

Christian Unity

Philip. 1:2

*Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our
Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

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Forward

The cure for evil desires is humility (see Proverbs 16:18-19; 1 Peter 5:5-6).

Pride makes us self-centered and leads us to conclude that we deserve all we can see, touch, or imagine.

It creates greedy appetites for far more than we need.

We can be released from our self-centered desires by humbling ourselves before God, realizing that all we really need is his approval.

When the Holy Spirit fills us, we see that this world's seductive attractions are only cheap substitutes for what God has to offer.

This is because of our fallen nature, we have a tendency toward envy. James is not quoting a specific verse or passage—he is summing up a teaching of Scripture. See Romans 6:6-8 and Galatians 5:17-21

Believers must lay aside petty differences and work together in unity.

It has been said that it is unimaginable what could be done for God if no one cared who got the credit for it.

The reply should be: “By God’s grace, I will be that person”

Study the following Scriptures for working together in unity, and produce a harvest of souls.

Chapter 1

Unity among Believers

Philippians 2:2

make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Many people—even Christians—live only to make a good impression on others or to please themselves. But “selfish ambition or vain conceit” brings discord.

Paul therefore stressed spiritual unity, asking the Philippians to love one another and to be one in spirit and purpose. When we work together, caring for the problems of others as if they were our problems, we demonstrate Christ’s example of putting others first, and we experience unity. Don’t be so concerned about making a good impression or meeting your own needs that you strain relationships in God’s family.

Do not be haughty in mind.

Romans 12:16

Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly Do not be wise in your own estimation.

These verses summarize the core of Christian living. If we love someone the way Christ loves us, we will be willing to forgive. If we have experienced God’s grace, we will want to pass it on to others.

And remember, grace is *undeserved* favor. By giving an enemy a drink, we're not excusing his misdeeds. We're recognizing him, forgiving him, and loving him in spite of his sins—just as Christ did for us.

Build up one another.

Romans 14:19

So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

Sin is not just a private matter. Everything we do affects others, and we have to think of them constantly. God created us to be interdependent, not independent. We who are strong in our faith must, without pride or condescension, treat others with love, patience, and self-restraint.

All things were common property.

Acts 4:32

And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.

Differences of opinion are inevitable among human personalities and can actually be helpful, if handled well. But spiritual unity is essential—loyalty, commitment, and love for God and his Word. Without spiritual unity, the church could not survive. Paul wrote the letter of 1 Corinthians to urge the church in Corinth toward greater unity.

None of these Christians felt that what they had was their own, and so they were able to give and share, eliminating poverty among them. They would not let a brother or sister suffer when others had plenty.

How do you feel about your possessions? We should adopt the attitude that everything we have comes from God, and we are only sharing what is already his.

The early church was able to share possessions and property as a result of the unity brought by the Holy Spirit working in and through the believers' lives.

This way of living is different from communism because (1) the sharing was voluntary; (2) it didn't involve *all* private property, but only as much as was needed; (3) it was not a membership requirement in order to be a part of the church. The spiritual unity and generosity of these early believers attracted others to them. This organizational structure is not a Biblical command, but it offers vital principles for us to follow.

Be humble in spirit.

1 Peter 3:8

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;

Peter lists five key elements that should characterize any group of believers: (1) harmony—pursuing the same goals; (2) sympathy—being responsive to others' needs; (3) love—seeing and treating each other as brothers and sisters; (4) compassion—being affectionately sensitive and caring; and (5) humility—being willing to encourage one another and rejoice in each other's successes. These five qualities go a long way toward helping believers serve God effectively.

Peter developed the qualities of compassion and humility the hard way. In his early days with Christ, these attitudes did not come naturally to his impulsive, strong-willed personality (see Mark 8:31-33; John 13:6-9 for examples of Peter's blustering). But the Holy Spirit changed Peter, molding his strong personality to God's use, and teaching him tenderness and humility.

In our fallen world, it is often deemed acceptable by some to tear people down verbally or to get back at them if we feel hurt. Peter, remembering Jesus' teaching to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39), encourages his readers to pay back wrongs by praying for the offenders. In God's kingdom, revenge is unacceptable behavior, as is insulting a person, no matter how indirectly it is done. Rise above getting back at those who hurt you. Instead of reacting angrily to these people, pray for them.

Conduct yourselves in a worthy manner.

