I. Announce:
   A. 3rd Service Baby Dedication: Jeremy Philip Klamp
   C. Lycia Harvey Interview:
      1. Back to Kosovo this week. What changes now w/the church? W/the cultural center?
      2. How can we pray for you?
   D. Charlotte Paulson: ICA
   E. Help for a Temecula Military Family.

II. Intro:
   A. Phillips Brooks (great preacher, saw his church in Boston. Wrote “Oh Lil Town of Beth”) once asked the operator of a local livery stable for the best horse he had. He said, “I am taking my wife for a ride & I want the very best for the occasion.” The livery man hitched up the buggy & led the horse out, & said, “Dr. Brooks, this animal is as perfect as a horse could be. It is kind, gentle, intelligent, well-trained, obedient, willing, responds instantly to your every command, never kicks, balks, or bites, & lives only to please its driver.” The good doctor listened to it all & then whispered to the owner, “Do you suppose you could get that horse to join my church?”
   B. We continue our discussion from ch.14 regarding strong & weak Christians…& their unity.
      1. We move from: don’t despise other Christians for their liberties or lack thereof in gray issues. And, don’t hinder their conduct. To now in the positive, to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

   C. Remember what we learned from Cain in Gen. 4:8,9 when asked where his brother Abel was, he responded, Am I my brother’s keeper?
      1. New Cent. Vers. "I don't know. Is it my job to take care of my brother?"
      2. NLT "Am I supposed to keep track of him wherever he goes?"
         a) Cain was a careless worshipper, an angry son, a murderer, & a ruthless wanderer. Knowing his history we would be safe in listening to his opinion…& GOING THE OPPOSITE WAY!
         b) The world says, “Am I my brother’s keeper”; but we should say, “I am my brother’s keeper”!
            (1) Let’s learn how to care for them, as they are our kinsmen both in this life & in the next!

III. UNITY! (1-6)
A. **Importance of Unity** – It was on Jesus’ mind right before He died. When He prayed in Jn. 17:20,21 I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

1. **Are we** making this come true?
2. **Are you** making this come true?
   a) We ask Jesus, “why wont You answer my prayer?”
   Jesus asks us, “why wont you answer My prayer???”
3. We like **disputing doctrine** with each others **rather than gathering around the cross**!

B. **Our Obligation!** (1,2)

C. (1) The **strong** must bear the weak & help them grow, & that takes love & patience. (www)
   1. And remember, Strength is for service not for status!

D. Bear – not just putting up with them, or tolerating them. It means to personally shoulder their burdens…as if they were your own.

E. (2) **Why should we do this?** Because we love them enough to want to help them toward maturity, toward their highest good.
   1. We need to stay close enough to them to be able to reach out & give them a little bit of steadying when it is needed.
   2. You probably did that when you taught your child to ride a bike!
      a) 1st you held him/her up. Then, as they began to learn how to balance you just kept a hand in place, w/a light touch, & corrected the beginnings of a fall. Then you ran along side as they gained confidence in staying upright. Then you stood & watched & cheered. You cleaned up a few cuts & sent them out again. Then you watched them ride off on their own...Competent! Stronger! You helped!

F. **Our Example!** (3)

G. If we live to please ourselves, we will **not** follow the example of Christ who lived to please the Father & help others. (note: pleasing is Key, 3 x’s)
   1. Jesus didn't come to gratify self but to give self.

H. Christ didn’t regard His equality w/God, as something to be used for His own pleasure.
   1. He didn’t come as a reigning Sovereign(though He could have)...but as a Sacrifice!

I. (3b) From Ps.69:9. Not only did Christ give up His robes of deity & His very life...but He even sacrificed His innocence in exchange for our guilt. - For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us.
1. I suppose we could sacrifice a few of our own freedoms to bring another believer to greater freedoms.

J. **Our Motivation!** (4)

K. Since He just quoted the O.T. he briefly comments about its nature & purpose.
   1. **Like Paul**, we too can look to them for truth & guidance.
   2. **The OT** is still relevant in the modern world, & will meet our deepest needs!
   3. **It encourages us**…by reading about God’s Attributes & character. By Reading the biographies of saints who overcame great obstacles. By direct Scriptures that call for endurance & speaks encouragement.
   4. **It gives us Hope** – God has promised us a wonderful future. The O.T. underlines, highlights, & illustrates that promise!

L. **Our Application!** (5,6)

M. (5) Jesus Christ is our model for Christian conduct.
   1. **Check out all other deities**, from the Assyrians, Babylonians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans…check out all other Holy Books…No holy book calls God by such sympathetic & attractive names as the NT!
      a) He is the…God of all comfort, God of compassion, God of consolation, God of patience, God of peace, God of grace, God of glory, & the God of Hope.

