

Improved Uniform International LESSON

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D.
Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago,
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Lesson for November 25

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CHRISTIANS WORKING TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY

LESSON TEXT: John 17:20-23; Acts 15:22-29.
GOLDEN TEXT: We are laborers together with God.—1 Corinthians 3:9.

Unity within the Church is God's plan and purpose, but that does not mean that some man-made plans for unity are either scriptural or desirable. There is much pressure being exerted now to unite the Church on the basis of a vast ecclesiastical organization, quite apart from any doctrinal or spiritual unity.

Such unity was not in our Lord's mind. He wants spiritual unity, and in such fellowship the Church will find its only real bond of united life and action.

I. Unity in Spirit (John 17:20-23).
Here we enter the veritable holy of holies of Scripture. Facing the time of His departure and death, the Lord prayed for those who believed, or would believe (v. 20) on Him. What was His prayer? That they should be one with the Father, with Him, and with one another. This had to be accomplished while they remained in this wicked world (see John 17:13-16). How? By the cleansing and sanctifying work of the truth.

The Word of God—the Bible—is the instrument used by the Holy Spirit in this work of sanctification. Small wonder that there is little holiness and spiritual unity when the Word has so little opportunity to touch and to cleanse. Reader, do you study God's Word?

Such separation to God will result in real spiritual unity between those of all denominations and creeds. It is not some artificial thing to be put on from the outside. It comes from the heart of man and reaches out into his life and into the lives of others.

II. Unity in Action (Acts 15:22-27).
Satan tried to thwart the missionary efforts of the Church at the very outset by starting a doctrinal controversy.

Although the first council at Jerusalem (Acts 15) had decided that "to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life," the question did not stay settled, for there were persistent Judaizing teachers who now contended that even though the Gentiles could be saved, they had to come into the church by way of Judaism and first fulfill the Jewish rite of circumcision.

The story of how this vital and fundamental question came up is found in the early verses of Acts 15. The entire future of the gospel ministry was in a sense dependent on the solution of this problem. Christianity is the only religious faith in the world that presents justification by grace as the way of redemption; all others follow (more or less) the path of salvation by works.

The question now was: Shall works of the law be mingled with grace? Can Jesus Christ alone save men, or is salvation through Jesus Christ plus something else?

How was such a serious question to be settled? Should argument and strife be permitted to go on until the stronger party prevailed? Better judgment indicated the desirability of a Christian method of settlement.

The final decision of the council is sent not only by Paul and Barnabas, but also by a committee from Jerusalem, a gracious gesture of fellowship.

As a matter of record (a wise procedure in such a case), a letter was sent which, after addressing the Gentiles as "brethren," reviewed the history of the matter and then, without mentioning circumcision at all, put upon the Gentiles "no greater burden than the necessary things." And what were those things? Those things which relate to purity of life as those who were enjoying Christian liberty. The law of Moses need not be kept as a ground of salvation. They were saved by grace. But grace can never be the cloak of careless living, nor can liberty in Christ be interpreted as license to live in sin. We are set free in Christ, not that we may sin, but that we may "go and sin no more."

III. Unity in Doctrine (Acts 15:28, 29).

In non-essentials we should exercise toward other believers the greatest love and consideration. Men have a right to differences of opinion, and must follow the dictates of their own consciences. Let us not be betrayed into controversy on such matters.

There are certain foundation doctrines which must be held if a church is to be Christian; concerning these we stand together. There is a faith for which we are earnestly "contending" (Jude 3). We are never, even on the grounds of supposed courtesy, to give aid and comfort to false teachers (II John 9-11). Kindly, tactfully, but definitely the Christian Church must stand true to its doctrinal convictions, standing united against an unbelieving world, and if need be, an unbelieving religious world.

COME TO CHURCH

Creamed Comments On The Sunday School Lesson

"CHRISTIANS WORKING TOGETHER IN A COMMUNITY"

John 17:20-23; Acts 15:22-29
for Sunday, November 25.

Christians are known by their distinctive character. They should work harmoniously in a community as an example to others. Love, sympathy, patience and helpfulness should characterize their daily life.

V. 20. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." It is a source of joy to know that mother is praying for us; how great should be our joy to know that the Lord is praying for us.

