

Unity



Restoration (Part 10)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious truths and insights that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same for you.

Today I'm going to bring you my final talk on the restoration of the church. Let me say that all next week I'll be dealing with the other main aspects of God's end time purpose, the restoration of Israel.

In my talk today I'm going to deal with the restoration of unity within the church. Let me begin by stating two basic principles. First, unity is the ultimate objective of God for the church. Second, a divided church can never defeat a united kingdom of Satan.

Let's look briefly at these principles in turn. First of all, unity is the ultimate objective of God for the church. This comes out clearly in the prayer that Jesus prayed in John 17, the prayer that's often called His High-Priestly prayer for His people. At the end of the prayer in verses 21 and 23 He says this, and He is speaking about all who believe in Him:

> "...that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me." (NAS)

Notice the two successive phrases. First of all, "that the world may believe," and then "that the world may know." What is it that confronts the world with the testimony of Jesus in its most effective form? It's not missions, it's not evangelism, it's not tract distribution—all these are good. But there's something more effective as a testimony to Jesus than all of those, something without which many of these lose much of their effectiveness, and that is the manifested unity of all believers. Jesus prays for this in clear specific language because, He says, through it the world may believe and the world may know.

Then again in Ephesians 4:13, Paul speaks about the main ministries that we've been discussing in the previous talks this week and he states this as the objective for these

ministries:

> "...until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." (NAS)

Notice, "until we all attain to the unity of the faith." That states as clearly as language can do that one final objective of God for the church is that we all attain to the unity of the faith. So I believe it's scriptural and correct to say that unity is the ultimate objective of God for the church.

Then the other principle. A divided church can never defeat a united kingdom of Satan. This principle is made clear by Jesus in Matthew 12:25–26:

> "And knowing their thoughts He said to them, 'Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand. 'And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?"" (NAS)

Notice that Jesus speaks about a divided kingdom or a divided house, and says that such a kingdom or a house cannot stand. Scripture refers to the church both as a kingdom and as a house. So if the church is divided against itself, it cannot stand. And in the words that follow about Satan, He indicates clearly that Satan's kingdom is not divided. So as long as the church remains divided and Satan's kingdom is undivided, the church will never overthrow Satan's kingdom.

Satan, of course, knows this well. He's very well acquainted with Scripture and his supreme objective is to keep the church divided. Therefore, anything that we do to perpetuate disunity is playing into Satan's hands.

Yesterday I said that authority is a necessary stepping stone to unity. I want to explain now why I said that. The answer is because unity flows from the head downward. This principle is stated in Psalm 133, a short psalm of just three verses:

> "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, For brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, Coming down upon the beard, Even Aaron's beard, Coming down upon the edge of his robes." (NAS)

And then it compares unity also to the dew of Hermon. Notice that unity starts at the head and flows downward. It never flows upward. And that's how unity can come to the church and no other way. It must come from the leaders down to the people. Let me state a simple principle: divided pastors produce divided people. United pastors produce united people. The division in the church, in the whole body, is a reflection of the division between leaders. If leaders were not divided, people would not be divided.

Now in Ezekiel 34 we are confronted with an indictment of God on the shepherds of Israel. It's too long to read it but let me just extract the great principle from this, that God judges shepherds by the condition of their sheep. Not by their background, not by their degrees, not by their denomination, but by the results they produce in His people, their sheep.

So if the church today is divided, strife-torn, weakened, and made incapable of overcoming Satan's kingdom, the responsibility rests upon the leaders of God's people. Not upon some, but upon all. I too, have to take my share of responsibility. And every leader of God's people is both individually, together with the rest, responsible for the division of God's people. That is a terrible responsibility for us to carry.

Now I want to give you a brief but practical pattern for God's people coming together in unity. It's taken from the Old Testament but the principles apply just as well today. I'm going to read some verses from Psalm 122:3–7:

> "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." (KJV)

Now the city of Jerusalem, in the Old Covenant, is a picture, amongst other things, of the church of Jesus Christ under the New Covenant. And Jerusalem was the focal point and the center of unity for God's people under the Old Covenant.

Let me extract just a few important points from that psalm that I just read. First of all, it says, "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." Interestingly enough, in Hebrew that word "compact" is formed from a Hebrew root which means basically a "companion" or a "fellow." Actually, it is the same root that give us the word Hebron. So, the compactness of the church is in fellowship, it's in the relationship between fellow believers.

Secondly, Israel went up three times a year by tribes under recognized leaders to their point of unity, Jerusalem. They did not go up as individuals. Each tribe went under leadership. It was the responsibility of the leaders to take their people to the point of unity.

Thirdly, the testimony of Israel was their coming together in this way. That's why God ordained that they had to do it three times every year. Because by coming together in that way they demonstrated to the whole surrounding world that they were one nation who had one God whom all of them served and worshiped. It was the visible demonstration of their national unity.

Then again, their coming together had three results: authority, peace and prosperity. That's the order in which they are stated. Their coming together brought them to the place where the thrones were set, the thrones being always the picture of divine authority. Then it says, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces." Notice, peace comes before prosperity. The church of Jesus Christ will never know true prosperity until it first has peace. So the order is authority, peace, prosperity. You see that authority is essential to peace and peace is essential to prosperity.

Now the restoration of unity in the church following this pattern means two basic requirements. Very simple. First, that God's people recognize and obey their leaders. Secondly, that the leaders recognize and relate to each other. That's all it takes, basically. Let me state those two requirements again and close. First, that God's people recognize and obey their leaders. Second, that the leaders recognize and relate to each other.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be dealing with the other main aspect of God's end time purpose, the restoration of Israel.

Radio Program

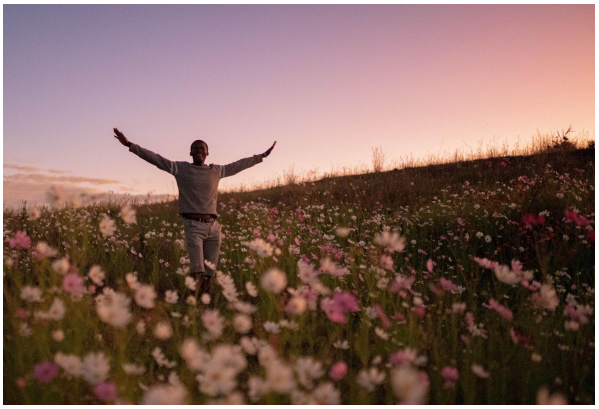
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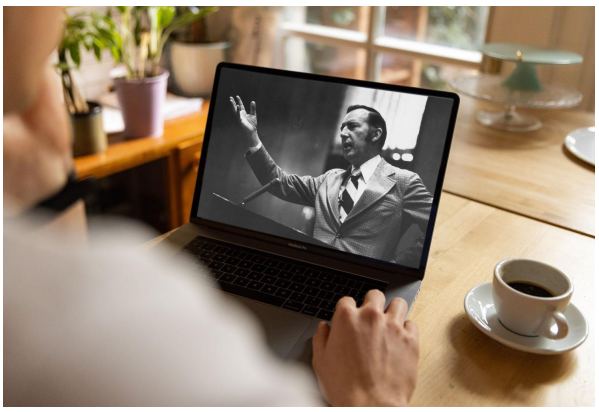
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