N. (6) **One mind & One mouth** - Someone said to General Eisenhower, "It's great how you were able to coordinate all the teams in that great enterprise(WWII)." The General quickly corrected him: "Not teams," he said, "but team."
   1. How can we be a united team?
   2. How can we be like-minded, 1-minded, 1-mouthed?
   3. Does it mean we as Christians should never disagree?
      a) I like Ruth Graham’s philosophy, she said regarding marriage, “If 2 people agree on everything, one of them isn’t needed.”
   4. See, it's not about agreeing on everything, or coming to the same conclusions. (obvious from his discussion of weak/strong in ch.14)
   5. He is looking for unity of perspective. Think as Christ thinks. Take on His values & priorities.
   6. Unity produces symphony of praise to God.
      a) **In a choir** there are those who sing Alto, some that sing Soprano, some Tenor, some Baritone, & some Bass.
         (1) Different parts & different pitches…but, beautiful harmony!
And all are following the same choir director.

b) In an orchestra there are those who play different instruments.
   (1) Some play French Horn, some play flute, some clarinet, some Baritone, & some violin, trumpet, trombone.
   (2) Different parts & different sounds…but, same song!
   (a) All following the same conductor.

c) The body of Christ is no different.
   (1) Ps: Remember before an orchestra plays, each musician must tune his own individual instrument! (you in tune?)

O. (6b) One mouth/voice Glorify God – What a goal!
   1. I think of the smile of the conductor at the end of a piece when he turns & bows to the audience.
      a) Saw this at Biola when Zach was in their choir. He was sure proud of his group!
      b) I picture God the same way, so proud of His kids.

IV. EXAMPLE (7-12)
A. (7) Receive/Accept one another = to open our arms and hearts to each other.
   1. To value the individual so much that he or she experiences warmth and belonging.
B. (7b) This is the standard by which acceptance is to be measured. “Just as Christ has received/welcomed us”.
   1. So, how do we receive/accept them? As perfect, flawless? Of course not!
      a) When we trusted in Christ, He accepted us as forgiven & as having promise.
   2. “We had to accept being accepted even though we were unacceptable!”
      a) So we must accept one another though we may see some things in the other that are unacceptable!
      b) One man was asked, “Are you associating with that brother who is in error?” To which he replied, “That’s the only brothers I have!”
   3. Receive one another = (pres. Imper) “keep on accepting or receiving one another”.
      a) How? Greet those you normally don’t talk to. Minimizing differences. Seek common ground for fellowship.
      (1) Christ exemplified this unifying spirit when he brought Jews & Gentiles together in one body.

C. (9-12) Praise!
   1. These quotations are taken from all 3 divisions of the OT - The Law, The Prophets, and The Psalms.
a) **David** in a song vowed to Praise God among the Gentiles. (9) Ps.18:49; 2 Sam.22:50

b) **Moses** sang in his great hymn of victory over Pharaoh. (10) Deut.32:43

c) The **Psalmist** called the Gentiles to lift their voices in praise to God. (11) Ps.117:1

(1) From both the **shortest** and the **middle chapter** of the Bible.

d) **Isaiah** shares the messianic prophecy of the Messiah coming as a shoot springing up from the stump of David’s family line. (12) Is.11:10

2. No less than **five** different Greek words for praise are used in **three** brief OT quotes, reminding us how significant praise is in God’s sight.

a) Of all the songs in the book of Revelation, did you know not one is a solo!

(1) Ex: 4 living creatures sing; 24 elders; a multitude of angels; every creature.

b) Spurgeon said, If someone asked what we want the Church to be, we would be pretty close to right if we said that we wanted it to be a choir. We should be anxious to build lives, belonging to Jesus, which harmonize w/each other in praise to God!

V. **PROVISION!** (13)

A. **Hope** = Confident expectation.

1. This is one who has **complete assurance** about the future.

2. There is a **Natural hope** and a **Spiritual hope**:

3. **Natural hope:** (Dict. a feeling of expectation)

   a) Benjamin Franklin said, "He that lives upon hope will die fasting."

   b) An anonymous writer said that "hope is a quivering, nervous creature trying to be bright & cheerful but, alas, frequently sick abed with nervous prostration & heart failure."

4. **Spiritual hope:**

   a) Hebrews 6:19 says, This hope we have as an anchor of the soul.


   a) They are also the 1st things to flee when you loose hope.

6. Being glad is a **decision of my will**, not an expression of my emotions.

B. By the power of the H.S. – We can start building bridges of unity today!

1. **Jesus & Paul** placed a very high premium on unity…will you?

2. Will you work toward making Jesus’ prayer of unity come true?

C. The Order Paul laid out...We believe in Christ(vs.12 *in him*); then we experience fullness of joy; then we experience fullness of peace; then we abound in Hope.

1. Our **one great hope** then is to believe on him. **Will you?**
A famous wagon once stood in the city of Gordium in Asia Minor. Its yoke and pole were tied with an intricate knot. It was said that whoever untied the knot would be ruler of Asia. Alexander the Great came, severed the knot with one stroke of his sword, and the Gordian knot became proverbial.

1. We were bound by sin. Christ from his cross set us free with one stroke!