V. 21. "That they all may 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." All Christians are to be one in loyalty to the Lord; when this is true, color, race, class, opinions, creeds and denominational differences will be very minor. The greatest appeal to sinners is in the spirit of love, united fellowship and harmony in professing Christians.

V. 22. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one." The glory which is to be the possession of those who believe on Christ is in the fact they are children of God, the greatest privilege that can come to any creature; this can not be true of any other creatures but man. To live as if this was not important is to choose to belong to the class without hope of eternal life.

V. 23. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Christ's followers are to be perfect in love, that love which God gives his children, for the purpose of being such good witnesses that others may know that God works in the hearts of men.

V. 22. "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barnabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren." After a controversy in the mother church at Jerusalem over the question of compulsory circumcision of Gentiles, a peaceful agreement was voted with certain

restrictions thus giving Paul and Barnabas the green light for continued missionary work. The decision was sent by a letter with the appointed messengers to Antioch. This letter became the Christian Magna Charta.

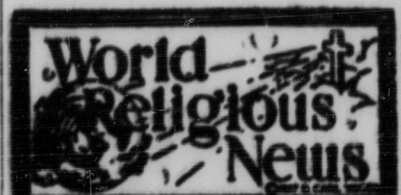
V. 24. "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment." Here was an opportunity for a division of the church based on a difference of Bible interpretation. But the loyalty and love for Christ was too strong to allow any division.

V. 25. "It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul." In the conference in the mother church, there were differences of opinion and several days of debating, but they agreed to make first things first and proceeded in harmony. If there is no harmony and a spirit of unity among those in authority then divisions may be expected in the local groups. Denominations arose when religious leaders differed.

V. 26. "Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The spirit of love and unity come when the leaders serve the Lord with great sacrifice and suffering. The spirit of harmony is now seen in all the churches as a result of the suffering and sacrifice of religious leaders on account of the world war. That is one good outcome of the war.

Vs. 27, 28. "We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." As burdens are shared there are developed ties and a spirit of fellowship which makes for union.

V. 29. "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well." In yielding the necessity of circumcision, the restrictions as indicated in this verse were advised.



More than fifty cities are holding one day conference for ministers and laymen to prepare for the united emphasis on lay evangelism planned by major Protestant denominations in 1946. Held in cooperation with local councils of churches and ministerial associations, the conferences are designed to train ministers and laymen in various phases of visitation evangelism.

The American Bible Society's 2nd annual Bible-reading campaign, from Thanksgiving to Christmas, will be conducted on a world-wide instead of a national basis this year, with Sunday, December 3, designated as "Universal Bible Sunday." For the 34 days between Thanksgiving and Christmas, 34 Bible passages have been chosen through a canvass of men and women in the armed forces for whom the Scriptures have attained deep significance, and these

DO YOU KNOW?

1. Which of the disciples was the first Christian martyr?
2. In what chapter is found the long prayer of the Lord?
3. In the long prayer of Christ what was the petition Christ offered for himself?
4. Why did Christ pray that all may be one?
5. What was the main controversy in Paul's accepting Gentile Christians?

ANSWERS TO "DO YOU KNOW?"

1. James, the brother of John.
2. St. John 17.
3. glorify thy son that thy son may be glorified in thee.
4. That the world may know that thou hast sent me?
5. Circumcision.

CHURCHES

St. Marys Church
Very Rev. Magr. Seimetz, pastor
First Mass 6:00 a. m.
Second Mass 7:30 a. m.
Children's Mass 9:00 a. m.
High Mass 10:15 a. m.
Communion Sunday for children of Mary.
2:30 p. m. Holy Hour.

Nuttman Ave. U. B.
C. N. Van Gundy, pastor
Sunday school, 9:30 a. m.
Divine worship, 10:30 a. m.
Evening service, 7:30 p. m. The Rev. N. W. Bowman, returned missionary from Africa, will be the speaker for the evening service. We extend our invitation to the people of Decatur to come to these services.

First Baptist Church
Carey R. Moser, Pastor
9:25 a. m. Sunday School. C. E. Bell, Supt. An interesting class for every age.

