

Wrote 7 Letters  
d. 107 AD  
Ephesians was 1<sup>st</sup> letter

**Prologue: Unity, Unity, Unity<sup>1</sup> – Joyous to Suffer with Christ**

Ignatius,<sup>2</sup> who is also Theophorus,<sup>3</sup> to her which has been blessed in greatness through the fullness<sup>4</sup> of God the Father; which has been foreordained before the ages to be forever unto abiding and unchangable glory, united and elect in a **passion truly suffered**, by the will of the Father and of Jesus Christ our God; even unto the church which is in Ephesus<sup>5</sup> [of Asia], worthy of all happiness: abundant greetings in Christ Jesus and in blameless joy.

Those with a "well-beloved name" are people of high character

**CHAPTER 1: Share His Name by Becoming an Imitator of God**

1:1 While I welcomed in God your **well-beloved name** which you bear by natural right, [in a virtuous mind], by faith and love in Christ Jesus our Savior – **being imitators of God**, and having your hearts kindled in the blood of God, you have perfectly fulfilled your pleasant work – 1:2 for when you heard that I was on my way from Syria, in bonds for the sake of the common Name and hope, and was hoping through your prayers to succeed in fighting with wild beasts in Rome, that by so succeeding I might have *power to be a disciple*, you were eager to visit me – 1:3 seeing then that in God's name I have received your whole multitude **in the person of Onesimus**, whose love passes utterance and who is moreover your bishop [in the flesh] – and I pray that you may *love him according to Jesus Christ and that you all may be like him*; for blessed is He that granted unto you according to your deserving to have such a bishop.

Onesimus was a slave of Philemon (v.10)

1 Cor. 11:1

In receiving their bishop, Ignatius received the whole church.

**CHAPTER 2: Submission and Unity Breeds Sanctification**

2:1 But as touching my fellow-servant *Burrhus, who by the will of God is your deacon* blessed in all things, I pray that he may remain with me to the honor of yourselves and of your bishop. You, and Crocus also, who is worthy of God and of you, whom I received as a model for imitation of the love which you bear me, have relieved me in all ways – even so may the Father of Jesus Christ refresh him – together with Onesimus and Burrhus and Euplus and Fronto; in whom I saw you all with the eyes of love. 2:2 May I have joy of you always, if so be I am worthy of it. It is therefore worthy for you in every way to glorify Jesus Christ who glorified you; that being *perfectly joined together in one submission, submitting yourselves to your bishop and priests, you may be sanctified in all things*.

Implicit is that the schoolmates share the same Master, which is Jesus Christ.

**CHAPTER 3: Unity, Unity, Unity: Unity in Christ with the Bishop**

3:1 *I do not command you, as though I were somewhat*. For even though I am in bonds for the Name as to **my schoolmates**. For I ought to be **anointed by you** for the contest in faith, in admonition, in endurance, in long-suffering. 3:2 But, since love does not allow me to be silent concerning you, therefore I was forward to exhort you, that you run in harmony with the mind of God: for Jesus Christ also, our inseparable life, is the mind of the Father, even as the **bishops that are settled in the farthest parts of the earth are in the mind of Jesus Christ**.

The anointing happens by the trainer, which is Christ in them.

Main Theme: The Importance of Unity. Christ is one with the Father; the Bishops, however distant from each other, are one with Jesus Christ.

**CHAPTER 4: Unity with the Teaching of the Church**

4:1 So then it is becoming for you to run in harmony with the mind of the bishop; which thing also you do. For your honorable priests, which are worthy of God, are attuned to the bishop, even as its strings to a lyre. Therefore, in your concord and harmonious love **Jesus Christ is sung**. 4:2 And each and all of you form yourselves into a chorus, that being harmonious in agreement and taking the key note of God you may *in unison sing with one voice through Jesus Christ unto the Father*, that He may both hear you and acknowledge you by your good deeds to be members of His Son. It is therefore profitable for you to be in blameless unity, that you may also **be partakers of God always**.

Jesus is the Theme of the Song.

<sup>1</sup> Over 20 references to Unity (unity, one, harmony)

<sup>2</sup> Tradition suggests that he was the child whom our Lord took up in His arms (Mark 9:36)

<sup>3</sup> Probably a title adopted by Ignatius himself to remind him of his Christian calling. The word may bear an active or a passive meaning, 'bearing God' or 'borne (or inspired) by God

<sup>4</sup> John 1:16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.

