

## President's Message

### Passionate Prayer of Jesus

*This prayer was a prelude to His crucifixion*

(The reason for the existence of the Full Gospel Fellowship is to promote and practice the spirit of unity among all true believers. What certain divisive doctrines have done in the body of Christ, we as an organized Fellowship, seek to heal. This statement of purpose needs to be continually underscored, and being that it's the first month of a new year, it is fitting to do so!)

Passion is defined as any powerful or compelling emotion or feeling, as love or hate. Often times this word describes the final week of Jesus before His execution on a Roman cross.

St. John 17 records one of the final prayers of Jesus and it included the following:

1. He prayed for our Preservation. "Keep them..." (17:11)
2. He prayed for our Jubilation. "My joy made full in them..." (17:13)
3. He prayed for our Emancipation. "Not of the world..." (17:14)
4. He prayed for our Sanctification. "Sanctify them..." (17:17)
5. He prayed for our Unification. "May all be one...?" (17:21)
6. He prayed for our Association. "I in them, and Thou in Me..." (17:22)

Jesus prayed passionately for the unity of believers. "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20-21). It appears out of the six requests; His prayer for the unification of believers is the key in convincing the world that Jesus was the "Sent One" from the Father. The convincing factor is not excellent teaching or preaching, not miracles, not the growth of the church, not our joy or freedom from sin, but it hinges on the "Unity factor" of individuals that believe in Jesus. In verse 23 "Unity" is the key in convincing the world that truly God loves them.

The "Songs of Ascents" (Psa. 120-134) possibly refers to the 15 steps that lead from the outer court into the inner court of Solomon's Temple or songs of pilgrims going to the three major festivals. To get a sense of the special songs, I will include the first verse of each song, with the exception of one.

"In my trouble I cried to the LORD, And He answered me." Ps 120:1

"I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From where shall my help come?" Ps 121:1

"I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." Ps 122:1

"To You I lift up my eyes, O You who are enthroned in the heavens!" Ps 123:1

"Had it not been the LORD who was on our side," Ps 124:1

"Those who trust in the LORD are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever." Ps 125:1

“Then the LORD brought back the captive ones of Zion, We were like those who dream.” Ps 126:1

“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.” Ps 127:1

“How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways.” Ps 128:1

" Many times they have persecuted me from my youth up, let Israel now say, many times they have persecuted me from my youth up; Yet they have not prevailed against me." Ps 129:1-2

“Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.” Ps 130:2

“O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; nor do I involve myself in great matters, or in things too difficult for me.” Ps 131:1

“I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the LORD.” Ps 132:4-5

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!” Ps 133:1

“Behold, bless the LORD, all servants of the LORD, who serve by night in the house of the LORD!” Ps 134:1

On each step a song was sang. The “Song of Unity” was one step away from entering into the presence of the Lord. Obviously, unity is an important criterion in bringing a believer into God’s sphere of approval.

Our salvation and healing has been completely satisfied in the death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead is our testimony of this fact. By faith in His death, burial and resurrection we are declared saved and healed! Not only that, we are now at peace with God and with one another. Reconciliation with God is a fact. Reconciliation with one another is also a fact. Read very carefully Ephesians 2:13-16. Unity is not a myth, something out of reach, but it is as near as the cross of Jesus. This word of faith is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (Ro. 10:8). Jesus in His death broke down the wall of hostility between all races, and made peace. The provision of unity, harmony and peace is a reality! The brethren can dwell together in unity as they believe the testimony of Jesus. His prayer has been answered in His death and now the Holy Spirit is progressively working that provision out in believers around the world.

The church is compared to a human body. Christ Jesus being the head and believers being the members of the body. God has placed each member in the body as it has pleased Him, therefore, the proper function of each member has been divinely fixed. When every member submits to the instructions of the head, the body is coordinated and effective. Unity is every member of the body moving together in co-operation, harmony; thereby each member is complimenting one another.

When one member(s) loses contact with the head, there is loss of movement, even paralysis. The unity of the members is disrupted and the outcome is disastrous.

God is Light, Spirit and Love. “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:5-8). Walking in the light is a prerequisite to fellowship. Darkness refers to the effects of sin. If a believer walks outside the Light of God, it will manifest in his behavior. There will be disharmony, fighting, bickering and other hostilities. Light refers to the revelation of the Word of God. As we walk in the light of God, and not in the propensities of darkness, “we have fellowship with one another!” “Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light” (Eph. 5:7-9).

One of the corner stones of the teaching of the Apostles was “fellowship” with one another. (Acts 2:42) As a result, the church grew at a rapid rate and God manifested Himself in miracles and wonders.

Now, notice how the church received Paul and Barnabas: “And recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised” (Gal 2:9). In church circles, shaking the right hand is a symbol of acceptance and some believe covenant making. Historically, the left hand is associated with the devil. It is good that many of us have received the “right hand of fellowship”, but also many of us have experienced the “left hand of fellowship.” This takes on the meaning that you are not accepted, you have been disengaged, disconnected, turned away, let go, excommunicated. This kind of experience should not affect our involvement in the church for the rest of our lives. We must all recognize the devil is at work, in and out of the church, and when his work is discovered, let us rebuke it and move on.

Being rejected by others is not the bottom line of our Christian life and should never be allowed to define our lives. Acceptance in the Beloved is our bottom line, and I declare, it shall define our lives. Fellowship, unity in the spirit, and harmony is the will of God and the Holy Spirit is determined to develop a body of believers into a mighty force throughout the universe.

“Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3-4) is a pivot point for all the activities of the Full Gospel Fellowship. Amen!