



# Ephesians

## Part 27

Ephesians 4:1-16  
Week of September 12, 2021

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Before Connect Group

- Read Ephesians 4:1-16
  - Watch the sermon by going to <http://switzerlandcommunitychurch.org>
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*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

*Ephesians 4:1-16, ESV*

# Sermon Notes

*There is unity within diversity. It is the headship of Christ that unites us. It is our individual commitment and service to the Body as a whole that continues to glorify God.*

It is important, in the middle of all the theological and in depth consideration of Ephesians, for you to understand that you are loved by God and that He is preparing you for His use. A few weeks back, we opened with the statement that God is doing something in you. This is true, if you have worked through this text of Ephesians with me, then it is impossible to have come this far in the beauty of this Gospel and not have the Lord working something significant inside of you. I know that this has been true in my own heart. It is possible though to become a Christian, to come to church, to read your Bible, and within the nature of our culture miss one very important fact. It is not just that God is doing a work in you, He is doing a work with you. *Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

As we begin to consider our text today, we remember the focus of unity that we talked about last week. We spent our time through last week's sermon focusing in on the words of Ephesians 4:3 *eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* Today we are still concerned with Unity. However, the challenge before us this morning is complex. Today we navigate the fullness of Paul's understanding of this unity.

## Unity in Christ

- *Ephesians 4:7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*
- After the beautiful language used in vs. 4-6 Paul takes a noticeable shift in language that I think is significant for us to acknowledge.
- The focus on Oneness in our faith and in the Lord, does not nullify Paul's understanding of our individual function and importance.
- The word "one" is used in this section in the emphatic position...
- Paul is purposefully making a point here that the Oneness of our faith and structure in the Mystery of Christ, is made up of our "each oneness" in Christ.
- Unity must not be confused with uniformity.
- Unity means that we are joined as a whole.
- Uniformity is the removal of all difference to be the same in form.
- At the center of this Gospel message is Conversion.
- This means that you die to your old self and live a new life, Paul will get there in his argument as we approach 4:17-24.
- Uniformity with the Gospel and the approach to sin and redemption, is appropriate.
- Our very goal is to become more like Christ. In this regard, we will all become more alike. However, here in this context, Paul wants to make sure that we understand that within this very Unity and desired uniformity with Christ, there is diversity.
- It is only by this Gospel that we could understand the true power to draw everyone under one salvation and one Lord, yet be gifted individuals purposed for God's glory in His kingdom.
- *Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

- *Galatians 3:28* There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- In light of our salvation, we all have the same access and gift of this salvation from the Father in Jesus Christ.
- However, the beauty and power of this Gospel is the full diversity of the World brought to justification and righteousness in the blood of Christ!
- *Revelation 7:9-12* After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."
- The most famous of Paul's analogies to communicate the beauty of this is in the "body" of Christ.
- *1 Corinthians 12:12-20* For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.
- There is unity within diversity. It is the headship of Christ that unites us. It is our individual commitment and service to the Body as a whole that continues to glorify God.
- *Ephesians 1:22* And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,
- *Ephesians 4:15* Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

## **The Headship of Christ:**

- Christ is our intercession
- *Psalms 68:18* You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there.
- This Psalm is often attributed to Moses and Mount Sinai and is often read during time of Passover.
- Christ brought us the gift of Grace and through that Grace, New Creation.
- He is the only one who can define you.
- Christ descended.
- Lower regions:
- This phrasing should not be quickly attributed to Hell.
- *John 3:12-13* If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.
- *John 8:22-23* So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this

*world; I am not of this world.*

- *Acts 2:19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;*

## **The Gift Within You**

- Ephesians 4:11-12
- It is not just that God is doing a work in you, He is doing a work with you.
- Each of us must come to the realization that our salvation is a gift from God and nothing of ourselves, but our transformation and growth into maturity in Christ is for a real purpose.
- It is not true that there is a line between someone who is active in church and someone who is not as active in how much they morally conform to Christ.
  - We wage war on sin because of the gift of grace offered to us in Christ.
  - We wage war on sin because of the surpassing joy of the knowledge of Christ.
  - The greatest consequence of sin in our lives is separation from the filling presence of God.
- Furthermore, it is not true that in order to glorify God I must go into ministry of some sort.
  - In regards to our corporate structure of today, this is a bold no.
  - In regards to understanding your ministry as a call from the Lord to testify boldly of the grace of God over your life to all whom you see, this is a bold yes.
- Finally, it is not true that when I decide to serve the Lord with my life, I must change my personality and conform to some external framework generally accepted by the mass of people.
  - In the labor of this whole sermon, we conform to Christ alone.
- You are designed for the work of God's glory in the measure of Christ's grace given to you.
- Vs. 11-12 presents our gifting not for us, but for the body of Christ and the work of the ministry.
- We are all made by the very hands of God and our life is purposed out for His glory and for reasons we do not fully yet know or understand.
- We have come to know Christ and our entire world has been turned upside down so that we can know Him more and glorify Him with every aspect of our being.
- We are not defined by our sin or even as sinners, but God has given us a new identify and we are to define ourselves in Christ and in Christ alone.

# Connect Group Discussion Questions

- What does it mean we are united in Christ? How does He bring about the unity within the body of Christ? What things bring us together?
- What does diversity in unity look like? What types of diversity does scripture speak of? How does Christ as the head of all diversity in the church?
- How does God use the diversity of the church to bring glory to His name?
- As people, what makes us resistant to any idea of diversity? What compels us to push past this desire and embrace the diversity of the church?
- Where have you seen the gifts of the spirit at work within you? Where have you seen the gifts of others bring balance and fill in gaps in areas you don't have?

## Challenge For The Week

Christ is the head of the church which reflects the beauty in diversity through many nations, languages, and peoples, but also through the abundance of multiple gifts all seeking to glorify Him in all the world.

- Take some time this week to consider how God has gifted you and how God can use those gifts where he has placed you currently to glorify Jesus Christ.
- The Gospel is for all and open to all who would receive Him. Who has God put in your life to reach with the Gospel? How can you take time to share your story with them this week?

