



April 4, 2025

### **Weather, Unity, and Truth**

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast of lower Alabama. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

One of the “things” people like to talk about, and the news media follows closely, is the weather. Every week when we begin our online Bible Basics study via Zoom conference, someone brings up the weather as we welcome one another. Maybe it’s simply a filler for discussion, or it is that it’s keenly focused on by many.

This year it seemed here in the U.S. winter didn’t want to let go. Cold temps and snow continued to be forecasted for multiple places in the U.S. I now where we live on the Gulf Coast, we saw a record snowfall and colder temps we frankly were not used to having or seeing for that matter.

I remember vividly when we lived in Nebraska, my wife and I traveling every spring further north to conduct the Passover in Winnipeg, Manitoba in Canada. On our way we passed through and often stayed in Fargo, ND overnight. We would often see considerable melting of snow in the area during that time, with temperatures sometimes hitting in the 40's F during the day. The Red River would rise to flood stages in the Fargo area and also in Grand Forks to the North, often dangerously so. It was always good to melt a lot of the snow before spring rains come to avoid a destructive rise in the River.

During those times of serious flooding the events unified people in the area. During 2009 the Red River rose to the highest level on record as far as many remember. Brethren joined many other neighbors in building a dike of sand-bags around whole subdivisions, and/or clusters of homes. There were sand-bagging

teams that came together all around the Fargo, ND – Moorhead, MN area. One of the large event centers in Fargo was turned into “Sandbag Central”, as they called it. Huge piles of sand were assembled and then shoveled into sandbags or loaded onto conveyors that emptied into the sandbags being held, and then tied off, and piled up by volunteers. In addition to the dike building in the subdivisions, some brethren put in a number of hours at Sandbag Central as well. The sandbags were then transported to various locations around the city area as needed. What we witnessed was a real sense of “unity and working together” to do whatever one could do to help. It really brought people together.

I also remember when I lived in Nebraska, in the early 70’s the Platte and Missouri rivers would also flood quite severely. Memories of being awake all night and working “sand bagging” to protect member’s homes as well as many others was not all that uncommon.

Often at times of crisis people do pull together to address the crisis and work through it. However, at other times people get pulled apart, become disunited, and even become adversarial and spend the rest of their lives being enemies.

How often has the church of God rallied together, or perhaps been pulled apart and become disunited! It’s painful when the negative happens.

No wonder our Savior on the night of the Passover prayed for unity for the disciples whom He had called. *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 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 17:20-21)

Jesus here prayed also for the disciples (including you and me and others by extension) that would be called in the future and for them to be unified. A previous statement made during this prayer is important to notice. *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."* (John 17:17) There cannot be unity without

members of the Body personally owning the instructions, revelations, and examples found in the Word of God, and living them.

The apostle Paul compared the marriage relationship between one man and one woman to that of Christ and His church. He then addressed the unity that was intended. *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."* (Ephesians 5:31-32)

Paul had spoken several verses earlier concerning the role of *"the word."* *"that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word"* (v.26) Paul goes on to comment about this cleansing *"that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."* (v.27)

Spotless and white garments of a bride probably come to mind. Notice the description of the future bride of Christ. *"And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."* (Revelation 19:8) Here we have that connection to the word of God which contains the instructions about righteousness and right acts. *" . . . For all Your commandments are righteousness."* (Psalm 119:172)

The role of both doctrine and accurate teachings based clearly on the Bible is both critical and vital. The body of believers must have sufficient agreement on the basics to be able to have the unity needed to hold the members of the body together. When there is disagreement and conflict over doctrine and basic teachings there will be disunity and fragmentation. The true church is God's church and the head of the church is Jesus Christ. They are guiding the Ekklesia to have correct understanding of the word of God. And that guiding depends on all of us as members yielding to His Spirit, His Word, and anchored in the truth, not simply tradition.

Notice how the apostle Paul described the church to his disciple Timothy. ". . . / write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15) Paul also instructed Timothy: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

So, the question arises then, how is doctrine and teaching established and continued in the church? Why do many sometimes consider tradition more important than truth from God's Word? We'll continue this vital subject next time...

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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