Philippians 1:27

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Paul encourages the believers to be unified, as they "stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith." How sad that much time and effort is lost in some churches by fighting against one another instead of uniting against the real opposition! It takes a courageous church to resist in-fighting and to maintain the common purpose of serving Christ.

Preserve the unity of the spirit in peace.

Ephesians 4:3

Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

To build unity is one of the Holy Spirit's important roles. He leads, but we have to be willing to be led and to do our part to keep the peace. We do that by focusing on God, not on ourselves. For more about who the Holy Spirit is and what he does, see the notes on +John 3:6; +Acts 1:5; and +Ephes. 1:13-14.

Chapter 2

The Lord is one God

Deuteronomy 6:4

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

Monotheism—belief in only one God—was a distinctive feature of Hebrew religion. Many ancient religions believed in many gods. But the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God of the whole earth, the only true God. This was an important insight for the nation of Israel because they were about to enter a land filled with people who believed in many gods. Both then and today, there are people who prefer to place their trust in many different “gods.” But the day is coming when God will be recognized as the only one. He will be the king over the whole earth (Zech. 14:9).

Jesus gave his glory to his disciples.

John 17:22

“The glory which you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as we are one;

Jesus’ great desire for his disciples was that they would become one. He wanted them unified as a powerful witness to the reality of God’s love. Are you helping to unify the body of Christ, the church? You can pray for other Christians, avoid gossip, build others up, work together in humility, give your time and money, exalt Christ, and refuse to get sidetracked arguing over divisive matters.

Jesus prayed for unity among the believers based on the believers’ unity with him and the Father. Christians can know unity among themselves if they are living in union with God. For example, each branch living in union with the vine is united with all other branches doing the same.

The Lord our God is one Lord.

Mark 12:29

And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

God's laws are not burdensome. They can be reduced to two simple principles: love God and love others. These commands are from the Old Testament (Deut. 6:5; Leviticus 19:18). When you love God completely and care for others as you care for yourself, then you have fulfilled the intent of the Ten Commandments and the other Old Testament laws. According to Jesus, these two commandments summarize all God's laws. Let them rule your thoughts, decisions, and actions. When you are uncertain about what to do, ask yourself which course of action best demonstrates love for God and love for others.

The word was God.

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In this Gospel, John provides clear evidence that Jesus is the Son of God and that by believing in him we may have eternal life. John also provides unique material about Jesus' birth. He did not come into being when he was born, because he is eternal.

What Jesus taught and what he did are tied inseparably to who he is. John shows Jesus as fully human and fully God. Although Jesus took upon himself full humanity and lived as a man, he never ceased to be the eternal God who has always existed, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and the source of eternal life. This is the truth about Jesus, and the foundation of all truth. If we cannot or do not believe this basic truth,

we will not have enough faith to trust our eternal destiny to him. That is why John wrote this Gospel—to build faith and confidence in Jesus Christ so that we may believe that he truly was and is the Son of God (John 20:30-31).

John wrote to believers everywhere, both Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles). As one of Jesus' 12 disciples, John was an eyewitness, so his story is accurate. His book is not a biography (like the book of Luke); it is a thematic presentation of Jesus' life. Many in John's original audience had a Greek background. Greek culture encouraged worship of many mythological gods, whose supernatural characteristics were as important to Greeks as genealogies were to Jews. John shows that Jesus is not only different from but superior to these gods of mythology.

In Hebrew Scripture, *the Word* was an agent of creation (Psalm 33:6), the source of God's message to his people through the prophets (Hosea 1:2), and God's law, his standard of holiness (Psalm 119:11). In Greek philosophy, *the Word* was the principle of reason that governed the world, or the thought still in the mind, while in Hebrew thought, *the Word* was another expression for God.

John's description shows clearly that he is speaking of Jesus (see especially John 1:14)—a human being he knew and loved, but at the same time the Creator of the universe, the ultimate revelation of God, the living picture of God's holiness, the One in whom “all things hold together” (Col. 1:17). To Jewish readers, “the Word was God” was blasphemous. To Greek readers, “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14) was unthinkable. To John, this new understanding of the Word was gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The disciples are to become one.

John 17:11

"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.

Jesus was asking that the disciples be united in harmony and love as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united—the strongest of all unions. (See the note on +John 17:21-23.)

God is the one mediator.

Galatians 3:20

Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.

