

ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

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7/12/20

In our current world, we do not have to look far to find countless things that are *successfully* dividing us as families, as a Church, as a nation and as a world. From political differences, issues of race, the wearing or not of masks, the upcoming Presidential election are just a few of the current hot topics. I have personally seen some very ugly and divisive things happening, and I am sure you have as well.

In a time this divided and this volatile, I think it is increasingly important to focus on some of the powerful truths that would help to UNIFY us, if we are willing to hear them and share them. Today we will look at 5 truths that are *successfully* transforming and unifying people all around the world. I pray that we all would take the time to meditate and apply these truths to our lives first, and second, that we would boldly bring them into the relationships we share with our neighbors.

UNIFYING TRUTH #1: WE ARE ALL CREATED AND LOVED BY GOD.

The Bible begins with and is founded upon this very truth. It saturates every book and character throughout its pages. God created us, and has been expressing His love for men and women through the entire history of humanity. Now, when we talk about “love”, we aren’t talking about “puppy love”, infatuation, or romantic heart shaped love, we are talking about **God’s desire for, and pursuit of GOOD in mankind**. God desires this truth to be deeply understood by all his creation. We are all in God’s love together, and this truth should never get old or stale in our lives! Let us meditate on it and rest secure in it. Let us pray that our children grow up with this truth as an immovable pillar in their lives.

UNIFYING TRUTH #2: WE SHOULD TREAT ALL PEOPLE WITH THAT SAME LOVE.

This is the 2nd great commandment Jesus gives us in Matthew 22:39. We should be treating our “neighbors” with the love that God extends toward us. It doesn’t matter what someone says about COVID, the President or even what they say about us. Our desire for others (especially those we disagree with, OR who have hurt us) should be for their good. Very few of our world problems would exist if we all were committed to this great and unifying commandment. Now, I am not trying to over simplify things or minimize the differences that do exist in our world. There may be disagreements as to what “good” would look like in a particular situation, and that is ok! Hopefully we are in conversations with people we do not agree with, but that we are seeking to bring good into their lives, and seeking to have unifying conversations about what good would look like. This is something that should be true of ALL of us!

UNIFYING TRUTH #3: WE DON’T TREAT PEOPLE WITH THAT SAME LOVE.

I don’t imagine I have to do much convincing of this truth. We all fail at loving the people in our lives. We are selfish and prideful people! The bible calls our failure to live up to the Love standard, “SIN”. Sin also permeates every book of the Bible. For just a couple short lists see Galatians 5:19 and Romans 1:29. Read them like a mirror and see how you match up. Pretty painful for most of us, and for the rest of you, take another look at “boastful and haughty” a little longer ;) We all stand unified in our inability to love God or others like we are commended to, and even like we desire to! We might seek to make an excuse when it comes to those who do us wrong, but we fail to do good to even those who are the closest to us!

While this truth might seem more depressing than unifying, take a minute to consider how it can actually bring about unity. When we spend a few minutes considering how we have failed to follow God’s command to love others, it gives us a right sense of humility toward others. It helps us develop patience toward those who would test us. Helps us learn how to forgive others, knowing that we fall so short from what God would call of us, yet He constantly is willing to forgive us! If we spent more time considering our

faults in a humble and mature way, rather than focusing on the faults of others, who knows how much more good we would have to share with those around us.

UNIFYING TRUTH #4: GOD WILL MAKE IT RIGHT.

The loving creator God is currently bringing good into the world by His power and through His people. But there will come a time when He will make it all right. He will finally and ultimately bring His loving goodness into the world in its fullness. But this love (once again) isn't all rainbows and roses. Because for God to make things right completely, means that He will bring good judgments to those who have failed to live the way He has commanded (see Truth #3 for any clarification as to who that might be). Though many shutter at this truth in its fullness, it isn't hard to find the parallels in our lives today. When a murderer is tried and punishment is handed down, we recognize that punishment as a good thing. When a drug dealer is put behind bars, we recognize that as a good thing. We see and support good coming into the world, even when it takes the form of judgment and punishment. So it is with God. The only perfect judge, who knows exactly what his creation has done in failing to live up to His standard of love. He has also graciously warned us as to what the good judgment will be for those who fall short. (See Romans 6:23) It is death. Not just physical death, but an actual separation from the life giving creator God, and all the good He would seek to bring. God isn't going to force His creation to obey Him and live with Him. But he certainly will make it right. Now that certainly is a sobering truth, that we all share together as those who fail to love. That leads us to our final truth, the greatest act of good ever seen.

UNIFYING TRUTH #5: JESUS CHRIST TOOK THE PUNISHMENT FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE IN HIM.

See 1 Peter 3:18, Titus 2:11. This truth unifies all who believe in Jesus in a way that is mysterious and miraculous. Christ gave himself up for us. Gave his life for us, to pay for our wrongs against God and against one another. That we might LIVE today and forever as the people of God who bring His love and goodness into the world. He was able to take our punishment because he lived without sin, and he can take all our punishments because he was the true God-Man. And if we believe this truth, and place our faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. God accepts Jesus' death on our behalf, and we are made right with God, and can live and dwell with our good and loving Creator for all of time.

Let us seek to saturate our hearts and minds in these 5 truths, and seek to bring them into the hearts and minds of those we come into contact with in our world. In this time of great division, God has givens us truths that are far more powerful and able to unify in eternal ways.