

EPHESIANS STUDY WEEK 6

Ephesians 4:1-16 NLT

Paul spent the first three chapters hammering out the meaning and implications of salvation in and through Jesus. For the next three chapters he shifts his focus to teach us about the way this new relationship should express itself in our daily lives. He begs us to 'lead a life worthy of your calling' and tells us 'then we will no longer be immature like children, tossed and blown by new teachings'. You have been called, created with a purpose, to grow and mature in love. Now the big question, Why? Paul makes it clear, to build the church, to see people saved and word together as one to bring the Gospel to all people!

*****Read Ephesians 4:1-16*****

WORTHY OF THE CALLING

Read the verses below and talk about what we are 'called' in Jesus and what we are 'called to' in Jesus.

- **What we are 'called' in Jesus:**
 - Ephesians 1:4
 - Ephesians 1:5
 - Ephesians 1:7
 - Ephesians 2:13
 - Ephesians 2:19
 - Ephesians 3:6
 - Ephesians 3:15
- **What we are 'called to' in Jesus:**
 - Ephesians 1:12
 - Ephesians 1:18
 - Ephesians 2:10
 - Ephesians 2:18
 - Ephesians 2:21
 - Ephesians 2:22
 - Ephesians 3:10
 - Ephesians 3:17
 - Ephesians 3:18

Our goal is to live a life worthy of what God created/calls us to be! This is what God calls you 'in' and 'to'. Church, respond to the call... live worthy of it.

UNITY

Read Ephesians 4:2, how should we 'live' out our calling?

- *Humility:*
 - It's not about us, it's not about anything we have done or can contribute. It's all about what Jesus has done!
- *Gentleness:*
 - Think about how Jesus has interacted with you? He is gentle, so we too should be gentle.
- *Patience:*
 - Think about how patient God has been with you. He is patient, so we too should be patient with others.
- *Loving:*
 - Christians have a bad rap as being unloving. Think about how loving God has been with you. He is love, so we should love!

Read Galatians 5:22-23, how does this relate?

The opposites of humility, gentleness, patience and love cause division within the body of Christ. For this reason Paul tells us to 'make every effort' to live in unity. Now this does not mean that we ignore false teaching, but it means we approach everything we do through the filter of love.

Read Ephesians 4:3-6, discuss what creates unity. And how do the following verses relate?

- One Body
 - Ephesians 1:11-13
 - The fellowship of believers, the church
 - Sealed with Holy Spirit of promise
- One Peace
 - Ephesians 2:14-15
 - Our hostility has been put to death
- One Hope
 - Ephesians 1:18, 3:6
 - The hope of the future of eternity

- One Lord
 - Ephesians 1:10, 1:22
 - Jesus, we all belong to Him
- One faith
 - Ephesians 2:8-9, 3:12
 - Our singular commitment to Jesus
- One father
 - Ephesians 1:5, 2:19
 - He keeps us for all eternity
- Who is over, through and in all
 - Ephesians 1:23, 3:19-20
 - He is God

In the church today we don't really experience the Jew/Gentile divisions, but we still face many types of division. What Paul says in Ephesians 4:1-16 is still relevant for us as we find ourselves in situations where unity and truth seem to be in conflict. True truth and true unity are never in conflict. The Bible is God's word and it is truth!

GIFTS

Paul teaches that God has given gifts to individuals in the church to mature and unify His people. Notice these four gifts involve the communication of the Gospel.

Pay attention, our "oneness" in Jesus does not destroy our individuality. The Holy Spirit has given each of us special gifts for building up the church. You have been blessed with them, it is vital you use them! You were made unique and amazing!

Read 4:7-16, list the gifts Jesus gave to the church:

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-
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-
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What was God's purpose in giving these gifts?

