

One Faith (Ephesians 4 5)

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into the concept of 'one faith' as mentioned in Ephesians, emphasizing the unifying nature of faith in Jesus Christ. It explores the dual aspects of faith - subjective personal belief and objective truth outside of self, highlighting the need for both to be united for true faith. The sermon underscores how faith in Christ justifies believers, excludes boasting, purifies hearts, and grants access to God, unifying Jew and Gentile believers in one body, one Spirit, and one hope.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:5, Romans 3:28, Acts 15:9, Ephesians 3:12, Galatians 3:22, Romans 3:30, Ephesians 2:18, Ephesians 3:11

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of 'one faith' as mentioned in Ephesians, emphasizing the unifying nature of faith in Jesus Christ. It explores the dual aspects of faith - subjective personal belief and objective truth outside of self, highlighting the need for both to be united for true faith. The sermon underscores how faith in Christ justifies believers, excludes boasting, purifies hearts, and grants access to God, unifying Jew and Gentile believers in one body, one Spirit, and one hope.

Transcript

We are going to be in Ephesians this morning looking at the next item here in v. 5 of chapter 4. Ephesians 4 reads this way, beginning in v. 1, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The unity of the Spirit is that which gives way in Paul's mind to v. 4, 5, and 6. There's a unifying reality behind these facts. There's one body, v. 4, and one Spirit. Just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Today we're in v. 5 dealing with one faith. And the question of the hour is this, what is that? What does Paul mean? One faith.

It's interesting to me. Oftentimes, I've told some of you before, one of my favorite Internet tools for commentaries is Study Light. What's interesting is as I was filing down through the different commentaries, you get to one, the guy is absolutely adamant about what one faith means.

You go to the next one, he's absolutely adamant that it isn't what the guy right before just said. Not that he's combating that guy or disagreeing specifically with that guy. He just has another opinion about what this means.

Theories abound. One faith. Now when Paul says it, I don't think that it was meant to be mysterious to the Ephesians, but it seems to be pretty mysterious to the commentators.

One guy adamant. Absolutely adamant that this has to do with our own personal believing. Another guy will be just as adamant that it does not have to do with our own personal believing.

It has to do with the overall doctrine and body of truth. So, here's the thing. There's a couple of things that make this difficult.

One is that Paul gives us no explanation like with the rest of these things. He says one faith, no explanation, no definition. That's one thing that makes it difficult.

The second thing that makes it difficult is this. The word faith does have different meanings. And it doesn't just have two meanings.

It actually has more than that. But primarily, it seems like the commentators wrestle over two of the most probably common meanings in Scripture. And I want us to think about that.

Faith can mean different things. And here's two of the things it can mean. And perhaps both of them lend something to what one faith might be.

But think about this. On the one hand, faith means the act of believing. That's subjective.

That has to do with me, the individual. Faith can be our own act of believing. And you know, Jesus spoke this way all the time.

He looked at people. You remember when they lowered the guy down through the roof? It says He looked at their faith. And He said to that man, your sins be forgiven you.

He would say to His disciples, oh, you of little faith. He said one day, I have not found such great faith in all of Israel. That's the way Jesus talked.

You of little faith. According to your faith, be it done unto you. Your faith.

According to your faith. It was very subjective. It was very individual.

It was the individual believing for themselves, personally believing. This is one meaning of faith. It refers to the specific individual's own confidence in the Gospel or own particular personal trust in Jesus Christ or particular person's own conviction of the truth of God's Word.

We all understand that. Your faith. Personal.

Individual. But, it is also used commonly in Scripture to refer to not the act of believing, but objectively, outside of self. Subjectively is my faith.

Me believing. But then you have the body of truth that's outside of yourself. The truth that we find in this book.

That's objective. That's true outside of me, outside of anything that I believe. And faith is also used to refer to that.

One of the classic texts where this comes across is found in Jude. Listen to this. Listen to how Paul talks about himself in Galatians.

They only were hearing it said, he who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy. Or Jude. Jude says it like this, Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write, appealing to you, to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

Now this is clearly not a reference to our individual faith, but to the body of revealed Gospel truth that we might call the Apostles' Doctrine. It's that which comes from Scripture. When Jude speaks of the faith, he's speaking about objective truths vital to the Christian faith that were obviously in danger, being distorted, and therefore needed to be contended for.

