**Bear with One Another in Love**

**The Passage**

Read together Ephesians 4:1-6

**The Big Idea**

God’s plan is to form a reconciled community of diverse people, and pursuing unity in such a community requires that we often simply bear with one another

**Questions for Discussion**

1. In Ephesians 2-3, Paul explains how forming a reconciled community (across racial, cultural, age, and gender lines) is at the heart of the gospel. How has your view of the gospel over the years compared with Paul’s view in these chapters? What’s been missing? What’s been added?

2. How does “bear with one another” strike you as a primary command for a community? What issues or questions does that command raise for you?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

A. This summer we are exploring the “one anothers” in Scripture as a way of considering what the church is. Today’s one another is found in v. 2: “Bear with one another in love.”

B. Verse 1 and verse 2 may feel like an odd pairing with verse 2 feeling like an anti-climactic finish to verse 1, but reminding ourselves of what the gospel actually is makes v. 2 the perfect response.

C. The gospel of reconciliation in Ephesians 2-3

1. Our vertical reconciliation with God through the cross (Ephesians 2:1-10)

a. We were alienated from God and objects of his wrath (see 2:1-3)

b. God made us alive with Jesus by his sheer grace (see 2:4)

 2. Our horizontal reconciliation with each other through the cross (Ephesians 2:11-22)

a. Jews and Gentiles were alienated from each other: long-time enemies across racial, cultural, and religious lines

b. At the cross, Jesus put to death their hostility and made them “one new person” by reconciling them both to God and to each other (see 2:14-17)

3. God’s plan is to display his “manifold wisdom” through this diverse reconciled community (see 3:10)

a. The diversity of the community across racial, cultural, age, gender lines speaks to the unlikelihood of such people finding unity and love

 b. Their ability to find unity will reveal God’s “wisdom” and power to world

D. In light of the gospel of reconciliation, “bear with one another in love”

1. The gospel is not about me or even me and God. It’s about the community. Our relationships together are our greatest witness to the world

 2. Diverse communities require lots of bearing with one another

a. Paul gives us three other words to go with bearing with in v. 2: humility, gentleness, patience

b. Our culture hasn’t set us up well to bear with one another. We are taught to think as consumers, to expect quick results, and to always assert out opinions

 c. All real and lasting relationships simply require lots of bearing

 3. Let’s follow in the ways of Jesus who was the great bearer of the faith

 a. He was willing to bear so much to provide our reconciliation

 b. He constantly bears with us every day (all our sins and inadequacies)

 c. Let’s offer the grace we’ve received from him to one another