

Hidden Treasures 206

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7

THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE

In Jesus' prayer as a High-Priest, which we find in John 17, He prays to the Lord: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they also may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17:20+21.

The issue here concerns unity. It concerns becoming one just as the Father and Son are one. If we observe the present-day religious world, we would have to admit that not much of this oneness can be seen among believers. We're not talking only about the lack of unity among the big denominations, but also about the appalling lack of unity, fellowship, and true brotherhood among be-

lievers, in general. Indeed, even within the same congregation there can be competition, unrest and quarrelling.

Despite this chaos of contradictions and conflicts, the call for true disciples is - even today - to become one. Jesus had His true disciples in mind when He prayed that they should become one. Unity, which for most people appears to be an impossibility, is attainable, even today, for Jesus' true disciples.

A disciple is someone who comes to the Master in order to learn from Him and to become like Him. "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple", Jesus said. Luke 14:27. Such a person can, indeed, be a member of some religious group, but he cannot be Jesus' disciple. And this is exactly what is of interest for us in this connection: What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? And, how can this complete unity become a reality?

Jesus says: "Whoever does not take up his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple." Matt.16:24. Here we can get an understanding of who His disciples are, namely, those who take up their crosses and follow Him. Herein lies the secret of disci-

pliship, of unity, of fellowship, and of true, eternal brotherhood.

Two disciples of Jesus who both deny themselves will, of course, become one, just as certainly as Jesus, the Son, became one with His father. That is because it is our self-will that hinders unity - "I want, I think, I demand", etc.. Wherever this "I" is crucified, unity comes forth - in the church, among the brothers, and in the family - true, eternal brotherhood. A body comes forth, as we can read in 1 Cor. 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, . . .". And so we can see that Christ's church on earth is no organisation, but rather an organism in which the members minister to one another. O, how blessed and lovely is this life of love which is described by the apostle Paul: "But being faithful to the truth, in love (Norwegian translation), we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. 4:15+16.

That bears witness to a unity and a fellowship that is quite unusual in this world. This unity is not achieved by means of our own human strength. It is, however, attainable by means of the power of the cross. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1 Cor. 1:18. By this power, unity and eternal fellowship come forth, in our homes and in the church - because this power is able to crush our self-will and egoism.

Imagine a group of people who are assembled in order to find out what each of them thinks about a particular Bible verse. You'd surely risk hearing many people's different opinions, and everyone of them thinks he is right. But if this same group of people were to assemble with the intention of finding out what God's Word wanted to say to them, don't you believe that it would result in unity? Yes, because each one would judge himself in the light of God's Word, and with this noble attitude of heart, they would come to unity, to a blessed brotherhood in God's light.

It is only with such a noble attitude of heart that we can attain unity. We should pay attention to the admonition that Paul gave to

his co-worker, Timothy: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." 1 Timothy 4:16.

Everyone who has this noble desire, of wanting to take heed to himself, with the intention of being in tune with the teaching of the Word of God, will avoid all confusing quarrels about various teachings, and come to this glorious unity in Jesus Christ.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love: Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. 4:1-6.

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