So that's another way faith is used. Now, remember, the question of the hour is this. Right there in Ephesians 4, verse 5, you see right in the middle, bookended by one Lord and one baptism, you find this concept of one faith.

What is that? What's Paul thinking about? Is he mainly thinking about our own personal belief? Is he thinking about this objective body of truth outside of ourselves? Whatever one faith means, I think we can all agree with this. It is flowing out of the concept of the unity of the Spirit. All these items in verses 4, 5, and 6 are meant to unite us.

The unity of the Spirit. That we know. And so, me subjectively? Is that what this has to do with? Is it me believing? Is it my faith? Is it my act of believing? Is it the objective truth of God's Word outside of ourselves? What is it that unites us? That's what we need to be asking.

What is it? Well, let me ask you this. Think about yourself. Think about yourself believing.

Can the act of me believing unify us? Does that unify us? It only unifies us. See, as I'm wrestling with this and I'm hearing these guys go back and forth, I think many of these guys are just arguing the wrong thing. Because here's the reality.

Me subjectively. My faith, my individual believing does not unite us unless objectively my faith is here and your faith is here. And you can look at it from the other side too.

The objective truth in this book doesn't unite us unless you subjectively believe it and I subjectively believe it. I don't think it's necessary to make that kind of distinction or that kind of division. Listen, the reality is this, Jude may talk about the faith.

He talks about the faith. But the reality is, the fact is, that yes, something exists called the faith, but it doesn't unite us unless we both contend for it. And the truth is, we won't contend for it unless we're convinced about it.

And so both of these things come in. Both of these things are necessary for us to be united. What unites us is when the objective meets the subjective.

That's where we're bound together. The faith must be your faith. The faith must be my faith.

And when the faith is both of our faiths, that's what unites. When we can contend for the same thing. How is it said in the Philippian letter that they were striving together shoulder to shoulder for this, we could say,

faith or the Gospel.

So, I don't think we want to fight for one or the other. Listen to how Luke puts it. Don't turn to these, but just listen.

In the book of Acts, the Word of God continued to increase. The number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem. And a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Now think about that. Priests. Whether you're in unity with the priests, or you're a priest and I'm a priest, how are we united? We're only united not because there's the faith, which is external to both of us.

The only way we're united is if we both become obedient to the faith. So there's this body of truth that we both need to subjectively become obedient to. That's the way Scripture speaks.

Think about this. You know Paul and Barnabas, they're in Acts 14, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith. Saying that through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God.

There it is again. We have to continue in the faith. What unites us is when you continue in it and I continue in it.

Then we're united. Then we're striving together for the sake of the same thing. We're contending for the same thing.

We're believing the same thing. One faith. One faith unites us.

And it doesn't unite us unless you believe it. You may be here today. You're not a believer.

Yes, there is something called the faith or one faith, but it doesn't unite you to the rest of us unless you're contending for it, you're obedient to it, and you're continuing in it. That's the reality. We're united when there's one faith objectively.

We both subjectively argue for that one and same thing. Now here's the thing. I think it's interesting for us to grasp Paul at this point.

I think it's necessary. I think it helps us to develop this thing. We think of unity.

You know, as elders, we may hear, well, some sister was offended with another one or some brother's jealous of another. We think of unity on this level. You've got Jodea and Syntyche there in the Philippian church.

And there's this Cyzic or true companion. I forget how it's pronounced in Greek. But Paul's telling him help these ladies resolve this problem.

A lot of times, that's how we think about unity. But I want you to think about something. I want you to get the big picture.

When you and I think about unity, yes, those things, any potential squabbles or whatever in the church, that's obviously part of this. But Paul isn't talking about unity in a vacuum. He never does.

And if you pay close attention when he brings this topic up, you'll find that he goes someplace all the time. What so astounded Paul was the fact that both Jew and Gentile are in this thing together. Now look, I know you don't feel this.

You don't get this. It doesn't really amaze us at all. This Jew-Gentile thing that seemed to be on Paul's mind all the time, it's not on our mind.

We don't think about it like he does. It doesn't amaze us like it amazed him. And I'm not necessarily saying that it ought to be the same way it did to him because he was coming out of that Jewish system.