10:15 a. m. Morning Worship. Sermon by the pastor. Theme, "Christian Strategy in a Chaotic World." Our choir will be present to furnish a special number in song. The Junior Church will also meet at this hour. Let us all make this day count for God and our community.

7:00 p. m. Our Evening Service. Here we feature a great men's choir. This mens group is growing so rapidly in size and interest, that you cannot fail to hear them. They will be singing tonight. Come and enjoy them. Other interesting features will also be enjoyed. Do not forget to come early. We begin promptly at seven o'clock.

7:30 p. m. Wednesday. Our mid-week service of prayer and praise. This is the most important service in any church. Everyone welcome to this and all services.

The First Presbyterian Church

"Five Points"
John W. McPeeters, Jr., pastor
9:00 a. m. Bible Class, Mrs. W. A. Lower.
9:30 a. m. Church School, W. P. Schrock, Superintendent.
10:30 a. m. Morning Worship. Sermon by the minister. The Toddler's Room is under the supervision of the World Friendship Guild.

3:45 p. m. Women's Missionary Society Annual Praise Service. Mrs. Leonard Saylor will give a book review on "Behold Your King," by Florence Maryn Bauer.
6:00 p. m. Westminster Youth Fellowship. Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Ziner, sponsors.
Monday, 7:30 p. m. Skating Party for all who want an evening of fun and fellowship at Sunset Park. Those who wish transportation will meet at the church. Young and old are both invited!
Wednesday, 7:00 p. m. "Bible Insights." Our study will be Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, the Bible Book of the Month.

Zion Lutheran Church
Monroe and Eleventh Sts.
Paul W. Schultz, Pastor
Sunday school and Bible class, 9:00 a. m.
Divine services, 10:00 a. m.
Lutheran Hour, 11:30 a. m.
Services County Home, 2:00 p. m.
Adult classes, Tuesday, 7:30 p. m.
Catechism school, Saturday, 8:30 a. m.
Choir, Sunday, 1:30 p. m.

Decatur Missionary
Lyle F. Steiner, pastor
9:30 Sunday school.
10:30 morning worship.
7:30 evening service.
We extend a cordial invitation

stake my life. I do believe in them with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength. But—
I am an unbeliever—in the widespread practice of using religion as a convenience. It can never mean what it is intended to mean merely by calling upon God when we are in difficulty.

I am an unbeliever—in the idea that religion is only meant to satisfy the weak and spineless. Some mighty big men have become big and have wielded a larger influence because of the meaning of religion in their lives.

I am an unbeliever—in the very prevalent opinion that "everyone must look out for himself." Selfishness has always ruined mankind; selfishness has always reaped its harvest. I know a man who flung his life into a cruel world not counting the cost. He redeemed that world.

I am an unbeliever—in the commonly accepted notion, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. It lacks purpose—it has nothing that reaches down into the soul and gives eternal value.

to all who do not have a regular church home to attend any or all of these services.

Nobody speaks so sternly against sin as Jesus and those who believe His gospel; but yet it forever stands true, "This man receiveth sinners."

Again this week there will no Wednesday evening prayer service because of our missionary convention which will be held Nov. 28-30. There will be no service on Saturday evening. Everyone interested in missions is invited to attend these services.

You are always welcome to the church where you are a stranger but once.

Zion Evangelical and Reformed
William C. Feller, Pastor
Church School at 9:00 a. m. Luther Class, superintendent. There are classes for all ages. Come and bring the family.

Worship service at 10:00 a. m. Kingdom Roll Call. 1946 pledges will be made during the service. Sermon: "Practicing Our Stewardship." If you are without a church home in the city, we invite you to worship with us.

The Deacons will meet in the church parlor on Monday at 7:00 p. m.

Junior choir rehearsal on Wednesday at 6:30 p. m.

The Bethany Circle will meet at the church on Thursday at 8:00 p. m.

The Philaethan Circle will meet in the home of Mrs. Walter Bockman on Wednesday at 8:00 p. m.

The Friendship Circle will meet in Room 107 at the High School, Wednesday 8:00 p. m. and will later meet at the home of Mrs. Ray Heller.

The Ruth and Naomi Circle will meet at the church on Thursday at 2:30 p. m.

Senior choir rehearsal on Friday at 7:00 p. m.

Catechetical classes on Saturday morning; seniors at 9, juniors at 10:00 a. m.

