

Ephesians 4:1-16

Week 7 - Unity In the Body of Christ

Introduction

The verses here are to address the separate roles and gifts given to followers of Christ that are all important in the ultimate function in the church. Each role and gift are given by Christ, but also made possible to complete because of His grace.

Ephesians 4:1-16 (NIV)

¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says:

“When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people.”

The “ascended” here (verse 7-10) is likely referring to Christ going from Earth to Heaven. Therefore, descending is the inverse, going from Heaven to Earth.

⁹(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

¹¹So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

? (1) What do you think it looks like to live a life worthy of the calling you have received (verse 1)?

? (2) What is an example you've seen of someone being "completely humble, gentle and patient" in a tough situation with another believer? Or an example of someone not being that way?

? (3) What does it mean to bear with one another in love?

? (4) Verse 3 instructs us to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit." In what ways have you seen this practiced well (church, small group, family, friends)? In what ways have you seen it not practiced well?

? (5) Verse 3 also mentions the "bond of peace." What bonds Christians and makes them more unified than any other group of people?

? (6) How does Paul's list in verses 5-6 specifically promote unity?

? (7) In verses 11-12 Paul mentions a few "offices" of the body of Christ. What are some others? Are there roles you've had that, at the time, you didn't think much of, but later came to see it as vital to the body of Christ?

? (8) How does Christ equip us to have unity in the Spirit?

? (9) What do you think unity looks like in our small group or in our church?

? (10) What are the challenges of appreciating the diversity of the body while maintaining unity? How can we meet those challenges?

? (11) What does it mean to “become mature, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”?

? (12) What helps us not be “tossed back and forth by the waves” (verse 14)?

For Discussion and Accountability

? What are some graces (gifts) you believe Christ has given you to contribute to the unity of the Spirit/church?

? Are there some areas in your life and life with other believers where you are disunified? How will you work toward unity in those areas?