

Ephesians 4:3-6

Today's lesson revolves around the very first word in our passage. That word is "eager". Paul describes the ideal Christian church (what the Ephesians should aspire to in the Gospel by the power of the Spirit) as one that is "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Today, I'd like to study the answers that are given as to why this should be the case.

1. Eager to nurture the peace we've been given
 - a. Our eagerness to pursue peace is grounded in our experience of the beauty of peace
 - b. Notice the word "maintain" here
 - i. To maintain something is to keep, nurture or shield something
 - ii. The term denotes the fact that what is in question has been provided but needs to be cared for
 1. Just as a dealership sells you (presumably) a new, reliable vehicle that needs to be maintained in order for it to continue to run, so the Lord provides us with peace in Christ and with one another but that unity must be preserved
 - c. The motivation to maintain peace is peace itself
 - i. Once we experience the joy of communing with God and fellowshiping with believers, we have great reason to maintain such a beautiful existence
 - d. The lost live in a perpetual state of conflict
 - i. Sin creates conflict with:
 1. God
 2. Authority
 3. Peers
 - e. Conversely, the saved have the Spirit of God who equips them to live in peace with God and their fellow believer
2. Eager to reflect the truth of our confession in our fellowship
 - a. What provides peace? The answer is that we have the most important things in common
 - b. This is the significance of the list that Paul provides in v.5-6 ("one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...")
 - i. We are unified because we have "one Lord"
 1. This means that the same authority who directs and guides us should direct and guide our brother or sister in Christ

2. Therefore, there is a great possibility for us to live in peace with one another
 3. Do you know what causes conflict among believers? The answer is sin and sin is the action or disposition of resisting the Lordship of Christ in our lives
- ii. We are unified because we have “one faith”
1. This refers to the doctrinal content of our confession
 2. Stated succinctly, we can have unity because we share the most fundamental convictions in common
 3. Notice here that Paul is teaching us that doctrine unites
 - a. While it is true that the Gospel of Christ (and biblical teaching in general) separate believer from unbeliever, it is just as true to say that doctrine unites the church as it creates the foundation of our life together
- iii. We are unified because we have “one baptism”
1. The idea of baptism here almost certainly refers to the spiritual reality that we have been by the Spirit into the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:13)
 2. This means that water baptism is in view only by proxy
 - a. Water baptism is the outward demonstration of the inward reality of our being buried with Christ in baptism and raised with Him, by faith, in newness of life
 - b. The relationship is key... those who have been baptized by the Spirit into the body are to be physically baptized as a declaration of their faith and a demonstration of their belonging to the body (see the order in Matthew 28:16-20; “make disciples” THEN “baptize them”...)
 3. Essentially, Paul is saying that the Ephesians could be unified because they had all been baptized into the faith
- iv. One God and Father
1. This is a reprisal of the first declaration that we have “one Lord” but it does add a bit with the statement that God is “over all and through all and in all...”
 2. What does this mean? It means that God is omnipresent in His authority and, therefore, this call to unity extends to every place as He is God over it all
 3. Everything was made by Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16)

4. Wherever we go, whatever we pursue, however we choose to operate, our God remains and He informs how we are to believe and behave in every sphere
5. This means that the unity we are eager to pursue is a “universal” reality
 - a. There is no setting and no circumstance that escapes the authority and Lordship of Christ and, therefore, there is no setting or circumstance that constitutes an exception to Paul’s admonition to be eager to maintain unity