



Daily Devotionals

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2 JOHN 7-13 OUR UNITY IS IN CHRIST ALONE

⁷ Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸ Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. ⁹ Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. ¹¹ Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

¹² I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

¹³ The children of your chosen sister send their greetings.

Those who would lead others astray, not only believe in something that is wrong, but they teach that error to others. This is no innocent ignorance or misunderstanding. These "deceivers" intentionally attempt to impose their erroneous ideas on the Church. It makes little difference to St. John what the specific content of their heresy is because it denies the Truth and the Truth is Jesus Christ.

With the Apostle's emphasis on love and unity throughout his writings, one of the most serious consequences of false teaching is disunity and schism in the Church. Simple logic dictates that any teaching that contradicts the divinity of Christ makes him a liar and divides the community into those who believe Jesus to be the incarnate Son of God and those who believe that Jesus is or was something else. These two positions are mutually exclusive, and therefore, the unity that the Church is to have in Christ is destroyed and the parties must go their separate ways. So it is natural that the deceivers and their followers will leave the Church and go "out into the world" since their teaching will not be able to gain a foothold in the true Church. But at the same time, these teachers and their teachings are a danger to the members of the Church who might succumb to them because of their own shallow understanding. It is best for such members not to invite these teachings into their lives or entertain them in their minds.

The Truth is that our unity comes only from Jesus and is only the result of who he is. We are not responsible for creating unity, but only for witnessing to that unity that comes from God through Jesus Christ. When we physically separate ourselves from others in the Church in order to "maintain" unity, we are being witnesses to the world of the Church's disunity and lack of love. St. John would have us do the hard work of standing patiently and self-sacrificially for the Truth in the midst of adversity in the Church so that the false teaching might be revealed for what it really is in order that our erring brothers and sisters, as well as the world, might come to know that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Almighty Father, whose blessed Son before his passion prayed for his disciples that they might be one, as you and he are one: Grant that your Church, being bound together in love and obedience to you, may be united in one body by the one Spirit, that the world may believe in him whom you have sent, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP, p. 255)