

The Bond of Perfection

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of putting on love and forgiveness to overcome disunity and achieve effective ministry.

Scripture: Numbers 12:9, Numbers 14:37, Numbers 16:30, Luke 11:17, Colossians 3:12

Topics: "Unity in the Body of Christ", "The Power of Love"

Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the critical importance of unity within the Body of Christ, likening disunity to a boxing match between one's own limbs. He warns that the devil exploits differences among believers to create strife, which ultimately hinders the work of the Lord. Through personal testimony, he illustrates how his own rebellion against leadership led to disunity, but a transformative encounter with God taught him the value of humility and love. Yohannan concludes that genuine love is the bond of perfection that fosters unity and effective ministry. He urges believers to put on love and embrace one another to overcome division.

Transcript

Have you ever seen a boxing match between a left arm and a right arm of the same person? Does your little finger purposely scratch and hurt your ring finger? If you are cold, does one of your feet try to block out the other foot to get closer to the heater? No, of course not. To even speak of such things seems absolutely ridiculous. But, I tell you, this sort of ridiculous fighting goes on in the Body of Christ all too often. One of the things I fear most in ministry of any kind is the disunity that the devil is able to create.

When disunity prevails, the work of the Lord is destroyed. Satan knows very well that "any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall" (Luke 11:17, NIV). And seeing how Satan cringes at the thought of the kingdom of God advancing, he does not want the house of the Lord to stand. So he takes those differences that were meant to complete us and uses them as the very thing to divide us. Whether it is differences in theology and doctrine or styles of worship and prayer--any difference you can imagine--Satan will use them to sow seeds of strife and disunity.

This is the reason why God so justly and immediately dealt with anything that hindered the unity of the children of Israel throughout the Old Testament. Whenever God asked His people to go forward, He would first weed out whatever held them back from moving ahead united in heart and mind. In Numbers 16, we read the story of Korah, the man whom the ground opened up and swallowed after he refused to acknowledge Moses as God's appointed leader. In Numbers 12, God punished the fractionating spirit of

Miriam and Aaron.

When the 12 spies came back with divided reports about the prospects of taking over the Promised Land, God punished the dissenting 10 spies who had not trusted Him (see Numbers 14). What (or Who) is the Problem? When I was 18, I traveled throughout India as part of an Operation Mobilization evangelistic team. We would share the Gospel with people in different towns and villages, selling tracts and other Christian literature at a very low price. With the money we made selling the literature, we bought food to eat and keep us alive.

Our team was made up of all Indian brothers except for our team leader, Brother William. He was a tall Englishman, 6 foot 2 inches or so, who previously studied as a medical student but walked away from it all so that he could reach the lost in Asia. He was always a very nice and gentle man. As our team leader, Brother William was responsible for making decisions in the group. I served alongside him as the assistant team leader, and was expected to take care of the problems of the Indians on the team.

After working with Brother William for a couple of weeks, it was obvious to me that everything he did was simply done in the wrong way. He didn't understand the culture or do things the Indian way. It got so bad that I was afraid the team wouldn't survive with him in charge. He was never very concerned about washing his clothes or keeping clean. When he would get ready for bed at night, his trousers were so stiff with dirt and grime that they almost stood up on their own. And he stunk too.

On top of all that, we could never sell enough books, and so we were half-starving. He would take us from one street vendor to the next, asking, "Chapati, how much it cost?" (Chapati is similar to a tortilla.) Then he would ask, "Dal free?" (Dal is like a lentil soup.) In some places, if you buy enough chapatis, the dal is free. Wherever the dal was free, we would buy the chapati and eat. But not very many places gave free dal. So in the horrible heat we would follow this white man, going from one vendor to the next, trying to find a place to eat for as little money as possible.

We were half-starving, dirty, sick and selling very few books. I must honestly confess, although Brother William was from England and was older than I was, I knew I could manage the team better than he. Many of the decisions he made seemed totally off the wall. Our ministry was ineffective. There was no unity on the team at all. Nothing was working. One day I just couldn't take it anymore. When the team gathered for our prayer meeting in the morning, I declared a boycott. I said, "Brother William, you cannot be the leader!

You just are not able. You are an English man. You don't understand Indian ways. You take us like beggars looking for food. You stink. The literature is not being sold. You are not a good example for us, and you don't care about us. Whoever made you our leader made a big mistake. We cannot cooperate with you anymore." Everyone was on my side. I still remember that day. I can see Brother William's face so clearly. He didn't say one word. He simply sat there and cried. That's all he did.

Tears poured down his face, and all of us Indians on the team, including me, sat there and didn't know what to do. All of a sudden, it was like the Lord walked right into my heart and convicted me, "You are sinning against Me. You are rebelling." I broke down weeping, realizing the magnitude of what I had just done. I cried, "Brother William, please forgive me. Look, I touch your feet. I will be your servant. Even if you starve me to death, even if you want me to work all day and all night long, I will obey you as long as you are my leader.

I will never fight with you or against you again." I turned to my Indian brothers as well and said, "I have done wrong. Please forgive me." That day I saw the hand of God holding Brother William. I saw the man's weaknesses and his struggles. When he first came to India, he was tall and well-built, with his muscles bulging out. In a few months' time, he was all skin and bones because he lived just like us. He lived on the streets, ate simple food, suffered from diarrhea and had all the other problems we had.

For the first time I saw Brother William's sacrifice. And I saw God using him to take me from where I was to a much higher place--to a place of humility and genuine love for my brother. After this incident, things went along so smoothly. Our team life was wonderful. I loved Brother William like my own life. I have wonderful memories of those times. He never changed. He didn't start washing his trousers or getting us more food. But I changed. We never had disunity or problems after that because God had dealt with the problem--with me.

I, the one who "knew" how things should run, had been the cause of the disunity all along. Put on Love "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection " (Colossians 3:12-14). "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" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). All disunity begins with a lack of genuine, godly love for one another. That's where it all starts. When Satan gets in and stirs up strife and hurt, love dries up and things go downhill from there. This is also when the work we are doing for God comes to a standstill. As long as disunity abounds, all ministry will be tainted and ineffective. But when our hearts are cleansed and changed, softened and broken, ministry becomes a simple overflow of a heart filled with love from Christ for all men.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/kp-yohannan/the-bond-of-perfection/>

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