

**“God Wants Us All To Be One People”**  
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**Sunday, May 15, 2016**  
**Menifee United Church of Christ**

A man spoke to his minister after church. The man said, “Pastor, I need you to pray for my hearing.” So the pastor put his hands on the man’s ears and he prayed and he prayed and he prayed. Then he took his hands off the man’s ears and said, “How’s you’re hearing now?” The man said, “Still the same. My hearing isn’t until Tuesday.”

How important is accurate communication? It’s very important. We need to seek and speak the truth. Especially in religion. We need to have accurate communication as we speak to one another.

All religions do, I think, seek and speak the truth. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a Unitarian. He was one who would seek and speak the truth. He said, “The highest compact we can make with our fellow is, - ‘Let there be truth between us two forever more.’”

How is it that we seek and speak the truth? When we do so honestly, bravely, with integrity. It’s important to seek and speak the truth whatever our religion.

The Holy Spirit brought all people together on Pentecost Sunday, seeking and speaking truth. In the book of Acts, we read about how all Jesus’ followers were together in a house. All of a sudden, from heaven, there was the sound of a rushing wind, blowing through the house. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They were speaking in what we now call tongues. They were speaking different languages, but they all could understand what everyone was speaking, whatever their language. They heard it in their own language. It was unusual. It was miraculous. And they were amazed. And they spoke of God’s deeds of power. But afterwards they asked, “What does this mean?”

Well, what does this mean? It means that the Holy Spirit wants us all to be one, wants us all to speak the truth to each other, whatever our language. And to be heard seeking and speaking the truth.

This story is the exact opposite of the story of the Tower of Babel. In the book of Genesis we read that back then people had all one language. They all spoke the same language. We don’t know what that language was, but they all spoke it. They all understood each other. They all had the same words. And then one day they decided they were going to build a tower up to the heavens to get closer to God. As they were building the tower, God said: Wait a minute. We don’t want this. We don’t want them coming up to heaven. We don’t want them speaking the same language. We don’t want them all being one. So God confused their language. They began speaking different languages. And God separated them on the earth. All the people spoke different languages.

Why would God do that? We don’t know. All we know is that a couple thousand years ago the Holy Spirit had all people understanding each other, because the Holy Spirit wants us all to be one.

Jesus wants us all to be one. According to Paul’s letter to the Galatians, Paul writes, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

What does that mean exactly? It means that we’re no longer separated by religion. Jew or Greek. There’s no longer Christians and Jews, Buddhists and Hindus, Muslims and atheists, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. That’s what God wants, in other words, God wants us all to be one people. It means we’re no longer divided by nationalities. Americans and Mexicans, Germans and Greeks, French and Chinese, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. God wants us all to be one people. It means we’re no longer divided by language. English and Spanish, German and Greek, French and Chinese, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. In other words, God wants us all to be one.

God created us all to be one. In the book of Genesis it says, “In the beginning God created humankind in God’s own image. In the image of God God created them. Male and female God created them. God blessed them.”

So we’re all children of God, right? We are. We’re all children of God. We’re all brothers and sisters. Regardless of our religion. Regardless of our nationality. Regardless of our language. We’re all one. God wants us all to be one people.

God wants us all to be one people in love. In I John it says, “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

So we are to be one in love as God is one. God loves us unconditionally. And we are to love one another regardless of nationality, religion, language. We're to love one another as Jesus taught us.

God wants us all to be one people. In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians, "[There is] one God and Parent of all, who is above all and through all and in all." God is our parent. We are all one with God. God is one with us. We are to be one people. And we are one people regardless of our religion, regardless of our nationality, regardless of our language. We are one when we speak the universal languages of love for one another, of truth - seeking and speaking the truth - and when we help one another. We are one regardless of whether we are Christians or Jews, Buddhists or Hindus, Muslims or atheists, we are all one people.

Years ago I was riding on an airplane. I struck up a conversation with the guy next to me. At the time, this was years before I was a minister, at the time I was kind of afraid of flying, or as one standup comedian I heard said, "I'm not afraid of flying, I'm afraid of crashing." Yes. So I was a little fearful, but I'm talking to the guy next to me and it turns out he's a minister. And I felt safer, for whatever reason. And then next to him was a nun! So I felt even safer. In fact, I looked at the person in front of me and the person behind me to see if, in fact, maybe they were a Buddhist and a Hindu. No such luck. But I did feel safer because I was next to these people of God.

But now I realize we're all people of God. Right? We're all children of God. We're all made in God's image. We're all made by God. We're all blessed by God. We're all loved by God. We're all children of God: the people next to me, the people in front of me, the people behind me, we're all children of God. And we're all one. We're all one people, regardless of our nationality, our religion or our language.

I went to high school in Germany. My father was a civilian in the military and was stationed in Germany. One summer my grandma came to visit us. And one day my grandma and my mom went shopping in this little town we lived in. As they were in the store, they noticed that all the people in the store spoke German. Imagine that! But my grandma and my mom didn't speak German. And they didn't like the fact that they couldn't understand the other people. They especially didn't like the fact that, in their minds, all Germans can speak English. And so therefore the Germans could understand what they were saying, but they couldn't understand what the Germans were saying. They didn't think that was right. They didn't think that was fair. So, all of a sudden, my grandma and my mom started speaking pig Latin, so the Germans couldn't understand them. That's a true story. You can't make stuff like that up. I wish it was not a true story, but it's a true story.

Let us not be like my grandma and my mom, OK? Let us try to understand each other. Let us listen to each other. Let us try to be one people. Especially on this Pentecost Sunday when the Holy Spirit gave us all the ability to understand each other regardless of our language. The Holy Spirit wants us to all be one. Jesus wants us to all be one. "For all of you are one in Christ Jesus." And God wants us all to be one, because God created us in God's image and we are blessed by God, and loved by God. So let us always, all, be one people.

Let us pray:

God of love, help us to remember that we are one people.

Help us to be one people.

Help us to love one another.

Help us to seek and speak truth to one another.

And help us to help each other.

Now and forevermore.

By the power of the Holy Spirit.

And in the name of Jesus.

Amen.