for a special kind of unity. Ephesians 4, that's where Paul begins by explaining the whole purpose of the church and why God blessed it with so many gifts in the beginning, let's start, say, with verse 11:

God's gifts were that some should be apostles; some should be prophets [that's preachers rather than predictors]; some evangelists; some pastors and teachers [and incidentally in the original pastors are not separated from teachers or teachers from pastors. It's phrased in Paul's language in such a way that he means there's no such thing as a good pastor who doesn't teach and there's no such thing as a good teacher who doesn't have pastoral concern for his students. They're put together. All those people now] for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ [that's the symbol for the church]: until we all attain to the unity [I'm going to translate it my own way here, there some versions do it. Literally the unity of the faith which means, I believe, the unity that is inherent in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God] to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried around with every wind of doctrine [carried about with every wind of doctrine], by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles [and we've seen that happen, haven't we, and when a church is shaken too easily it means the members are not very grown up]; rather speaking the truth in love [God's way of doing it always]; we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ [and so on];

Now notice the nature of this unity. These people have come to the place where they enjoy a unity that is the result of their trust and their faith (same word you remember), and their knowledge, which means to love and trust and to admire and be a friend of the Son of God. In other words, all these people love and trust the same God and the same Jesus. And among those who are friends of God there's a wonderful unity and fellowship. And as far as unity is

concerned, friends of God, I have observed, are especially polite and gracious and patient with those who don't agree with them; for God is that way too, and they admire that in God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Friends of God, #7, "Go Away, You Never Were My Friends" recorded June, 1987, Orlando, Florida} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/7MMFOG>*

"The unity inherent in our faith, and our knowledge of the Son of God." That is, we now know the truth about our God as revealed by his Son, and we like it. And it has won us back to trust and faith. In other words, we all love, trust, admire, and worship the same God. Why, that makes for unity! Doesn't it? Because, what is it about God that has won us? Isn't it that he values nothing higher than our freedom? And all the laws that he's given were just for our protection. And he almost apologizes every time he gives us a law. It is fraught with hazard that we'll misunderstand, and do these things for the wrong reason. I mean, God isn't pleased when I abstain from murdering my mother-in-law because every day I check that law, and it says, "Thou shalt not do it, and if thou doest it, thou shalt be seriously punished in the end." And so I don't murder my mother-in-law. My mother-in-law is not that secure under those circumstances, because one day I might forget to read the rules that morning.

The Lord's goal is that some time, some day, we come to the place where we'd never think of murdering our mothers-in-law. Of course they'll be wonderful ladies, too. I can say this safely, because I never met my mother-in-law, I'm very sorry to say. She died just before I met my wife-to-be. From what I hear, I would like to have met her, very much. But God does not want the citizens of the hereafter to be safe because we read the rules, and we take the Rule Giver very seriously. That's not real unity. That's not the tenth commandment, which says, "Thou shalt not even want to murder thy mother-in-law." And that's the law written in the heart, where a man does his thinking, as well as his feeling.

So this is not a contrived, enforced unity. Here are people who, in the highest sense of freedom, have agreed that God is not the kind of person his enemies have made him out to be. He is instead precisely as Jesus revealed him to be. And we accept his testimony that if we've seen Jesus, we've seen the Father. He does value nothing higher than our freedom. He hates to add law upon law. He'd rather we'd do what's right because it is right, and his highest goal for us is the recovery of self-control. Why, that adds dignity to life. That's what we all want. Wouldn't you love to live under that kind of government—a government that does not like to add laws? Or rule by law at all? Of course it does mean that God can only admit to his kingdom those who respect this quality of life, so he says, "I cannot save you if you do not like this. Besides, if you want to go some other way, the consequences are serious; even in this life, the results are very damaging."

Well, but do you notice after mentioning this kind of unity, what kind of people would respect this kind of unity? Look at the next line:

And reach mature manhood [mature personhood, this is the way grown-ups behave], to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ [be grown up, as he was]; so that [to make his point more emphatic], we may no longer be children.

Remember in 1 Corinthians 13,

“When I was a child, I thought as a child, I behaved as a child,” but now that I’ve grown up I behave as 1 Corinthians 13 says.

A grown up person loves, and is never rude, and never arrogant, never insists on having his own way, never impatient, and so on. That’s the way grown-ups behave. And there’s peace in that kind of community. “So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” There’s no stability in the family when every person that comes by with some new idea can confuse the family. Satan comes by and says, “God is an arbitrary tyrant, exacting, unforgiving, and severe.” Like children, we think, “Well, maybe so,” we’re not really settled into the truth. “Tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”

And then we have unity again. So there’s another way of saying God’s goal for us is, “though it’s very sweet to be reborn, and have new hearts and right spirits, don’t be retarded. I mean, grow up without delay, and come to the place where I can just turn you loose in my universe, knowing you will behave like mature people, and there’ll be a unity inherent in the fact that we all love and trust each other. I can even trust you!” So many places in the Bible describe, it seems to me, this quality of life that God wants, and is the only way to have peace, and harmony, and unity, and freedom for eternity. Do you know any other way to have freedom forever, than this? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Ephesians and Colossians*, recorded May, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/68MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

