

## Phil. 3:1-9 - Communion & Union....or Hyphen?

Intro - Gen. 1:1 – God made the universe...a wide diversity of things that operate in unity – created order  
 The Church is a universe – a wide diversity of sinners brought to unity in one Savior- a re-created order.  
 One thing that all Christians share is a common love for Christ and shared communion with Him at His Table. Every SONday is the LORD's day but this day we celebrated the LORD's Supper. In the Supper we are reminded of many things – Incarnation, Substitution, Redemption, Pardon...Communion & Union

As we prepare ourselves to fellowship with one another, and with our Redeemer, I want us to remember that as we come to this Table we are to downplay our diversity and embrace our unity. As Christians we have a common identity – and our identity is in Christ- He is our Life! Our created differences are swept into the re-created order – a diversity of sinners brought together into unity around one glorious Savior.

- Years ago I had some sweet fellowship with an individual with whom I had nothing in common
  - A lot of differences: age, socio-economic, education, occupation, “success”, family, we did have a small similarity - he had a mansion and I was a man with a son
  - We had absolutely nothing in common.....except Christ!
    - We were two very distinct sinners redeemed by the same wonderful Savior
    - All our differences made no difference – especially around the Ordinance
    - There is a *sameness* to the Supper. Same: elements, portion, place, same time
    - We were one in the Son. A common identity despite our differences
- Phil. 3:1-2 – Paul wants to safeguard the church and warns of divisive people. He calls them Dogs, evil workers, false circumcision. Jews who were classifying and categorizing Christians
  - Jude 19 - warn of those who cause division (make distinctions) and have not the Spirit
    - Identity politics plays in the world but has no place in the church
- Phil. 3:3 Believers are those who have the Spirit and exhibit two distinct things:
  - 1 - Glory in Christ (Gal. 6:14 – God forbid that....) Spirit filled = Christ exalting
  - 2- put no confidence in the flesh (our diverse identities are downplayed)
- Phil 3:4-6 Paul gives his own resume` if he were to play the comparative identity game.
  - Circumcised the 8<sup>th</sup> day (special ceremony) Israel (special nation)
  - Benjamin ( a top tribe) Hebrew of Hebrews (top of class)
  - Pharisee (conservative *originalist* with Law) zeal (no slacker but persecutor)
  - Legalistic precision – he was without reproach – a stickler for the law – he did the work
  - Impressive resume` Laudable diversity that set him apart a unique identity
- Phil 3:7 pre-salvation identity he thought was on the + side of the ledger was put on neg. side
  - His unique diversity and distinction was lost in a Union & Communion with Christ Jesus
- Phil 3:8 Paul puts all his best stuff and unique self on the trash heap - it's all rubbish
  - Isaiah 64:6 our best deeds and unique identity is but dirty diapers
    - All that defines me is dung compared to Christ who is my all in all
  - Our diverse identities before Christ..... must bow to Christ.....when we come to Christ
- Phil 3:9 Being found in Him... our chief identity is in Christ!
  - Our diversity is swallowed up in His unity We are a universe a re-created order

- Our righteousness is in Him                      our identity is in Him
    - I lose my filthy rag righteousness and I get God's perfect righteousness by faith
  - He is everything we are not and He gives us all that He is                      Union & Communion
- Hyphenated Christianity disrupts our unity
  - Not uncommon for a new bride to keep her past name. want a new identity but holds old
    - She keeps her separate distinction with hyphen.                      Old name-New name
  - Unfortunately the Bride of Christ often does the same.                      (Emphasis is on the distinction)
  - American Christian baptized in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, in the southern tribe, a Baptist of Baptist, a zealous conservative Christian. Black-Christian, Asian- Christian, Republican, Progressive, Independent Christian... We love our hyphens before the word Christians
- The Bride of Christ must leave off the Hyphen if she is to have communion/union with Husband
  - Identity politics has no place in the church.                      we emphasize our union not distinction
    - The church is a universe                      diversity of sinners united in one glorious Savior
- We must give up our sinful identities
  - Were not: drunk-Christians, lying-Christians, Adulterous-, greedy-Christians, Gay- ....
  - We are Christians that have been saved from.... 1 Cor. 6:9-11 (old identity washed)
- I must downplay my cultural identity
  - God created our cultural identities (are great)                      ought to be appreciation for distinction
    - But our diversity is absorbed in the unity of the church
  - Our identities before Christ.... must all bow before Christ.... when we come to Christ
  - Our main identity is in Christ                      We are Christians and we bear His name...alone
    - Union & Communion with no Hyphen                      re-created order                      a universe
- Hymn #258 "In Christ there is no East or West"

Gathering of the elements

hymn # 236 "The Church's One Foundation"

This Communion is open to any baptized believer in fellowship with Father, Son and Spirit and who also is in loving union with His church

Fencing the Table

Self examination

Discerning the Body

Celebrating the Meal