The law has two functions. On the positive side, it reveals the nature and will of God and shows people how to live. On the negative side, it points out people's sins and shows them that it is impossible to please God by trying to obey all his laws completely.

God's promise to Abraham dealt with Abraham's faith; the law focuses on actions. The covenant with Abraham shows that faith is the only way to be saved; the law shows how to obey God in grateful response. Faith does not annul the law; but the more we know God, the more we see how sinful we are. Then we are driven to depend on our faith in Christ alone for our salvation.

When God gave his promise to Abraham, he did it by himself alone, without angels or Moses as mediators. Although it is not mentioned in Exodus, Jews believed that the Ten Commandments had been given to Moses by angels (Stephen referred to this in his speech, see Acts 7:38, 53).

Paul was showing the superiority of salvation and growth by faith over trying to be saved by keeping the Jewish laws. Christ is the best and only way given by God for us to come to him (1 Tim. 2:5).

There are three that testify.

1 John 5:7

For there are three that testify:

The phrase “came by water and blood” may refer to Jesus’ baptism and his crucifixion. At this time, there was a false teaching in circulation that said Jesus was “the Christ” only between his baptism and his death—that is, he was merely human until he was baptized, at which time “the Christ” then descended upon him but then later left him before his death on the cross.

But if Jesus died only as a man, he could not have taken upon himself the sins of the world, and Christianity would be an empty religion. Only an act of God could take away the punishment that we deserve for our sin.

Sin hides the face of God from you.

Isaiah 59:2

But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

Sin offends our holy God and separates us from him. Because God is holy, he cannot ignore, excuse, or tolerate sin as though it didn’t matter. Sin cuts people off from him, forming a wall to isolate God from the people he loves. No wonder this long list of wretched sins makes God angry and forces him to look the other way.

Chapter 3

Friendship with the Lord is hostility toward God.

James 4:4

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Conflicts and disputes among believers are always harmful. James explains that these quarrels result from evil desires battling within us—we want more possessions, more money, higher status, more recognition.

When we want badly enough to fulfill these desires, we fight in order to do so. Instead of aggressively grabbing what we want, we should submit ourselves to God, ask God to help us get rid of our selfish desires, and trust him to give us what we really need.

James mentions the most common problems in prayer: not asking, asking for the wrong things, asking for the wrong reasons. Do you talk to God at all? When you do, what do you talk about?

Do you ask only to satisfy your desires? Do you seek God's approval for what you already plan to do? Your prayers will become powerful when you allow God to change your desires so that they perfectly correspond to his will for you (1 John 3:21-22).

There is nothing wrong with wanting a pleasurable life. God gives us good gifts that he wants us to enjoy (James 1:17; Ephes. 4:7; 1 Tim. 4:4-5). But having friendship with the world involves seeking pleasure at others' expense or at the expense of obeying God. Pleasure that keeps us from pleasing God is sinful; pleasure from God's rich bounty is good.

You have not because you ask not.

James 4:1-2

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

Conflicts and disputes among believers are always harmful. James explains that these quarrels result from evil desires battling within us—we want more possessions, more money, higher status, more recognition. When we want badly enough to fulfill these desires, we fight in order to do so. Instead of aggressively grabbing what we want, we should submit ourselves to God, ask God to help us get rid of our selfish desires, and trust him to give us what we really need.

Brothers should dwell together in unity.

Psalm 133:1

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!

David stated that unity is pleasant and precious. Unfortunately, unity does not abound in the church as it should. People disagree and cause division over unimportant issues. Some delight in causing tension by discrediting others. Unity is important because (1) it makes the church a positive example to the world and helps draw others to us; (2) it helps us cooperate as a body of believers as God meant us to, giving us a foretaste of heaven; (3) it renews and revitalizes ministry because there is less tension to sap our energy.

Living in unity does not mean that we will agree on everything; there will be many opinions just as there are many notes in a musical chord.

But we must agree on our purpose in life—to work together for God. Our outward expression of unity will reflect our inward unity of purpose.

Expensive oil was used by Moses to anoint Aaron as the first high priest of Israel (Exodus 29:7) and to dedicate all the priests to God's service. Brotherly unity, like the anointing oil, shows that we are dedicated to serving God wholeheartedly.

Mount Hermon is the tallest mountain in Palestine, located northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

The mountain of the Lord shall be established.

Isaiah 2:2-4

Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths."

For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.

