

~Other Speakers S-Z: K.P. Yohannan:

At the end of a devastating three-year drought, all Israel assembled at Mount Carmel. There Elijah boldly challenged them to watch a contest between the prophets of Baal and himself.

After the prophets of Baal exhausted themselves in vain to persuade their god to answer by fire, it was Elijah's turn to call upon Jehovah.

But before he did, he first rebuilt the altar of the God of Israel: "And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob . . ." (1 Kings 18:30-31).

This act of Elijah is of great significance. These 12 stones speak of the unity that was required before he or anyone else could see God's work accomplished. Then Elijah could only go as far as two sentences into his prayer before the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust and the water in the trenches.

Jesus' disciples might have felt small compared to the mighty prophet Elijah. However, Jesus told them how they could have the same presence of God and experience His powerful answers to their prayers: by being united in their hearts. "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:19-20).

I hope that you will not miss the seriousness here. The work of God goes forward through unity. Without it, what happens to God's purposes here on earth? Consider this quote from Paul Billheimer's book *Love Covers*:

The most important, momentous, crucial, but the most ignored, neglected and unsolved problem that has faced the Church from its infancy to the present throbbing moment is the problem of disunity. . . . The sin of disunity probably has caused more souls to be lost than all other sins combined. Possibly more than anything else, it is the one thing that binds the hands of the Holy Spirit and thwarts His work of convincing of sin, righteousness and judgment.

Without any doubt, disunity is one of the most powerful weapons Satan uses to hinder the work of God. We should guard against it at all costs.

So often we get caught up in the face value of our lives and situations that we don't even realize how demons are blowing things out of proportion, twisting the facts and manipulating situations all with the aim of creating disunity. Yet when we respond in a godly manner, we thwart Satan's tactics. Christlike attitudes will save us from words and actions that would have caused rifts in the Body of Christ. What are the thoughts and attitudes that keep us from responding in Christlikeness and the spirit of unity?

A judgmental spirit. Having a judgmental spirit means we have a critical and unloving attitude toward others. We think we have the only right answers. We measure everyone and everything by our standards while our critical and unmerciful attitude toward others is just as displeasing to the Lord as the sin we see in them.

Jesus vividly illustrates this contrast by comparing our judgment with that of a man who tried to remove a speck from his brother's eye while having a log in his own. He goes on to tell us that such a self-righteous attitude has severe consequences: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged" (Matthew 7:1-2).

Lack of brokenness. Unless we are willing to give up our own ambitions, we cannot be one with the other members of the Body of Christ. If we are so adamant about our rights and our ways, we are not able to live and work together in God's kingdom.

Each one of us has to come to a place at which we recognize the depths of our self-love and then repent and be willing to say, "I am sorry." As long as we are unwilling to admit that we are wrong, we are weak and there is no unity among us.

Unwillingness to become servants. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5, kjv).

Do we serve others because it is convenient or when we know we will be praised? Or will we serve simply because it is our privilege to take a low position?

The way we respond to Christ and humble ourselves before Him is reflected and judged by the way we respond to others around us. Jesus said, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25:40).

It's easy to climb up the ladder; the hardest thing is to go down by choice. I believe this is where we are tested to see if we are willing to humble ourselves and maintain unity by serving others.

Clouded vision. Like soldiers on the battlefield, if we fall down, we continue on. We don't walk out of the battle. When we face difficulties—times of misunderstandings, differing opinions, disappointment or missed expectations—our vision can become clouded, and we forget the war that is raging.

But Paul urges us, "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"

The Weapon of Disunity

(Philippians 1:27). We are in a battle for souls, and our unity is so crucial to accomplishing this purpose. So don't let the times of difficulty blur your vision. Remember why you were enlisted.

The destiny of nearly 3 billion unreached people hangs in the balance. Yet not a day goes by that we don't hear of disunity in the Body of Christ, whether it's among individuals, denominations or mission groups. So often division takes place over such small issues that are not at all crucial in order to maintain fellowship in Christ. Do you know how splintered we are? We are one Body, one Church, yet we have more than 3,000 different denominations.

My dear brothers and sisters, we cannot afford to be playing games. May the Lord give us the courage, clear thinking and brokenness to walk together in unity.

Will you lay down your own agenda for the sake of the many who are waiting to hear the name of Christ?