



One Bread
1 Peter 3:8 and 1 Corinthians 10:17
May 31, 2020

I once heard that people are not difficult, just different. It's definitely true that we are different from one another, but some people are also just plain difficult! And sometimes it is difficult for us to get along with each other. Over the years we've had our share of disagreements among us.

Now we are in the throes of a life-changing pandemic and quarantine, and these are not necessarily bringing us together as a nation or even as a church. Brett McCracken, author, elder, and editor of the Gospel Coalition addressed this in an article entitled, "Don't Let Coronavirus Divide You." As we are now planning how and when to resume meeting together in person again, we need to guard against it becoming another occasion for conflict and dissension.

In light of all this, I want us to think again today about what it means to BE the church by hearing a word from God in 1 Peter. Peter reminds us that we are the people of God (1 Peter 2:9-10) and urges us to act accordingly (vv. 11-12). He then calls various groups to submission, something that we Americans tend to resist (2:13-3:7). Yet submission is in fact a Christian virtue that will help us get along with each other better. Next Peter gives us the message I want to emphasize today (3:8). It is the word of God, inspired by his Spirit. It tells us who and what we are supposed to BE as God's holy people. Everyone one of us is called to BE:

1. Like-minded—united by a common attitude and outlook, having the mind of Christ, which is self-denying and looks to the interests of others (Philippians 2:1-11).
2. Sympathetic—suffering with others, able to feel what they are feeling
3. Loving toward the others (*philadelphos*)—affectionate, kind, brotherly or sisterly
4. Compassionate—tender-hearted, deeply concerned about the others, having good feelings toward others
5. Humble—humble-minded based on our recognition and acceptance of our weaknesses and that we can be wrong

Our example is Jesus (1 Peter 2:21-25). He showed us that we are to do good, expect to suffer anyway, and then endure it. Even if we were actually perfect, we would still get insulted and suffer, and we are not to retaliate or threaten. Instead, we endure by entrusting ourselves to the one who judges justly.

In Ephesians 4, Paul gives 3 keys to unity: focus on the big things we have in common (vv. 4-6), make every effort to preserve the unity (v. 3), and be humble, gentle, and patient (v. 2). This last matter (v.2) is very similar to 1 Peter 3:8.

In contrast to this calling, our culture is saturated with individualistic, independent, self-centered, opinionated, outspoken, entitled people. It's extremely easy to absorb these attitudes without even realizing it. But we are the people of God, foreigners and exiles on earth (1 Peter 2:9-12). We are called to be different from the people around us. The BLT version of 1 Peter 3:8 says think about others, think about others, think about others, think about others, put yourself last.

We are a family, brothers and sisters, because we are all sons and daughters of God. As we gather around the table together, we eat the one bread and so are one united body (1 Corinthians 1:17). Let's remember that in everything, including the pandemic, quarantine, and resuming public gatherings.