

# RICH *in* GRACE

## *Sermon Series in Ephesians*

**Preparing for Small Group:** Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
  - (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
  - (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
  - (4) What does God want me to know?
  - (5) What does God want me to do?
- 

### **“Walk the Walk”** *Ephesians 4:1-16*

**Main Point:** God gives us all we need to be the body of Christ.

*Facts about being the body of Christ:*

**God calls us to be the body of Christ, so live up to the calling (1-6).**

- *Walk in humility and not pride (2).*
- *Walk in gentleness and not harshness (2).*
- *Walk in patience and not impatience (2).*
- *Walk in purpose to protect unity (3-6).*

Paul, as a prisoner on account of his faith in Jesus, was in a unique position to challenge the believers to live out their faith in a manner worthy of their calling in Christ Jesus. Paul's urgent plea pointed to the importance of what followed in the characteristics that should connect the lives of believers to their calling. In short, the believers' lives should display the fact that they were one under Christ and in Christ. Their hearts should display the grace of God that they've received in Jesus, leading to humility, gentleness, and patience in their relationships with each other. Why? Because they were the body of Christ! They were connected through one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who was over all of them and was at work through and in each of them. Their oneness was essential to their calling to be the body of Christ, witnessing to Jesus and continuing the work of Jesus. Nothing has changed. Today, believers are called to a high calling, and that demands that they live surrendered lives that God can work through and work in. True surrender to the Spirit in the life of a believer is truly seen in relationship with other believers. Where humility, gentleness, and patience is missing, the flesh is operating, and unity is suffering. So the call is the same: Live in a manner worthy of your calling!

1. What is humility? What does this look like in life? Evaluate and discuss humility in your life. How do we grow humility in our hearts?
2. What is gentleness? What does this look like in life? Evaluate and discuss gentleness in your life. How do we grow gentleness in our hearts?
3. What is patience? What does this look like in life? Evaluate and discuss patience in your life. How do we grow patience in our hearts?
4. How do verses 3-6 emphasize the importance of unity? Why? How do we pursue this kind of unity in the church?

### **God gifts us to be the body of Christ (7-14).**

- *God gifts every follower by His grace and for His glory (7-10).*
- *God gifts the church with leaders to build up the body of Christ (11-12).*
- *The body of Christ is built up as believers become more like Jesus (13-14).*

God calls believers to be the body of Christ, and God gives believers all they need to accomplish what He's called them to do. Verses 7-10 are interesting and important. These verses point to the reality that Jesus is the One who gifts every believer according to His grace and for His glory. The descending and ascending language reminds us of the fact that Jesus was the prophesied and long-awaited Messiah who is rightfully over all things. He is the one with the authority and ability to gift and to fill believers for His work. Paul, however, shifts in verses 11-12 to focus on some specific gifts to the church, which include those who were in leadership and teaching or preaching roles. In other words, Christ gifts some believers to be a gift to each local gathering of believers for the work of building up the body of Christ for the work of ministry. What does this building up look like? It looks like believers maturing in their faith so that they look more-and-more like Jesus and so that they are less-and-less vulnerable to the deceitfulness of sin and Satan. What's significant is that this maturing doesn't just happen in isolation as an individual believer, but it happens with other believers in order to grow unity in the faith and maturity in the body of Christ.

1. Read verse 7, and discuss what this verse means for our church and for your life. Read verse 10, and discuss what this verse means for our church and for your life.
2. What gifts has Christ given you for your place and purpose in the body of Christ?
3. Discuss the list of roles in verse 11. How were and how are these roles still a gift to the church? Read verse 12, and discuss the purpose of these gifts to the church. What are some unbiblical views of the purpose of pastors and teachers in the church today? Why?
4. Notice verses 13-14 are addressed to the collective church (we). What is the importance of the body of Christ in promoting growth in Christ and protecting against the many schemes of sin and Satan?

### **God matures us through His Word when it's spoken in love (15-16).**

Paul wrapped up this beautiful call to the church to be the body of Christ by reinforcing the primary way that God has provided for growing the body of Christ, which is His Word. It's through speaking the truth in love that the body of Christ is knitted together and grown to maturity. What is the truth? It is the Word of God! And when God's Word is spoken in love, with the purpose of building up God's people for their own good and for the glory of God, then God uses His Word effectively in the lives of His children to mature and to grow them in Christ, individually *and* collectively. Love for the body of Christ should be the motivation of proclamation in teaching and preaching, and love in the body of Christ should be the product of proclamation in teaching and preaching. In God's Word, God has given the church all that's needed for growth and maturity in Christ.

1. What does it mean to speak the truth in love? What does this mean in the case of encouragement or comfort? What does this mean in the case of admonishment or discipline?
2. What are some practical ways that you can check the motivation of your heart in speaking the truth in love to someone? What are some dangers in speaking the truth without a motivation of love. Have you ever been tempted to do this? If so, when, and how?
3. Share testimonies of times where someone spoke the truth in love to you, and where God used that to grow you in Christ. Who is someone who needs to hear the truth in love in their lives? Pray for them, and discuss how you plan to share the truth in love with them.