He had a mindset about Gentiles being unclean. To him, this thing was stark. This was vivid.

This was real. This was in your face. This was part of the culture.

It's not part of ours. I don't know any of you that are a Jew. And so this just doesn't hit us like it did him.

And I recognize the idea of unity goes beyond Jew and Gentile. But, it seems that in Paul's mind, that's where the whole thing started. And I want you just to see this.

I want you to think with me about this. There's one body. There's one Spirit.

There's one hope. There's one Lord. There's one faith.

There's one baptism, one God. Think with me here. Just watch.

Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 2.16. Just turn back a page. Remember, the first thing in the list. One body.

In Ephesians 2.16, Jesus Christ reconciles us both. Who's that? Who's us both? We'll go back up to v. 11. Remember that at one time, you Gentiles in the flesh called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision.

There you have them. The uncircumcision and the circumcision. Remember that you, you Gentiles, you that He's talking to, the uncircumcision, you were separated from Christ, alienated, all the way down.

And what we find here is that Jesus Christ reconciles us both to God, both, Jew and Gentile, in one body. That's the body of Christ. That's one body.

He does this in one collective body of Jew and Gentile. Think, one Spirit. Oh, where do we find that at? Look at Ephesians 2.18. For through Christ, we both have access in one both.

It's always interesting to me that when you look through Paul's writings, what you find is when there's one body, it's got to do with both. When you have one Spirit, it has to do with both. You see, this is unifying.

You say, does this keep going? Well, yes, it does actually. There's one hope. If you turn back to chapter 1, notice with me, in v. 11, in Him we... Now, if you just read that we, you might think Paul is including himself with the Ephesians, but that's not what he's doing.

Watch. In Him we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we... Who is the we? We're the first to hope. See, the third thing here is there's one hope.

Who are the first to hope? Well, you remember the Gospel. Jesus said it would go first to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the world. Who were the first? The first were Jews.

The Gospel started there. He told His disciples, Jesus did in the beginning, don't go out to the Gentiles. You stay right here.

They were the first to hope. They have an inheritance. What's the hope? The hope is this inheritance.

The hope is the glory. V. 13, in Him you also. You Gentiles, you also.

When you heard the Word of the truth, the Gospel of your salvation, believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance. See, they have the inheritance too. The Spirit of God guaranteeing it.

Both. Those who first believed, they have an inheritance. Those who come along later, you also.

You too. One hope. One inheritance.

You keep going here. Let's look at Romans. Turn with me to Romans 10.

I'm just showing you something about Paul's idea here about unity and how Jew and Gentile were so much in his mind behind one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, and one faith. But now we're to one Lord. And you see the same thing come at us again.

Romans 10, verse 12. There's no distinction. No distinction between who? Again, Jew and Gentile.

What's uniting? The same Lord. One Lord. For the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call upon Him.

This is uniting. And in Paul's mind, the most amazing thing was that Jew and Gentile were being united in one church. You have to know that the reason why is because it was the most amazing because it was the most divisive thing in a natural state.

They were so at opposite ends. The last people in Paul's mind who could have ever been brought together were these two groups. Now, you say what about one faith? Okay, look at Romans 3. Because we're going to see that in Paul's mind, same thing.

Faith is bringing these two people together. Romans 3, verse 28. We hold that one is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also. So you see, Jews and Gentiles. That's on the table.

Now notice, verse 30 is the verse that I want you to see. Since God is One who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. See, there it is.

Again, in His mind, circumcised, uncircumcised, both faith. Now, the question is, okay, is this what He means by one faith? Is this it right here? One faith. They both share the same faith.

I'm going to say yes it is and I'm going to show you in a second, but I want to ask this. Look at verse 30. Why does Paul have to say it this way? God will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised

through faith.

Now some people have really got hung up over the two different prepositions. Oh, look, since the prepositions are different, it means the faith must be different. That is to absolutely miss what Paul's saying here.

But let me ask this question. Why doesn't Paul just say that God will justify anyone by faith? I mean, that's what he says in verse 28. Why does he have to say it like this? Why does he need to be so specific and show us in very pointed fashion that the circumcised are justified by faith, but he has to separately say the uncircumcised are likewise justified by faith? Why? I think the reason's simple.