The temple was built on the mountain of the Lord, Mount Moriah, highly visible to all the people of Jerusalem. For more on the significance of the temple, see the note on +2 Chron. 5:1ff. In the last

days the temple will attract the nations, not because of its architecture and prominence, but because of God's presence and influence.

God gave Isaiah the gift of seeing the future. At this time, God showed Isaiah what would eventually happen to Jerusalem. Rev. 21 depicts the glorious fulfillment of this prophecy in the New Jerusalem, where only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be allowed to enter. God made a covenant (promise) with his people and will never break it. God's faithfulness gives us hope for the future.

This describes a wonderful future of peace when instruments of war will be converted to instruments of farming, when we will be taught God's laws and will obey them. Although we know that eventually God will remove all sin and thus the causes of war, conflicts, and other problems, we should not wait for him to act before we begin to obey him. Just as Judah was told in Isaiah 2:5, we should walk in his light now. Though our eternal reward awaits us, we already can enjoy many benefits of obedience now as we apply God's Word to our lives.

Chapter 4

All sheep will become one flock.

John 10:16

"I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.

The "other sheep" were non-Jews. Jesus came to save Gentiles as well as Jews. This is an insight into his worldwide mission—to die for the sins of the world. People tend to want to restrict God's blessings to their own group, but Jesus refuses to be limited by the fences we build.

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord.

Revelation 11:15

Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

The seventh trumpet is sounded, announcing the arrival of the King. There is now no turning back. The coming judgments are no longer partial, but complete in their destruction. God is in control, and he unleashes his full wrath on the evil world that refuses to turn to him (Rev. 9:20-21). When his wrath begins, there will be no escape.

All nations shall come to worship

Psalm 86:9

All nations whom you have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and they shall glorify your name.

“There is none like you, O LORD.” The God of the Bible is unique! He is alive and able to do mighty deeds for those who love him. All human-created deities are powerless because they are merely inventions of the mind, not living beings. The Lord alone is “worthy . . . to receive glory and honor and power” (Rev. 4:11). Although people believe in many gods, you need never fear that God is only one among many or that you may be worshipping the wrong God. The Lord alone is God.

Let us entreat the favor of the Lord

Zechariah 8:20-23

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'it will yet be that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. 'The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, "Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will also go." 'So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord...

There will come a time when fasting for sins will be replaced by feasting and joy. People from all nations will “seek the LORD Almighty.” This was also promised in Zech. 2:11.

My house shall be called a house of prayer.

Mark 11:17

And saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

Money changers and merchants did big business during Passover.

Those who came from foreign countries had to have their money changed into temple currency because this was the only money accepted for the temple tax and for the purchase of sacrificial animals. Often the inflated exchange rate enriched the money changers, and the exorbitant prices of animals made the merchants wealthy.

Their stalls were set up in the temple's court of the Gentiles, frustrating the intentions of non-Jews who had come to worship God (Isaiah 56:6-7). Jesus became angry because God's house of worship had become a place of extortion and a barrier to Gentiles who wanted to worship.

Chapter 5

There is no distinction between Jew and Greek

Romans 10:12

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;

Have you ever been asked, “How do I become a Christian?” These verses give you the beautiful answer—salvation is as close as your own mouth and heart. People think it must be a complicated process, but it is not. If we believe in our hearts and say with our mouths that Christ is the risen Lord, we will be saved.

All are one in Christ.

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Some Jewish males greeted each new day by praying, “Lord, I thank you that I am not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.” The role of women was enhanced by Christianity. Faith in Christ transcends these differences and makes all believers one in Christ. Make sure you do not impose distinctions that Christ has removed. Because all believers are his heirs, no one is more privileged than or superior to anyone else.

It’s our natural inclination to feel uncomfortable around people who are different from us and to gravitate toward those who are similar to us. But when we allow our differences to separate us from our fellow believers, we are disregarding clear Biblical teaching. Make a point to seek out and

appreciate people who are not just like you and your friends. You may find that you have a lot in common with them.

All are one in Christ.

Colossians 3:11

a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

The Christian church should have no barriers of nationality, race, education level, social standing, wealth, gender, religion, or power. Christ breaks down all barriers and accepts all people who come to him. Nothing should keep us from telling others about Christ or accepting into our fellowship any and all believers (Ephes. 2:14-15). Christians should be building bridges, not walls.

The Lord will again recover his people.

Isaiah 11:10-13

Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious. Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea. And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth...

