

# EPHESIANS

GOD'S PLAN FOR GOD'S CHURCH REVEALED

SERMON TITLE: "Unifying Grace, Part 2"

DATE: October 17, 2021

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:11-16

PASTOR: Jason Malone

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The Book of Ephesians is a beautiful picture of the spiritual blessings we have in Christ and as members together in Jesus' Church. When he arrived, Jesus revealed what was once hidden from us throughout the ages through the power of the Holy Spirit. As a result, we're introduced to something new—a life in Christ where we find THE answer to the brokenness of this world. But what should this look like? How should we, in the power of the Holy Spirit, live this new life? Jesus' church is meant to be a source of wholeness and life amidst a world of brokenness and death. What does this entail? What does it mean practically? In this letter to the Ephesians, Paul explains the mystery of the church and gives us practical insight into living as believers who have been raised from death to life by faith in Christ.

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The opportunity, we've all had, to talk about the beauty and mystery that is the Church has been sweet. From Paul's opening song..."to the praise of His glory"...to his prayer of thanksgiving and for spiritual insight for the church at Ephesus...to the miracle that is "from death to life" from "enslaved to enthroned" from "objects of wrath to trophies of grace" from "under Satan's dominion to in union with Christ"...to Jew and Gentile finding unity in Christ...the dividing wall of hostility has been torn down...to the Church being a picture of God's multifaceted wisdom to all who look on and observe...both here on earth and in the heavens...to Paul's prayer for strength and love...it has been an encouraging few weeks. And Jim mentioned this last week as we looked at the first part of Ephesians 4...chapter 4 is this transition in the letter...if the first 3 chapters are about our calling as Followers of Jesus both individually and corporately...these next 3 chapters are about how we live out that calling as individuals and as a family. It is all connected in Paul's heart and mind as he writes this letter to the Church at Ephesus. The mystery that is the Church...living as the Church and it impacts all of life.

The Apostle Paul encourages the Church at Ephesus to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which they have been called and to maintain the unity given to them through Christ as they grow in humility, gentleness, patience, and love. Paul also tells us that God has given a multi-faceted leadership gift to the Church to equip the Church towards spiritual maturity...thus maintaining the unity given them through Jesus.

At Fellowship, we consider ourselves an "equipping church" and we have 7 core values that we desire to see everyone equipped in and growing in for the sake of accomplishing the ministry before us as a church.

- Magnifying Grace
- Enjoying God
- Loving Others
- Understanding Truth
- Depending on the Spirit
- Living in Integrity
- Advancing the Gospel

But we are only an equipping church to the degree that we are intentionally equipping you AND to the degree that you are willing to be intentionally equipped. So through our emphasis on life with Jesus, life in community and life on mission, we have intentional strategies in place to equip those that desire to be equipped. But if we see Sunday as a concert venue...where we show up a few times a month for the "paid religious professionals" to do a few things that we give a thumbs up or a thumbs down...we aren't being the Church. If you process everything at Fellowship Greenville through a self-focused lens...as in "this is the type of church that I want" while also being a passive observer...as in "I'm so grateful for the job our staff team does" you are missing out on what God's desire and plan is the Church. Or as Paul Tripp says: "God is not satisfied with informing you about the work of his kingdom. He transforms you to participate in the work of his kingdom."

As we walk in a manner worthy of our calling...being equipped in our giftedness to accomplish the work of the ministry...our unity will be maintained as we grow and mature in love and that unity on display in our spheres of influence...in our city...will put the gospel on display...the mystery of the Church is revealed.

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### *Community Group Questions*

READ Ephesians 4:1-16...

1. What are the greatest challenges to maintaining the unity given to us through Christ?
2. Humility-Gentleness-Patience-Forbearing Love: Which of these is the Holy Spirit currently growing you in the most? Why? How?
3. Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Have you as a community group shared what your gifts are with each other? If not, now would be a great time to do so.
4. How are you currently being equipped in your giftedness for the work of the ministry of the church?
5. How are you taking advantage of the strategy at Fellowship to grow and be equipped (in your life with Jesus, life in community, life on mission)?
6. Is there a practical Next Step for you when it comes to being equipped for the work of the ministry?