Because we have a tendency to think that it's easier for some people to be saved than others. Now that was the big hang-up that Paul recognized existed in the world then. But you know, we think the same way.

It's not just about the other person in the church, but it's that mindset that some have an advantage. No advantage. It's an equal playing field.

Brethren, it's just true. We have a tendency to think that it's easier for God to be kind to certain people over against other people. But what he's showing us is faith cuts through all that.

The circumcision of the one doesn't in any way put him forward. It doesn't give him an advantage. The uncircumcision of the other, that doesn't leave him behind.

The justifier of them both is one and the same God and the basis of their justification? Faith. God looks past a man's lineage, a man's performance. What this does is it paves the way for sinners of all stripes, all color, to achieve a right standing with God no matter who they are, no matter where they've been born, whether or not they're the physical seed of Abraham.

And the thing was, to Paul, he couldn't get over this. It blew him away. This was stunning to him.

We don't feel it. We don't get it. And I'm not necessarily trying to preach today so that you do feel it and you do get it.

But I know this, the fact there's one faith is a very unifying reality. And that we should feel. That we should have an idea.

Can we call what we find there because both have this faith, can we call this one faith? If the circumcision by faith, the uncircumcision through faith, is this the one faith? And I would answer yes, as long as what I said before holds true. The objective and the subjective have to come together. The subjective is me believing.

And that's what you see in v. 30. You see the uncircumcised believing. You see the circumcised believing.

But that has to be united with a truth that's outside of ourselves. There's something the Jew must place his faith in for God to justify him. And the Gentile must place his faith in exactly the same thing for God to justify him.

Then it's one faith. Then it unites us. Then it overcomes all lineage and all ethnicity.

Certainly, this isn't just faith in anything. He's not saying, well, the uncircumcised by faith in anything and the circumcised by faith in anything, that's not it. There's something outside of ourselves.

The way Paul emphasizes the oneness of this faith is interesting. Right after this in Romans, notice what he does. Look at Romans 4.16. That is why it depends on faith.

What's it? Well, righteousness. The righteousness that God gives to us. Justification, you might say.

That's the it. You can trace it back to v. 13. The righteousness of faith.

And he says that is why it depends on faith. In order that the promise may rest on grace, be guaranteed to all His offspring, not only to the adherent or those who are of the law, but also or actually to the one who shares the faith of Abraham. Now notice that.

Shares. Who gets this? What's the it? It depends on faith. But notice the faith.

It's the one who shares the faith of Abraham. You want to go somewhere in Scripture? You want to go somewhere in Paul's writings where he's showing one faith? This is a place right here. One faith.

We all share this faith. So what does the faith of Abraham look like? Well, he goes on to describe it. Look at v. 20.

No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised. There's the basis of his faith. Fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised.

That is why his faith was counted to him as righteousness. But notice, the words that was counted to him were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe.

Who believe what? Who share the faith of Abraham. Back there in v. 16. Counted to us who believe.

In Him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord. Now, look, when we talk about the Christian faith, what I recognize is this, that when you really begin to search Paul's writings, yes, there is a faith. We could define the Christian faith most broadly as maybe everything that was written in this book.

But I can tell you this, when you look carefully at Paul's writings, do you know what he's concerned with? He's concerned with those elements of the faith that justify the sinner. When you want to boil this down, one faith that unites us, you know full well, you know full well that there are true Christians that are not united on every point in this book. But if you boil it down to the absolute minimum, you would have to say this, that one faith that unites is that which is essential to be believed.

That objective truth that must be believed. That minimal amount of God's revelation that must be believed for you to be justified. I'll tell you, that's what unites us.

Being justified. No matter what you believe, if you're not justified, we're not united. I mean, when you're talking about the one faith, the faith of Abraham, we must share in the faith of Abraham.

He's talking about the faith by which we obtain it. That is why it depends on faith. This is the reality of justification.

What is the minimal amount of truth that must be embraced to be saved? And here's what's interesting. As Paul is talking about the faith of Abraham and the fact that he was fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised, notice what happens. Notice what he does.

Look at verse 24. It will be counted to us who believe. There's the it again.

Righteousness. We will be counted righteous who believe in Him, the Father, who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord. Now notice this.

Who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. That is very interesting. He was raised for our justification.

