

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from God, Our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

**[Introduction]**

Adam and Eve.  
Abraham and Sarah.

Boaz and Ruth.  
Isaiah, Jeremiah..  
Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah...

Joseph and Mary.  
You and me.

Angels and Archangels.  
All the company of heaven.  
God and all his dear children. Together.

***“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! . . .  
For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore”*** (Ps 133:1, 3).

It would be the Garden of Eden all over again!  
The Garden of Eden would have been a climatic paradise that apparently needed no rain because it was watered by a mist coming up from the ground (Genesis 2:6).

There would be no storms or harmful natural occurrences.  
Everything about God’s creation would have been perfect;  
after all, He had pronounced it “very good” at the end of day six (Genesis 1:31).

What God says is ‘very good’ cannot have any flaws whatsoever.

Therefore, the world in which Adam and Eve lived would have been:

- the perfect temperature,
  - the perfect humidity,
  - without pests or diseases,
- and without anything that would detract  
from their enjoyment of knowing God in a perfect, undiluted way.

*The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;  
and a little child shall lead them.*

*The cow and the bear shall graze;  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

*The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,  
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.* (Isaiah 11:6-8)

Surely, this is what is meant by the word 'paradise'. The whole wide world united.

How dearly we would love that sort of unity, wouldn't we?

And you know, God desires unity with us too!

But in our world ... we have such disunity!

Most of us are painfully aware of how much crime, violence, and sin exists in our world. If you are ever in doubt about that fact, just take a look at the evening news. The Christian sees this as the effect of sin in our world.

We know that this is a result of the fall of man.

The situation persists because too many people love

"...the darkness rather than the light..." (John 3:19).

[*Not in Eden*]

You know, it seems we're more like those outside the holy city (v 15).

Look around!

We're sure not in Eden!

We're denied the place God intended for us to gather in unity:

around the tree of life (cf. Gen 3:22–24).

And no, I am not talking about the one at Disney's Animal Kingdom.

But THE Tree of Life!

But we have such disunity!

We have such disunity because we have fallen for a lie. Hook, line and sinker!

Adam and Eve fell for the devil's lie.

Adam and Eve went their own way, and what did it get them?

They gave up the image of God, to be "like" God (Gen 3:5).

They gave up the true worship of God (cf. v 3).

They rejected God's command not to eat of the tree.

They turned away from his face—the act of disobedience.

They feared his presence because they feared his wrath (Gen 3:10).

They thought they could be independent of God.  
They believed they didn't need him or his Word.  
They embraced the lie and the death that came with it.  
The world is captive to that lie...  
That says you need to do it on our own.  
It says you need to be independent, separate.  
You need to be independent from one another.  
You need to be independent from God.

We have fallen for the same lie. Hook, line, and sinker.  
We've become slaves and victims of the devil's wicked schemes (2 Cor 11:3).  
That has indeed cast us out of the Garden, away from the tree of life.

Those captive to the lie are outside the holy city.  
They are cut off from life.  
They are excluded from God's presence.  
They are denied worship of God.  
They are "Accursed" (vv 3, 18–19).

**[United]**

But God doesn't leave us abandoned to the lie (Jn 14:18); rather, he draws us to himself.

**WE ARE UNITED WITH GOD IN THE TRUTH OF HIS WORD.**

He draws us in the flesh of Jesus Christ (vv 13, 16).

Jesus is the bright morning star.

Jesus is the root and descendant of David.

Jesus has divine titles.

He draws us through his Word (vv 6–7, 16; Jn 14:26).

His Word calls and enlightens (Third Article explanation).

His Word is a lamp of truth (Ps 119:105; Jn 14:6), which banishes  
the darkness of sin and unbelief and the lie (vv 5–6).

We are united in the flesh of Christ.

We are gathered in one place.

God sustains us with the one river of the waters of life (v 1).

God sustains us with the one tree of life (v 2).

We are gathered to share in his blessings.

We receive the waters from the river: Baptism.

We receive the healing fruit from the tree: the Lord's Supper.

We are gathered in the true worship of God (v 3; Jn 4:24)—

“one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph 4:5-6).

Jesus gives us unity in his promises.

His Baptism, death, resurrection, and ascension are ours (Acts 1:22).

He is coming soon (v 12).

We will see him face-to-face on the Last Day and in eternal life (v 4; Jn 17:24).

We will again possess the image of God, reigning with him (v 5).

While waiting in expectation, we invite, proclaim, and pray.

We invite others to share in Christ and the waters of life (v 17).

We proclaim Christ's Word faithfully (vv 18–19).

We pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (v 20).

**[Conclusion]**

YES – Come, Lord Jesus, and bring us to the new Eden.

Place us around the tree of life, forevermore together.

Bring us the unity of we find only in Christ.

For this is what we believe – hook, line, and sinker. Amen!

Let us sing a joyful noise unto the Lord. AMEN!