

8 October 2023

### Unity – Part III

Dear Sisters and Elders,

As I pondered on what the theme of this week's letter should be, I felt the spirit prompting me to share one more letter on the principle of unity as a bookend to the two previous emails. This one is based on Corinthians 13, a chapter best known for a beautiful treatise on charity. So, what does charity have to do with unity? EVERYTHING!

Part 1 was based on the principle of unity being the result of everyone in the group having the same judgment because they all had the same mind of Christ - having each been taught by the Holy Ghost. It also focused on the importance of action rather than just words, with an emphasis on looking upward first and then outward. Part 2 focused on the importance of unity to protect each other from spiritual and emotional harm (gossip, mocking, backbiting, etc.). Its major focus was on the various spiritual gifts we are each given so that we can bless each other and the Church. The comparison was to the different members of the body and how the "whole" needs each "part" to properly function, emphasizing how we all must adopt the culture of Christ over our own "country culture". This allows these gifts to be appreciated, utilized, and valued.

Now, let's look at 1 Corinthians 13 and the connections between charity and unity. **I will mention two.**

The **first connection** is the most obvious. Paul gives us a list of characteristics, attributes, conditions, and actions we should adopt when we have charity. These are found in verses 4-7.

1. Don't be a complainer (suffereth long)
2. Easily love and serve others (is kind)
3. Be not jealous of others (envieth not)
4. Be not proud (vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up)
5. Act appropriately in all situations (doth not behave unseemly)
6. Be not easily angered (not easily provoked)
7. Be not selfish (seeketh not her own)
8. Think no immoral thoughts (think no evil)
9. Take no joy in sin (rejoiceth not in iniquity)
10. Be honest in all things (rejoiceth in the truth)
11. Be responsible for one's actions (beareth all things)
12. Believe the words of the prophets and live them (believeth all things)
13. Be filled with hope (hopeth all things)
14. Endure all hardships and trials without murmuring (endureth all things)

Imagine a mission culture where these 14 conditions of charity prevailed in our everyday interactions with other missionaries, members, leaders, and those we meet on the street! Wouldn't it be the most amazing experience possible? I love verse 11 in this same chapter: *"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when*

*I became a man, I put away childish things.” It also applies to sister missionaries... “when I became a woman, I put away childish things.” Every one of these conditions is a choice we can make. The more we choose them, the greater maturity we exhibit.*

Now, on to the **second connection**. We read in verse 2 that without charity, *“I am nothing”*. This is repeated in Moroni 7:44 where it says if we have not charity, we are nothing. To understand this, we first must understand what charity is. *“But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever”* [Moroni 7:47]. In other words, charity is the pure love that God has for us, not the love that we have for God or for others (see attached photo). This is why in Preach My Gospel Chapter 6, the attribute of Christ is “Charity AND Love”. It covers both the pure love God has for us and the love that we have for God and others. How do we get this love? First, we pray for it as stated in Moroni 7:48, *“Pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart that ye may be filled with this love”* (referencing the pure love of Christ mentioned in verse 47). There is a second way, which I believe is related to the first and perhaps even more important. It is revealed in the full text of verses 43-44, a portion of which I mentioned earlier. *“And again, behold I say unto you that he cannot have faith and hope, save he shall be meek, and lowly of heart. If so, his faith and hope is vain, for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart; and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.”* The key is the phrase **“meek and lowly in heart”**. When we are meek and lowly of heart, we seek to be more like Christ. We want to turn to God and change the way we think. We don’t hide anything. We seek correction and chastisement. We desire repentance! We are not worried about consequences; we are worried about missing out on feeling the greatness of His pure love. When we fully repent, we feel the love of God in profound ways. We begin to be filled with this love (remember, repentance always requires fervent - *all the energy of heart* - prayer). As we begin to be filled with this love, we choose to begin to adopt the 14 conditions of charity mentioned above. We begin to live in “Living Water”. If we are not repenting and changing and praying and seeking, **we are nothing** because we never really experience the love that God has for us. And furthermore, we stay in our own “natural man” state, living in “Stagnant Water”. This is just one more reason why the atonement of Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of the Gospel. It is the only way we will ever be able to feel comfortable in the presence of God.

To summarize this third letter on Unity, it is simple. If we want to be unified as companionships, as districts, as zones, as sister training leader groups, then we need to discover the joy of daily repentance which means we must be meek and lowly. We need to seek for and adopt these 14 conditions in our lives which come to us naturally as we turn towards God. May we all be filled with this pure love of Christ and may that love we feel from God be reflected to those around us so that they too might enjoy the profound blessing of unity for which we seek.

All my love,

President Kunz