But you want to make sure that you define that in light of verse 24. How was Christ Jesus raised for our justification? Verse 24 explains it. God raised Him from the dead.

And by believing in Him who did this, we're counted righteous. How is Christ being raised for your justification? Well, you're only justified by faith. Faith.

One faith. By embracing this one truth. That's how you're justified.

What does the resurrection have to do with it? Your faith. If we're looking for minimal aspects of saving faith, justifying faith, you better not miss this. You better not miss the resurrection.

Christ was delivered up for our trespasses. He died in our place. And then He was raised to prove to us that our sins were indeed paid for and that the Father was satisfied.

The Father did this. This you must believe. You must believe in this God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

The resurrection is at the heart and the soul of this justifying faith. The faith. One faith.

And in so believing, it will be counted to us who believe. It. The righteousness.

God counts us righteous by believing this. Is that all? I mean, that's one thing that He sets here. You.

You can't get away from it. V. 24, it will be counted to us. This is at the heart of salvation.

God counting you righteous. Whatever you may be unified in, it doesn't matter if you're not unified in this reality because if you're not unified in this reality, you're not saved, you don't know the Lord, and you're going to perish in the end. Whatever one faith is, you can be certain of this, it is that which unifies the true people of God.

It is that belief, that faith. You can't get away from the fact that it's the resurrection. It's the Father who raised Him from the dead.

His being raised from the dead. Raised for our justification. But is that all? Is there more? Now notice this.

Go back to chapter 3. Look with me at v. 25. Whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood. Now notice these words.

To be received by faith. Okay, Paul, teach us. What is the minimal truth? What is the essential truth? What is the heart and soul of that which must be believed if I'm going to be justified? If I'm going to be declared righteous by God? Me, who am unjust.

Me, who am ungodly. Me, who am a sinner. What must I do? Now, notice that.

To be received by faith. What? Well, that which he has just got done saying. Let's move back.

Move back to v. 21. Let's pick this up in the fullness. Now, the righteousness of God.

That's the it. Because this righteousness of God is not talking about the attribute of God. This righteousness of God in v. 22.

Notice it. V. 22, the righteousness of God through faith. That's how it comes.

Through faith in Jesus Christ. Notice, it's not His attribute. It's His righteous requirement for man.

And it says it's for all who believe. See, that's the gift. And notice this, there's no distinction.

Notice he comes back to the Jew-Gentile thing again. No distinction. No Jew, no Gentile, no circumcised, no uncircumcised.

There's no distinction here. The righteousness. Notice, faith in Jesus Christ.

No distinction. Keep reading. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

And when he says all, you know what he means. You know what's in his mind. Jew and Gentile alike.

"...and are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood." There it is. What we just read there, that is to be received by faith. That is at the heart, the soul.

Propitiation. You see that word? Propitiation by His blood. Propitiation is that which brings a change in God's attitude towards the sinner.

It's that which moves Him from being at enmity with us to being for us. Through propitiation, we are restored to fellowship, favor, with a previously offended God. That's what's behind this word.

God is appeased. Jesus Christ did that on the cross that was necessary to put away our sins. And He's satisfied.

He placated God's wrath. That's the issue. This is the very essence of salvation.

This is what's to be received by faith. And then he goes into this. Verse 30, "...since God is one, He will justify the circumcised by this faith and the uncircumcised through this faith." One faith.

One faith in the objective sense. And it's embraced likewise in the subjective sense. This is the personal act of believing being exercised by both the uncircumcised and by the circumcised.

And this is one faith in the objective sense. It's one faith in Jesus Christ. It's one faith in the fact that there is redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

That's the purchased Christ. We've been bought. God put Him forward.

You need to recognize this. God provided a way for you to be saved. God put His Son forward to appease His own wrath, to propitiate His wrath by His blood, by His suffering, by His death on that cross.

This is the essential. This is the faith if you're looking for something that is unifying to us. Whatever faith you have, listen, brethren, whatever faith you have, if God doesn't justify you and count you righteous as a result of that faith, it is not the one faith.

Now, turn with me to Galatians 3. Again, Paul is going to speak to us about faith. And he does it in a way that's a little bit mysterious, but I think you'll see from the context what he means. Galatians 3.22 And I'll just tell you, he's talking about faith.

