

One Body, One Spirit, One Hope, One Lord

Ephesians 4:1-16

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Lesson Aim: To stress the need for believers to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, realizing we won't always agree. To illustrate Christ is the giver of spiritual gifts and the giver of gifted people to His Church. To challenge every believer to find his or her spiritual gift(s) and to use them for the building the body of Christ to the fullness of Christian maturity.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-6)

- * For the second time in this book, Paul reveals he is a prisoner of the Lord (**vs. 1**). (See **3:1**) What other three books together with Ephesians comprise the so called "prison epistles". (Hint: E,P,C,Ph) "Walk" is a word that has become Christianese in our day (a Christian catch word). How would you explain the meaning of the phrase "Christian walk" to an unbeliever?

- * According to **verse 2**, what four qualities are essential for maintaining the spirit of unity in the Church? Define the meaning of each quality and how they apply to the Church setting. What does the word endeavoring mean (**vs. 3**)? Why is it so hard to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" in the Church?

- * Oneness is the theme of **verses 4-6**. What are the seven areas of oneness Paul uses to illustrate God's unity and the unity of the Christian faith in general? Discuss the meaning of each.

- * If Christ has called His Church to unity, why are there thousands of different denominations today? Are there times when Churches shouldn't be in unity

with other Churches? If so, when?

Part II: Christ's distribution of spiritual gifts and gifted men (Eph. 4:7-13)

- * Grace usually means “unmerited favor”, but it can also refer to “God’s empowering” for a specific task. According to **verse 7**, who receives this grace? How much of this gift does each person receive? Who is the giver?

- * **Verse 8** is a reference to **Psa. 68:18** and refers to God’s triumphant ascension to the temple in Jerusalem. Where is Christ triumphantly ascending to in **verse 8**? What captives is He leading to this wonderful place? What kind of gifts are referred to in **verse 8**?

- * Spiritual gifts are not talents or innate abilities, but a special gift that was given to us after conversion for the purpose of building up of the body of Christ (the Church). Make a list of the spiritual gifts recorded in **1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-31; Rom. 12:3-8 and Eph. 4:11**. Which spiritual gifts do you think you have?

- * Some believe **verse 9** refers to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, others to His burial, yet others to **1 Pet. 3:18,19** when He preached to the disobedient spirits in prison from the time of Noah. How do you interpret **verse 9**? Why?

- * After Jesus defeated Satan on the cross and later rose from the dead, what triumphal event is then described in **verse 10**? How does this affect the Old Testament saints/believers? What will the universal response be to Christ at the end times? (See **Phil. 2:5-11**)

* What is an apostle (vs. 11)? What was specifically required to be an apostle of Jesus Christ? (See Acts 1:21–26) How did Paul meet these qualifications? (See Acts 9:1–16) Does the Bible reveal any apostles other than the original twelve? (See Acts 14:4; 1 Cor. 15:7; 1 Thess. 2:6; Rom. 16:7 Phil. 2:25) NOTE: The later are “apostles of the Church” in contrast to “the original twelve apostles of Jesus Christ,” Matthias and Paul. Are there “apostles of the Church” today? What do we tend to call them?

* What was the function of the New Testament prophet (vs. 11)? The evangelist? What is the spiritual gift of evangelism? Does every believer have it? Is every believer required to evangelize? (See Matt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:15) Who is the foremost evangelist of our time?

* Pastors and teachers seems to point toward one ministry (vs. 11). What is the biblical role of the elder/pastor? (See 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Tit. 1:5–9; 1 Pet. 5:1–4) How many times is the word pastor found in the Bible? The word elder? (See Concordance) Should the pastor be expected to do the work of ministry by himself?

* Why did God give “some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers”? (See verse 12) According to verse 13, what is the goal of all this training? When does the training stop?

Part III: Growing up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ (Eph. 4:14–16)

* Why is the nautical theme a good illustration of the believer who isn’t grounded on the Word of God? (vs. 14) What is the meaning of doctrine and why is it so important to every believer?

* What is the difference between “speaking the truth”, and “speaking the truth in love” (vs. 15)? According to **verse 15** what is the purpose of “speaking the truth in love”? Why is the human body a good illustration of how the Church should function? According to verse 16, does every believer

have a special role in the Church? Why is love so important (the glue) in keeping everything together?

- * How are you using your spiritual giftedness to build up the body of Christ (the Church)? If you are not sure what your spiritual gifts are, please talk to one of the elders or take a free spiritual gifts assessment online at:

http://www.elmertowns.com/spiritual_gifts_test/

<http://www.churchgrowth.org/cgi-cg/gifts.cgi?intro=1>

Miner's Corner: Manna for Life!

1. Our walk with Christ (our Christian conduct) should be worthy of the special calling we have in Jesus. How is your Christian walk today?
2. Every Christian should work hard to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
3. Christians are not to have unity simply for unity's sake, but are called to unity "of the faith" (a oneness in the core beliefs of Christianity and in our love for Jesus Christ).
4. Every believer has been given at least one spiritual gift, most have more. What are your spiritual gifts and how are you using them to build up the body of Christ?
5. God gave gifted people (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the purpose of building up the Church to the fullness of Christian maturity.
6. Everyone is called to do their part in the body of Christ. How are you doing?