<sup>5</sup> Ignatius had not visited Ephesus, but the Church had sent delegates to him at Smyrna; Mentioned first amongst the 7 Churches in Revelation (Rev. 1:11, 2:1); capital of the Roman province of Asia

**CHAPTER 5: Unity, Unity, Unity – Eucharistic Unity**

5:1 For if I, in a short time, had such conversations with your bishop, which was not after the manner of men but in the Spirit, how much more do I congratulate you who are closely joined with him as the Church is with Jesus Christ and as Jesus Christ is with the Father, that all things may be harmonious in unity. 5:2 Let no man be deceived. If anyone is not within *the area of the altar, he lacks the bread [of God]*. For, **if the prayer of one and another has such a great force**, how much more that of the bishop and of the whole Church. 5:3 Whoever therefore comes not to the congregation, he does thereby show his pride and has separated himself; for it is written, “God resists the proud.”<sup>6</sup> **Let us therefore be careful not to resist the bishop, that by our submission we may give ourselves to God.**

Matthew 18:18-20

I belong to God through a life of submission to Him and His Church.

**CHAPTER 6: Remain in the Truth to Maintain Unity**

6:1 And in proportion as a man sees that his bishop is silent, let him fear him the more. For every one whom the Master of the household sends to be steward over His own house, we ought to receive as Him that sent him. Plainly therefore we ought to *regard the bishop as the Lord Himself*. 6:2 Now Onesimus of his own accord highly praises your orderly conduct in God, for that *you all live according to truth*, and that *no heresy has a home among you: no, you do not so much as listen to any one, if he speaks of anything else except concerning Jesus Christ in truth*.

Eph. 5:22 Wives, submit to your husbands, as to the Lord.

**CHAPTER 7: Avoid False Teaching**

7:1 For some are accustomed to hunt in a cunningly, destructive manner after the Name, while they do certain other things unworthy of God. These men you should avoid, as wild-beasts; for they are mad dogs, biting by stealth; against whom you ought to be on your guard, for they are hard to heal. 7:2 There is **only one physician, of flesh and of spirit**,<sup>7</sup> **generate and ingenerate**, God in man, true Life in death, Son of Mary and Son of God, first passible<sup>8</sup> and then impassible, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Implying Human and Divine Natures

**CHAPTER 8: Remain Completely Devoted to God**

8:1 Let no one therefore deceive you, as indeed you are not deceived, seeing that you belong completely to God. For when no lust is established in you, which has power to torment you, then truly you live after God. I devote myself for you, and I dedicate myself as an offering for the church of you Ephesians which is famous unto all the ages. 8:2 **They that are of the flesh cannot do the things of the Spirit**, neither can they that are of the Spirit do the things of the flesh; even as faith cannot do the things of unfaithfulness, neither unfaithfulness the things of faith. No, even those things which you do after the flesh are spiritual; for you do all things in Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 2:14 The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness

**CHAPTER 9: Complete Devotion Produces Joy**

9:1 But I have learned that certain persons passed through you from far away, bringing evil doctrine; whom you refused to **sow seed** in you, for you stopped your ears, so that you might not receive the seed sown by them; forasmuch as you are **stones of a temple**, which were prepared beforehand for a building of God the Father, being raised up to the heights through the engine of Jesus Christ, which is the Cross, and using for a rope the Holy Spirit; while your faith is your windlass,<sup>9</sup> and love is the way that leads up to God. 9:2 So then you are all companions in the **festal procession** along the way, carrying your God and your shrine, your Christ and your holy things, being arrayed from head to foot in the commandments of Jesus Christ. And I too, taking part in the festivity, am permitted by letter to bear you company and to rejoice with you, that you set not your love on anything after the common life of men, but only on God.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who much give an account. Let them do so with joy...

**Discussion Questions:**

What is biggest challenge to maintaining unity with Christ in the Church? How do you advise dealing with external attacks, such as false teaching? Internal attacks (pride, lustful desires, etc.)? Is there a connection between the two?

<sup>6</sup> Proverbs 3:34, 1 Peter 5:5-6, James 4:6

<sup>7</sup> 2 Clement 9:5 Christ the Lord who saved us, being first spirit, then became flesh

<sup>8</sup> Passible: capable of feeling or suffering; susceptible to sensation or emotion (likely responding to Docetic heresy)

<sup>9</sup> **Windlass:** a winch used on ships to hoist anchors and haul on mooring lines