He's going to talk about that which justifies us. And he's going to tell us there's no distinction between Jew and Gentile. It's so typical with Paul.

No distinction. No Jew. No Gentile.

This is the faith that justifies. And notice how he describes it. Galatians 3.22 The Scripture imprisoned everything under sin so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Galatians 3.23 Now, before faith came. Now let's just stop right there. In the original, this literally reads the coming of the faith.

Before the coming of the faith, we were held captive under the law. Now, what does that mean? The coming of the faith. Before the coming of the faith, we were held captive under the law.

What? When I read Hebrews 11, I read that faith was around all the way back since the times of Abel. What do you mean when faith comes? What is this? What does that mean? The faith. The coming of the faith.

Notice, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. Again, there's an article before faith. It's literally the faith about to be revealed.

The faith. Both places here, both of these last two usages in v. 23, there's an article. The faith.

The coming of the faith. The faith about to be revealed. How is faith being used here? It's not individual faith, but nor is it just, listen, a big chunk of this book that was written.

That had already come. What does he mean by the faith? He's certainly not talking about the whole body of truth found in Scripture, nor is he talking about your personal faith. What's he talking about here? What is this? V. 24, So then the law was our guardian until Christ came.

Now that's interesting. He's talking about faith coming, and then he just inserts instead of faith, he says, until Christ came. So faith came when Christ came.

And basically what he's doing is it looks like he's using faith interchangeable for the object of faith in order that we might be justified by faith. V. 25, But now that faith has come... Again, there's an article here. The faith having come is how it literally reads.

The faith. This one faith having come. Paul has reference to the time of Christ's coming.

Now that faith has come. Now that Christ has come. That's the idea.

It was then that faith and the object of faith were fully revealed. When that happened, when Christ came, what happened? The veil was rent. The old covenant system.

It says we're no longer under a guardian. For in Christ Jesus, you're all sons of God through faith. Again, there's an article there.

It literally in the Greek reads through the faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. And notice this, there's no distinction again.

There is neither Jew nor Greek. Now he goes on to speak about others, but that's always where he starts. That's where all of this oneness, one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, He has in His mind of Jew and Gentile alike.

Now listen, some think of the doctrines of grace as being like the chief thing. Some dwell on eschatology. Some dwell on the law.

But if there's one faith to contend for, what we want to contend for is that faith in Jesus Christ that justifies. And you're not going to get away from it unless it's faith in that one Jesus Christ who is Lord, that one Jesus Christ who has made redemption, who is propitiated. God set forth as a propitiation by His blood and has to be received by faith.

This Christ, this is at the heart. This is the faith. The one faith that justifies both circumcised and uncircumcised so that there's neither Jew nor Greek.

And I would just say this, Paul is very careful to show us how it unifies. And I'm actually going to show you one place that probably Luke being influenced by Paul, but how does one faith unify us? You see, if we have one faith, again, the subjective meets the objective. Your faith meets at this objective truth which alone when believed, God will justify you.

What do we share? We share justification. That means we share salvation. But what else do we share? We share other things.

Notice, if you're right there in Romans 3, you know in v. 30, he says same God. Romans 3.30, God is one. This same God will justify the circumcised by faith, the uncircumcised through faith.

But notice what he says right before this in v. 27. What becomes of our boasting? Whether you're circumcised or uncircumcised. What becomes of your boasting? Excluded? By what kind of law? By a law of works? No.

By a law of faith. By the principle of faith. By the reality of faith.

You know what one faith does? It unites us in having our boasting mouths shut. That's one thing. It excludes boasting.

What becomes of it? Excluded. You see, this is the thing about the Christian faith. It looks away from self.

The whole Christian faith is based on this one fact. God accomplished our salvation without our help. We can't boast that we had any part in accomplishing it.

Because we didn't have any part in accomplishing it. What faith does is call attention to the One who's being trusted. That's one thing.

That's one way we're united. Where you find God's people, we can sing these songs, and with united joy, we're singing about the One who saved us. If our boasting is in how we're living, what we're doing, if our boasting is in our advantage, there's not unified joy in that.

There's not unified silence to our boasting in that. There's not unified joy in the singing, in the exalting, in the praising. Somewhere else we're unified is this.

Acts 15.9. The thing that was interesting about the boasting as excluded, right in the context of Jew and Gentile again. There being no distinction. One is just God will justify the one by faith, the other one through faith.