First Evangelical Church
F. H. Willard, Minister
Sunday School 9:15 a. m. Gregg McFarland, Superintendent.
Morning Worship 10:10 a. m.
No Youth Fellowship or Evening service.

District Youth Fellowship at Celina, Ohio Sunday afternoon and evening.

November Fellowship Service, Wednesday evening. "Carry in" supper at 6:30.

A man is not old until everything and everybody seem wrong; it may happen at 70 or 17.—Christian Witness.

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Madison at Ninth Street
Charles E. White, Minister

"21st ANNIVERSARY SERVICE"
9:15 a. m. Sunday Church school, Curtis Hill, Supt. Classes with separate rooms and capable teachers for all age groups. Urge your friends, guests and neighbors to attend. All are welcome.

10:30 a. m. Festival Celebration of the Twenty-First Anniversary of the dedication of the present Church building. Sermon subject: "Then and Now—Hitherto Hath the Lord Helped Us." Choral accompaniment by vested choir and organist. All members and friends of the church, including children and young people are urged to be present for this Anniversary observance.

6:30 p. m. Adult, Senior, Intermediate and Junior Christian Endeavor Societies meet in their respective places.

7:30 p. m. Evening Service. This will be the service planned by the Home Mission and Church Extension Society. Special bulletins and order of service. Sermon on an appropriate and helpful theme. Some very fine things are in store for those who attend the evening services. We had a very happy surprise last Sunday evening when Major Chaplain, Dr. H. P. Abbott who is the outstanding Chaplain of the denomination preached to us and gave his wonderful experiences. Why not vote for the American way of life and all good things by attending all services this Sunday?

7:00 p. m. Wednesday Mid-week service. Four separate groups.
8:00 p. m. Choir rehearsal.
Sunday December 2, Celebration of The Holy Communion at 10:30 a. m.

Church of the Nazarene
Marshall and North 7th
J. T. Trueax, pastor

Sunday school 9:30 a. m. Doyle Lytle, Supt. We give you an invitation to our growing school to enjoy the study of God's word together. A class for your age.
Morning worship 10:30 a. m. Special song by the girls choir.
Message by the pastor.
Junior church 6:45 p. m. Mrs.

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says, "Peace is not built on the paper resolutions of churchmen any more than on the blueprints of economists and statesmen. Nothing short of a spiritual reformation on a global scale will suffice to redeem the world from the cause of war. General MacArthur, following the surrender of Japan on September 2 subscribed to this view when he said: 'The problem

basically is theological. It involves a spiritual reformation and improvement of human character that will transcend material and cultural differences of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if it is to save the flesh."

Why not accept the challenge and come to church now?

Anspaug leader and Mrs. Trueax assistant. This is a service for your child and his spiritual welfare. Plan for yours to be present.

Young peoples service 6:45 p. m. Miss June Ward in charge. The discussion will be on Missions. Evening service 7:30 p. m. Good singing and special music. Songs by girls trio and male duet. Message by Rev. Williams. We give you a warm welcome to our well attended evening service. You will enjoy our friendly atmosphere.

Rev. and Mrs. E. E. and Ora J. Turner will begin a personal workers convention Wednesday, Nov. 28 and continue through Dec. 2nd. The services will be nightly at 7:30 and Sunday morning at 10:30 a. m. The public is invited.

The First Methodist Church
Merrill O. Lester, Minister
Lowell J. Smith, Supt.
"Making Use of the Remnant" will be the subject of the morning sermon. At night the subject will be "Four Anchors." These worship services call for your presence dear members. The church school awaits its opportunity to

serve every member and the church. Program made—You are asked to attend. Official Board is asked to attend Wednesday night at the mid-week service. Day is Tuesday, Dec. 19th. City, Fort Wayne, afternoon evening meetings. The speaker by the choir Sunday church will honor you. Services Dec. 2nd at 4:00 p. m.

Some one has said: "You are paid for afterwards." The good is like salt. "You pay in advance." The reformer of long ago, gave some advice that was remembered. Would you be remembered? You must work withers amuse themselves. As you must risk your life for you are strong morally and really? You must resist temptation. All this is paying in advance serve the other side of the future. The bad things are paid afterwards."

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