

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: BE YE ONE

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 38:5,6

Hear my voice and follow me, and you shall be a free people, and ye shall have no laws but my laws when I come, for I am your lawgiver, and what can stay my hand? But verily I say unto you, Teach one another according to the office wherewith I have appointed you, and let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me. And again I say unto you, Let every man esteem his brother as himself; for what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter to them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith to the one, Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other, Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there, and looketh upon his sons and saith, I am just. Behold, this I have given unto you a parable, and it is even as I am: I say unto you, Be one; and if ye are not one, ye are not mine.....

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And let every man deal honestly, and be alike among this people, and receive alike, that ye may be one.... (51:2)

An old proverb says that birds of a feather flock together. Whenever and wherever people are grouped together, there must be some cohesive force or idea, some unity of purpose, some agreement in principle, or the group will not hold together. And it is still more certain that no group can accomplish any very worthwhile goals -- no group can do God's work or build God's kingdom, unless it has unity. There must be unanimity of purpose, agreement on the way to go, the things to do, and when and how, or all the energies and time and money of the group will be dissipated in argument, contention, and indecision, with nothing accomplished.

Paul frequently likened the unity of the church to the unity of the body. The body is made up of many individual cells, grouped together to form various kinds of tissues and bones and members and organs. Yet in spite of this very wide diversity of form and function, the body is one, because every individual cell, organ, and member of the body is under the control and direction of the life, mind, and intelligence, will or spirit that permeates and governs the body.

The church is the body of Christ -- the implementation through which his will is expressed to the world, through which that will is accomplished. If every member of his church is obeying the same Life, the same Mind, the same Intelligence, the same Ruler, the same Spirit,

then there will be unity in the church. If every member is following his own will, his own intelligence, his own spirit, then there will be disunity, strife, contention, and frustration in the body of Christ.

Great efforts have been made in our time to bring about the unity of all Christian denominations. Such unity is much to be desired. Most of us, at one time or another, have felt a twinge of conscience and a sense of hypocrisy as we have sung:

"We are not divided; All one body we,  
One in hope and doctrine, One in  
charity."

We are divided. We might as well admit it and face it. Some go one way and some another. Some believe one thing and some another. Many of our attempts at ecumenical unity have been attempts to smooth over and water down our doctrinal differences so that we can agree with each other on next to nothing. Far less frequently our attempts at unity have been made through an earnest self-examination and prayerful seeking of God's will and Christ's purpose in us. It is useless to agree among ourselves and then invite Christ in. We cannot agree with each other until we first agree with him. We can become one with each other only as we all first become one with him and share in his life. This is the price of unity. Christ can bless our unity on no other terms.

In the normal body there is never any argument between the two feet as to which way they shall carry the body. There is never any argument between hands and feet, or between stomach and lungs, or between heart and brain, as to which gets the larger supply of food or of oxygen. There is wide diversity of function, but also a very tightly knit, compact, organic unity. The life of the body depends on the agreement and cooperation of every member of the body. There is mutual concern by every member and organ for the welfare of every other member and organ. There is love; there is self-sacrifice; there is unselfishness; there is dedicated service. When one organ of the body breaks down, other organs will do extra work in order that the vital life of the body might continue. Every organ and member does a different work, but all work together as one.

We can learn many lessons in unity from the body. Unity is equality -- not a dead level equality where every man is the same, has the same, and does the same as everybody else, but an equality in which every man has an equal opportunity to receive according to his needs and just wants -- according to the functions he has to perform in the body of Christ-- and also an equal opportunity to function and to contribute to the good of the body according to his gifts, callings and functions, and according to the best of his capacity. There can be no real unity in any group while some are trying to keep from others that which they need to sustain life at its best and to maintain the total efficiency of the body, or while some are taking all and giving nothing to support the welfare of the group.

We can readily see, then, that unity is not uniformity. No two muscles or organs in the body have exactly the same function. No two members of the church have exactly the same gifts and callings. There is diversity of function, gift, and calling; but there is unity in this diversity, because every diverse gift and every diverse action is governed by the ruling Spirit and the Supreme Intelligence of the body. All have something to contribute. Each member has something he, and he alone can do for the church, or something he can do better than anyone else.

"Let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me." Sin always separates men from each other and from God. Hatred, enmity, jealousy, pride, selfishness, inequity, injustice, rivalry, always bring disunity. Such things are sinful because they do

divide men from each other and from God, and because that division hinders or prevents God from accomplishing his purposes through the church, which is the body of Christ. If you are divided from your brethren by these or other sins, you are divided from Christ's church; and since the church is his body, you are also divided from Christ, "If ye are not one, ye are not mine."

The gospel of Jesus Christ, and his ordinances as administered through the church, are designed to free men from the sins that divide, and unite them in the fellowship of his church, his body, his spiritual kingdom. Those ordinances, and the life and intelligence and power which flow through his church as it implements the life-giving ordinances, bring forgiveness for past sins, and strength to meet future temptation, to meet every physical and spiritual need, and to accomplish every purpose and every task which Christ has appointed to his church. There can be no forgiveness, no strength, no direction, no help from Christ without unity. "If ye are not one, ye are not mine."

All of the Christian graces and virtues make for unity, because they are aspects of righteousness. Love, brotherly kindness, humility, mercy, unselfishness, gentleness, meekness, longsuffering, patience, tolerance, generosity, and justice bring men together, and bind men together. Sin always divides. Righteousness always binds together and unifies.

Sometimes the physical body is attacked by a cancer. A cancer is composed of outlaw cells which grow wild, refusing to come under the direction or control of the normal body laws, and disregarding the needs of the rest of the body. Cancer cells contribute nothing to the body, but actually feed on it, and eventually destroy it if not stopped. So there may be and often are found those in the body of Christ who prey on others -- who refuse to abide in unity -- who are self-seeking -- who are a law unto themselves -- who will destroy others to gain advantage for themselves. In the physical body the fate of such cells is either to be destroyed, or to destroy the body in which case they perish anyway. The body of Christ cannot be destroyed; therefore the fate of outlaw cells within that body is inevitable destruction.

Sin divides; righteousness unites men to each other and to God. "Be ye one; and if ye are not one, ye are not mine." "Let every man deal honestly, and be alike among this people, and receive alike, that ye may be one."