Right there. Boasting excluded. No distinction.

You go to Acts 15.9, we find the same thing. God made no distinction between us and them. Who's the us and them? Jew and Gentile.

They're going on about the salvation of the Gentiles here. Acts 15. They're all in Jerusalem.

They're talking about the conversion of the Gentiles. And you know what they say? They say God isn't making a distinction. Those Jews out there, what? No distinction.

Same thing. Happening to them, happening to us. And what is it? Having cleansed their hearts by faith.

The hearts of men are filthy. They're polluted. The heart is inside.

The heart is what goes on in here, inside of us. It's where the man thinks. It's where the man knows.

It's where the man feels. It's where the man is convicted. It's where the man believes.

Christianity is a religion that affects man on the inside. Most religions just simply make the person clean on the outside. But the inside is left untouched.

This is another place where the faith, the faith, one faith, it unifies us. Because as we embrace it, what you find is this. Isn't this amazing? As I look at Christ redeeming, propitiating, rising, and my faith reaches out, where does that happen? Not with my hand.

How do I embrace Christ? It happens inside me. And as it looks to Christ in faith, a cleansing happens. The heart is made clean.

It's purified. No distinction. There's no true embracing of the one faith without this cleansing result.

No distinction. It happens the same to Jew and Gentile and to all. And there will always be a new purity that grows out of a new faith that's placed in this Christ.

Christ is so powerful that simply to believe in Him, to look not with these eyes, not to grab with this hand, not to eat physically. You can be blind. You can be deaf.

You can be armless. And you can seize hold on this Christ. And what happens is by faith.

It happens in the mind. It happens in the heart. With the heart, one believes.

And when there's that looking to Christ, there's that trusting in this Christ, there's a washing. He's so powerful that simply to believe in Him unleashes this washing effect. And the fact is, this is extremely unifying.

No one embracing the one faith is left out of this purifying action. Now, go to Ephesians again. I've got one more here.

One more way that this is unifying. If you look at Ephesians 3.11, right at the end, it says, Christ Jesus our Lord. Verse 12, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him.

Now notice this. Through our faith in Him, we have boldness and access. To where? We'll go back to 2.18. Because Paul spoke about this.

Access. Through Christ, we both have access in one's spirit to the Father. Now notice this.

Just like with humility, what becomes of our boasting, both uncircumcised and circumcised alike, it's by faith. The law of faith. It's excluded for both of us.

Just like with the purifying of the heart, there's no distinction. It happens to both of us. Right here.

We have boldness and access through our faith in Him. Well, through Him, we both have access in one's spirit to the Father. You see, Paul has got this in mind.

Both. Both. Jew and Gentile.

No difference. Sinful man imagines he can just waltz right into the presence of God. No thought.

No thinking. Anytime he wants. Many men, actually, they just believe that God is out there and all He's doing is holding His breath.

Waiting. I'll tell you, in one sense, we have a picture in Scripture. The father of the prodigal son is probably very much painted that way.

And that is very encouraging to the sinner in all of his dirt and filth. But I tell you, what doesn't come out in the prodigal son is this, there is no access to the Father except by faith in the Son. He said, no one goes unto the Father except by Me.

We can't just waltz into His presence. The reality is this, the way is barred. When that cherubim stood with that flaming sword and kept Adam and Eve back, you need to recognize what happened.

The way was barred. Men don't know it. Do you realize what one of the most marvelous, wonderful things that can ever be said about anybody is that they should embrace the one faith and become a Christian? Why? Because they're granted access.

That unifies us by faith. One faith. That's the ticket.

That's the key that unlocks the gates of heaven. It's faith in Jesus Christ. The nearness of God, the NAS says, is my good.

I have access through my faith. Not because I'm better this week than I was last week. The whole point is that after the things I've done, God is willing to have me enter into His presence and be accepted and be loved and be treated absolutely contrary to what my sins deserve if I embrace the one faith concerning God's Son.

By this, I have access. That means I can come to the place where He gives... I mean, think about it. You have access.

What does that mean? I can go before Him. I come to that place where He gives Himself to me, where He talks to me, where I commune with Him. The door's open.