God will judge with righteousness and justice. How we long for fair treatment from others, but do we give it? We hate those who base their judgments on appearance, false evidence, or hearsay, but are we quick to judge others using those standards? Only Christ can be the perfectly fair judge. Only as he governs our hearts can we learn to be as fair in our treatment of others as we expect others to be toward us.

Judah had become corrupt and was surrounded by hostile, foreign powers. The nation desperately needed a revival of righteousness, justice, and faithfulness. They needed to turn from selfishness and show justice to the poor and the oppressed. The righteousness that God values is more than refraining from sin. It is actively turning toward others and offering them the help they need.

A golden age is yet to come, a time of peace when children could play with formerly dangerous animals. Not all of this was fulfilled at Christ's first coming. For example, nature has not returned to its intended balance and harmony (see Romans 8:9-22). Such perfect tranquility is possible only when Christ reigns over the earth.

God will gather his people from every land.

Ezekiel 37:21-24

"Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms." They will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling

places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be my people, and I will be their God...

God's promise here goes beyond the physical and geographical restoration of Israel. He promises to breathe new spiritual life into his people so that their hearts and attitudes will be right with him and united with one another. This same process is described throughout God's Word as the cleansing and renewing of our hearts by God's Spirit (Titus 3:4-6).

God will gather the remnant of Israel.

Micah 2:12

"I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold; like a flock in the midst of its pasture they will be noisy with men.

Micah's prophecy telescopes two great events—Judah's return from captivity in Babylon, and the great gathering of all believers when the Messiah returns. God gave his prophets visions of various future events, but not necessarily the ability to discern when these events would happen. For example, they could not see the long period of time between the Babylonian captivity and the coming of the Messiah, but they could clearly see that the Messiah was coming. The purpose of this prophecy was not to predict exactly *how* this would occur, but *that* it would. This gave the people hope and helped them turn from sin.

Present offering after reconciliation.

Matthew 5:24

Leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

Broken relationships can hinder our relationship with God. If we have a problem or grievance with a friend, we should resolve the problem as soon as possible. We are hypocrites if we claim to love God while we hate others. Our attitudes toward others reflect our relationship with God (1 John 4:20).

Live in harmony with the Lord.

Philippians 4:2

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

Paul did not warn the Philippian church of doctrinal errors, but he did address some relational problems. These two women had been workers for Christ in the church.

Their broken relationship was no small matter, because many had become believers through their efforts. It is possible to believe in Christ, work hard for his kingdom, and yet have broken relationships with others who are committed to the same cause. But there is no excuse for remaining unreconciled. Do you need to be reconciled to someone today?

Dwell in him with all fullness

Colossians 1:19-22

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds...

By this statement, Paul was refuting the Greek idea that Jesus could not be human and divine at the same time. Christ is fully human; he is also fully divine. Christ has always been God and always will be God. When we have Christ we have all of God in human form. Don't diminish any aspect of Christ—either his humanity or his divinity.

Be reconciled to God through Jesus.

Romans 5:10-11

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

God is holy, and he will not be associated with sin. All people are sinful and so they are separated from God. In addition, all sin deserves punishment. Instead of punishing us with the death we deserve, however, Christ took our sins upon himself and took our punishment by dying on the cross. Now we can "rejoice in God." Through faith in *Christ's* work, we become close to God (reconciled) rather than being enemies and outcasts.

God reconciled the world to himself.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

God brings us back to himself (reconciles us) by blotting out our sins (see also Ephes. 2:13-18) and making us righteous. We are no longer God's enemies, or strangers or foreigners to him, when we trust in Christ. Because we have been reconciled to God, we have the privilege of encouraging others to do the same, and thus we are those who have the "ministry of reconciliation."

Enter into the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus.

Hebrews 10:19-20

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

Moving from argument to instruction, the author cites many examples of those who have demonstrated faith throughout history. Living by faith is far better than merely fulfilling rituals and rules. This can challenge us to grow in faith and to live in obedience to God each day.

10:19 The Most Holy Place in the temple was sealed from view by a curtain (Hebrews 10:20). Only the high priest could enter this holy

room, and he did so only once a year on the Day of Atonement when he offered the sacrifice for the nation's sins. But Jesus' death removed the curtain, and all believers may walk into God's presence at any time (see also Hebrews 6:19-20).

Matthew 11:28

**Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.**



To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I
accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

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