****Read Ephesians 4:12****

- ***Purpose: To do His work!***

- In Ephesians 2:10 Paul stated that we were 'created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do'. Now, Paul tells us, the reason God has placed people with different gifts within the church is to 'prepare God's people for works of service.' These works of service, which Christ wants members of his church to do, are anything from giving someone a meal to preaching the Gospel. This involves every member of the church.
- Read the following verses how do they relate to “do work”?
 - Matthew 8:15
 - Matthew 20:26-28
 - Matthew 25:35-40
 - Matthew 27:55
 - Luke 8:3
 - Acts 6:2
 - Acts 6:4
 - Acts 20:24
 - 1 Corinthians 3:5
 - 1 Corinthians 16:15
 - 2 Corinthians 8:1-4
 - Philemon 13
 - Hebrews 6:10
 - 1 Peter 4:9-11

Read Ephesians 4:12, 4:16

- ***Purpose: To build up the church!***

- This is spiritual growth and strengthening of the church. When God's truth is clearly taught it motivates the church to action, this in turn strengthens the church.

Read Ephesians 4:13

- **Purpose: faith, knowledge, maturity.**

- verse 13 lists four things that result when God's truth is communicated within the church:
 - Increasing unity in 'the faith' - that is, as we understand more and more about what we believe
 - Increasing unity in our knowledge of the Son of God
 - Continuing progress towards the goal of maturity
 - Continuing progress towards Christlikeness.

Read Ephesians 4:14

- **Purpose: no longer be immature kids**

- The communication and teaching of God's truth within the church, motivating the church to acts of service and leading the church towards unity and maturity in Christ has a further purpose and result: that the church, individually and corporately, will be increasingly protected against the allurements and attractions of false and deviant teaching. Here again we see Paul's intense focus on the content of 'the faith' and his affirmation of the extreme importance of the truth.
- He identifies false teaching as
 - 'waves'
 - 'every wind of new teaching'
 - Tricks, lies, cleverness
- Its effect on un-taught, immature believers is that they are 'tossed back and forth' and 'blown here and there'. Without stability. Without foundation. Without consistency. Without discernment.

Read Ephesians 4:15

- **Purpose: Speak truth in love**

- It is obvious in context that Paul here is not talking about 'telling the truth' as opposed to 'telling lies': he is referring to 'teaching the truth' as the opposite of the false teaching to which he has just referred. It is to protect the church against the deceitful doctrines of men that Christ has placed in his church people with the four teaching/communication gifts listed in verse 11. It is this truth that will bring the church to maturity in Christ.
- Note the qualifying 'in love'. The love of God constrains us to teach his truth rather than error: it is not to promote ourselves or our opinions that we teach the truth, but because of our knowledge that the truth about Jesus Christ is the only truth that can set people free. To refuse to teach the truth is to act without love.
- What do the following verses mean and how do they relate truth/love?
 - John 8:31-36
 - John 14:6:2
 - Corinthians 5:11-14
 - John 8:31-36
 - John 14:6:
 - 2 Corinthians 5:11-14

Read Ephesians 4:16

- **Purpose: We fit**

- As the church is taught the truth about Jesus Christ and individuals within the church each do the work of God, the church as a whole is built up.

We have learned about unity in the church, and learned about gifts God has given to the church that build unity and maturity. With all this in mind, thoroughly fill in the blanks below.

Read Ephesians 4:14-15 and fill in the blanks.

- Ephesians 4:14 - Those who are mature in Christ will not _____?
- Ephesians 4:15 - Those who are mature in Christ will _____?

Read Ephesians 4:16, describe what it looks like to be a part of the church. What does this mean for you? Are you currently 'apart' of the church?

Questions for further thought

- Are you living a life "worthy" of your calling? If you are not, what is holding you back?
- Read Ephesians 4:14, are you immature or mature? Are you growing in your relationship with Jesus? If you are growing, explain how.
- As an adult, growth is your responsibility. If you are not growing, who are you blaming your immaturity on? Who in your life do **YOU NEED TO REACH OUT TO AND ASK FOR HELP?** Again, it is your responsibility.