You see, people can ask, what's the Christian faith all about? What's Christianity? What's the church? What's this all about? I mean, is it a matter of duty? Is it a social thing? No. It's about people in a unified fashion having access to the Father with hearts that have been washed clean. All of this by faith.

No distinction. Jew or Gentile. Mazed Paul.

Access. And we come and our mouths are not boasting. Why? That's all been excluded.

Faith excludes it. We come with our eyes beholding what Jesus Christ did for us. That's where our faith is.

Those basic realities. That's it. We know Christians contend over and fight over many things, but not here.

Not this. Not these truths. If you fight here, if you contend here, if you don't uphold these by contend, I mean contention.

Not contend like Jude means. Brethren, there's one faith. You can dig.

You can wrestle. You can look at Paul. You can try to get his feeling for the faith.

But there's one faith. It's the faith of Abraham. There's one faith that was revealed when the one Christ was revealed.

The faith. One faith. It is that faith that justifies embracing that one faith, believing in that redemption that is by Christ Jesus.

God put Him forward to be a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This is all you see it. One body? Yep.

Reconciled in one body. Both. One Spirit.

Yep. Through Him, we both have access. This one Spirit.

One hope. Oh, you remember what it says? At one time, you Gentiles, you uncircumcised at one time, separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope. There's one hope that unites us all.

One Lord. The same Lord. Lord of all.

No distinction. Jew and Gentile. One faith.

God justifies the circumcision by faith, and He justifies the uncircumcised by faith. One faith. You ready for one baptism? Anyway, you want to know what Paul means by one baptism? Hopefully, that's next week.

Father, I pray that these would not just be theoretical things to think about, ponder, agree, disagree, but may the real uniting quality of one faith reach out and grab us. We know the object of faith can be put for faith. Christ.

He is the object. Lord, how will we believe unless there's some revelation given to us, unless we're told, unless we're taught, unless our eyes are opened to behold? Father, I pray this, the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of Him, reveal Him. Holy Spirit, please reveal this object of our faith.

Reveal Him. May He be more glorious, more full of splendor and majesty before our eyes. Spirit of God, when You come, You will glorify Him.

I pray, Lord, glorify Your Son in ways that we're helpless to do, we're impotent to do, but that You can do and You can work through us to make happen. I pray, Lord, how would the spiritual gifts build up this church unless the building up is until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God? We pray that that would happen. We pray that make it happen, Father.

Make it happen. Make us grow. Make us grow in this faith and in this knowledge of the Son of God until we achieve and reach maturity.

The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ so that we aren't any longer blown about by every wind of doctrine. Make us mature. Grow us so that we build up ourselves in love.

Speaking the truth in love. Growing up in every way into Him who is the Head. We pray that You would make that happen.

Cause it to happen. Lord, we don't want to just read about these things. We want them to be a reality in our midst.

I want the people that come here to truly grow, to stay on their way, to stay the course. Father, we've had some people fall out of the race. We've had some people disciplined out of the church.

Lord, we have witnessed those who have gone out from us because they weren't of us. We know these realities. But Lord, there are people that You're preserving, a people that will endure, that will make it to the end.

We pray, Father, do what You do to keep people saved and to keep them well saved and to cause them to persevere. We pray, Lord, continue and further perpetuate that work whereby Your people are saved to the uttermost all the way to the end. Lord Jesus, You promised to save to the uttermost and we hold You to that.

We lift up our voices in faith. We look to You. Don't only save us at one time by Your redeeming power, by the propitiating blood that was shed to appease the Father who is now satisfied on behalf of the believers.

Lord, we look to You and we pray, save us to the uttermost. Save us fully. Save us today.

Save us tomorrow. Cause us to endure to the end. Lord, save us well so that we not become weary in well-doing, so that we become fruitful.

We know some 30, some 60, some 100-fold. Lord, I pray for many 100-fold Christians in this place. Don't let us stagnate.

Don't let us fall to sleep, but keep us going. Keep us burning. Keep us hot.

Keep the fires, Lord, a burning and shining light like John the Baptist was. Cause us, Lord, cause us to run. Cause us to not be weary.

Cause us to have wings of an eagle that we might fly, that we might soar. We pray all this in Christ's name. Amen.

You're dismissed.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/-8wntio5MFA.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/one-faith-ephesians-4-5/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net