

## **GROUP ICE BREAKER**

If you were to leave the world one piece of advice before you died, what would you say and why?

## **REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS**

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

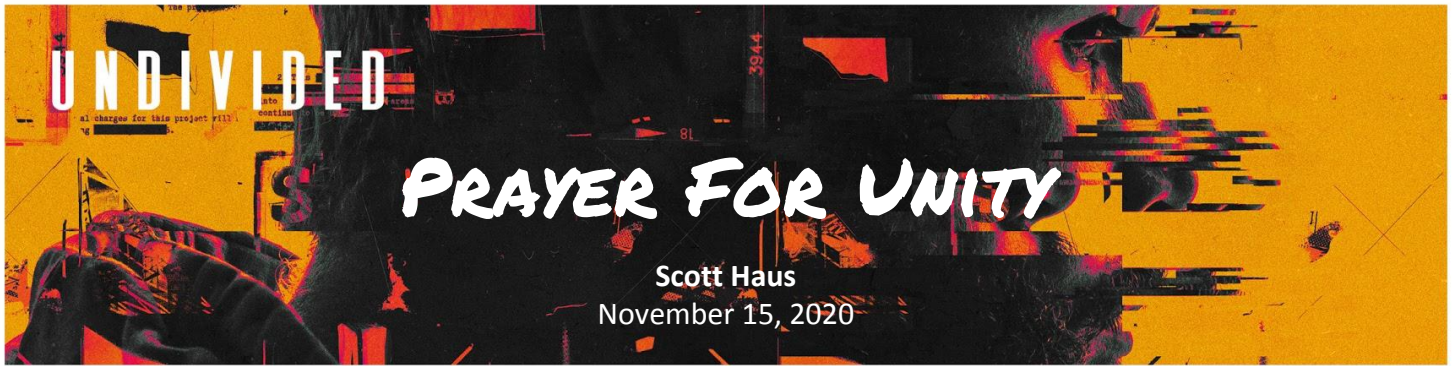
- I will ground my life in Christ and his teachings, not a political ideology.
- I will have the same mindset in me that was in Jesus Christ.
- I will be civil toward those who I disagree with politically.
- I will be a peacemaker in a divided society.
- I will extend compassion and love to those around me.

## **THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP**

We find ourselves in a moment of history where the divisions in society are growing farther apart by the day. On Jesus' last day, he prays for the disciples. He prays, Father protect their unity. On Jesus' last day he prayed that you and I would be one. Our unity with one another is to be "just as" the Father and Son are one. Division isn't simply something that separates. It brings ruin. Division destroys relationships, homes, churches, communities, and nations. It's a human nature issue. Unity and division are about people more than policies. The problem is when we begin to "other" one another. We dehumanized. Paul says when it comes to our unity, when it comes to our oneness, make every effort, do every single thing possible you can do to preserve unity, to protect unity, to promote unity. Be humble, patient, and gentle. Gentleness is the opposite of outrage. In an outrage culture, gentleness has the potential to break the cycles of division, and the power to heal and transform through a posture not of offense, but gentleness. Ultimately, unity is about looking beyond what divides us and looking to the One who made peace with God and each other possible: Jesus. You see, what unites us is greater than what divides us. What would it look like for you to preserve, protect, and promote unity?

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Share with the group how you would define unity and what things can hinder unity.
2. Read John 17:6-26. Why was unity so important to Jesus that he would include it in his last prayer with the disciples before his death?
3. How does the unity of the church bring people to faith in Christ? Do we see that kind of unity in the Church today? Why or why not?



## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONT)**

4. Read Galatians 3:26–28. In what ways does this verse challenge some of our divisions around identity? How does it challenge you personally? How does it promote unity?
5. What does it mean to you that we are all ONE in Christ? How should that affect the way we treat each other?
6. Read Ephesians 4:1-6. Paul encourages us to be humble, gentle and patient in an attempt to keep unity within the church. Which is the greatest challenge for you and why?
7. Read Philippians 1:27 and 2:1-2. How does our conduct reflect the presence or absence of unity? What are the contributing characteristics to building unity that are mentioned here?
8. What are ways our church could lead the way towards unity in our community? What are ways you individually could lead others towards unity?

## **NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)**

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will resist dividing over issues and instead lean into the unity found in Christ.
- I will take on an attitude of humility and actively listen to others.
- I will act with gentleness rather than respond with outrage.
- I will practice patience with others in moments of disagreement.
- I will do all I can to preserve, promote, and protect unity in the church.

## **SCRIPTURE REFERENCES**

- John 17:11, 20-23
- Matthew 12:25
- Galatians 3:26-28
- Ephesians 4:1-3
- Philippians 1:27
- Philippians 2:1-2