When the followers of Christ are one with Him, there will be no first and last, no less respected or less important ones. A blessed brotherly fellowship one with another will bind all who truly receive the Lord Jesus Christ in a firm loyalty that cannot be broken. All will be equally one with Christ (MS 28, 1897). {5BC 1097.9}

The union between Christ and His people is to be living, true, and unfailing, resembling the union that exists between the Father and the Son. This union is the fruit of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. All true children of God will reveal to the world their union with Christ and with their brethren. Those in whose hearts Christ abides will bear the fruit of brotherly love. They will realize that as members of God's family they are pledged to cultivate, cherish, and perpetuate Christian love and fellowship, in spirit, words, and action. {SD 293.2}

To be children of God, members of the royal family, means more than many suppose. Those who are accounted by God as His children will reveal Christlike love for one another. They will live and work for one object,—the proper representation of Christ to the world. By their love and unity they will show to the world that they bear the divine credentials. By the nobility of love and self-denial, they will show those around them that they are true followers of the Saviour. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." . . . {SD 293.3}

Christ's knowledge of truth was direct, positive, without a shadow. The closer the acquaintance a man has with Jesus Christ, the more careful he will be to treat his fellow men respectfully, courteously, righteously. He has learned of Christ, and he follows His example in word and action. By faith he is united with Christ. "We are labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9). . . . {TDG 135.4}

Selfishness and pride hinder the pure love that unites us in spirit with Jesus Christ. If this love is truly cultivated, finite will blend with finite, and all will center in the Infinite. Humanity will unite with humanity, and all will be bound up with the heart of Infinite Love. Sanctified love for one another is sacred. In this great work Christian love for one another—far higher, more constant, more courteous, more unselfish, than has been seen—preserves Christian tenderness, Christian benevolence, and politeness, and enfolds the human brotherhood in the embrace of God, acknowledging the dignity with which God has invested the rights of man. {OHC 173.3}

God is love. The love of the Father and the Son is an attribute of every believer. The Word of God is the channel through which divine love is communicated to man. God's truth is the medium by which the intellect is reached. The Holy Spirit is given to the human agent who works in cooperation with divine agencies. It transforms mind and character, enabling man to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Perfect love can be enjoyed only through the belief of the truth and the reception of the Holy Spirit. . . . {UL 104.2}

We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood, but there are others whose meaning does not lie on the surface to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. There must be careful research and prayerful reflection. And such study will be richly repaid. As the

miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly searches the word of God as for hid treasure find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker. The words of inspiration, pondered in the heart, will be as streams flowing from the fountain of life. {SC 90.3}

Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given. When Nathanael came to Jesus, the Saviour exclaimed, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said, "Whence knowest Thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." John 1:47, 48. And Jesus will see us also in the secret places of prayer if we will seek Him for light that we may know what is truth. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance. {SC 91.1}

It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light, and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought, and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help, we are to form our opinions for ourselves, as we are to answer for ourselves before God. {RH, June 28, 1906 par. 7}

The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. {RH, June 11, 1908 par. 4}

Though the Jews had the Scriptures which testified of Christ, they were not able to discern Christ in the Scriptures; and although we have the Old and the New Testament, men wrest the Scriptures to evade their truths; and in their interpretations of the Scriptures, they teach, as did the Pharisees, the maxims and traditions of men for the commandments of God. In Christ's day the religious leaders had so long presented human ideas before the people, that the teaching of Christ was in every way opposed to their theories and practice. His sermon on the mount virtually contradicted the doctrines of the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. They had so misrepresented God that He was looked upon as a stern judge, incapable of compassion, mercy, and love. They presented to the people endless maxims and traditions as proceeding from God, when they had no "Thus saith the Lord" for their authority. Though they professed to know and to worship the true and living God, they wholly misrepresented Him; and the character of God, as represented by His Son, was as an original subject, a new gift to the world. Christ made every effort so to sweep away the misrepresentations of Satan, that the confidence of man in the love of God might be restored. He taught man to address the Supreme Ruler of the universe by the new name— "Our Father." This name signifies His true relation to us, and when spoken in sincerity by human lips, it is music in the ears of God. Christ leads us to the throne of God by a new and living way, to present Him to us in His paternal love.—*Review and Herald*, Sept. 11, 1894. {FE 309.1}

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. {Ed 190.2}

The Holy Spirit loves to address the youth, and to discover to them the treasures and beauties of God's word. The promises spoken by the great Teacher will captivate the senses and animate the soul with spiritual power that is divine. There will grow in the fruitful mind a familiarity with divine things that will be as a barricade against temptation. {COL 132.3}

The knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. This is the knowledge that works transformation of character. Received into the life, it will re-create the soul in the image of Christ. This is the knowledge that God invites His children to receive, beside which all else is vanity and nothingness. {AA 475.1}

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." To search means to look diligently for something which has been lost. Search for the hidden treasures in God's word. You cannot afford to be without them. Study the difficult passages, comparing verse with verse, and you will find that scripture is the key which unlocks scripture. {MYP 259.1}

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}