

EPHESIANS

WEEK 4: EPHESIANS 4:1-16

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- The apostle Paul writes to the believers in Ephesus whom he calls faithful in Christ
- After Paul hears of their faith in Christ, his prayer is that they may receive a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of God.
- Paul's desire is for them to know God and what He has done for them – how He has blessed them with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places from eternity past.
- All these blessings are in Christ, made possible through His resurrection and are secured by Him seeing that He is now enthroned in heaven far above all rule and authority and power and dominion
- As believers, we are to grow in the knowledge of God and the blessing with which He has blessed us.
- We are to know the hope of His calling, the riches of His inheritance in the saints, and the greatness of His power toward us who believe.
- As believers, we are called to grow into Christ who is our head and thus know our role and proper function in the body.
- We are to know that salvation is not of ourselves, but it is the grace of God who chose us before the foundation of the world, called us to imitate Him in holiness, and to depend on His strength for victory in the spiritual warfare.
- **Class Schedule:**
 - July 12: Ephesians 1:1-14 Redemption in Christ
 - July 19: Ephesians 1:15-2:10 Position in Christ
 - July 26: Ephesians 2:11-3:21 Oneness of Jew and Gentile
 - **August 2: Ephesians 4:1-16 Preservation of Unity**
 - August 9: Ephesians 4:17-32 Walk in Righteousness
 - August 16: Ephesians 5:1-21 Walk in Love, Light, Wisdom
 - August 23: Ephesians 5:22-6:9 Walk and Relationships
 - August 30: Ephesians 6:10-24 Armor and Epilogue

Introduction

Therefore, or for this reason... – not only the gospel requires a response, but salvation as well requires a response.

To the gospel, you must respond with faith. To salvation you must respond with proper living; a living that is worthy of it.

Therefore... or for this reason... What reason? Because of what God has done for us in Christ, that is our sure salvation and glorification as well as His great love toward us, which surpasses knowledge.

This is the reason, and what is Paul's response to what God has done for us?

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (Eph. 1:3)

"... to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." (Eph. 3:21)

A proper response to God's salvation is a God given, burning, desire to glorify God.

No soul that is made alive, after reading God's wonderful blessing toward us should come out with a mediocre love for God. No, if your soul is not set ablaze, as it were, for God, then the eyes of your heart are not enlightened for if you had a grasp of God's free grace of salvation toward you, and His immeasurable love toward you in Christ, then like Paul you would cry *"Blessed be God... to Him be the glory"*

Ever since the soul was made alive and shown the surpassing riches of God's grace, the soul has but one goal and one unsatiated desire, and that is to glorify God!

Giving glory to God is the natural response of a believer in Christ

"... to Him be glory..." (Eph. 3:21).

Not only must God be glorified in our individual lives, but God must also be glorified in His church. *"to Him be glory in the church."* (Eph. 3:21).

What a sad thing it is for a parent to see the family divided, and what heartbreak it is for the parents to see their children at odds with one another. I wonder what amount of grief we cause the Spirit of God when we have quarrels among ourselves. Indeed, when we act like this, we are focused on ourselves and not on the glory of God.

Paul is writing to the church, to the body of Christ and says, *"to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."* (3:21)

How Does the Church Glorify God?

- By walking worthy of the calling of God

“to walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called.”

There is a command given by God, which, if we are believers, we must obey – that command is the command to walk worthy of the calling with which God has called us.

- First let us notice the addresser

“Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord.”

He does not just say ‘I Paul’ but *“I, the prisoner.”* Why *“I, the prisoner?”* Because Paul isn’t just trying to make them aware of His present situation so as to excite sympathy, but he is making them aware of the reason of His present situation – Eph. 3:13 *“Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.”*

Paul, therefore, is writing as one who is an example of the exhortation that he is giving them. Let us not be so ready to exhort others in the areas in which we ourselves are deficient.

- Secondly, let us look at the urgency of Paul’s exhortation *“I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you....”*

Ought not a walk worthy of God’s call be a reasonable and expected response. Should Paul, and I dare say God, have the need to beg us to walk as Christians should walk? If God is imploring us walk according to His calling, then it is true that there is a grave danger in us being deceived that we can be Christians apart from our being diligent to walk as God would have us.

There is much to be discouraged about when we look at our daily shortcomings but at the same time there is much to be encouraged about when there is a consistent striving against these shortcomings; when there is a love for God displayed in pursuit of holiness.

THE EXHORTATION TO WALK WORTHY OF THE CALL

- **The Manner of the Exhortation**

- Walk with all humility and gentleness → “But Christians are called to have the same mind as Christ, “who humbled Himself” (Phil. 2:8)...we should not misunderstand the term as though it were synonymous with weakness... we should be clear that meekness is a virtue of the strong, those who could exert force to get their own way but choose not to”¹
Gentleness of meekness “is that unresisting uncomplaining disposition of mind, which enables us to bear without irritation or resentment the faults and injuries of others”²
- With patience (or long-suffering) → “It points to the virtue that resists provocation”³
- Showing tolerance for one another in love → “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 Jn. 4:10-11)

Love is undeserved and as God displayed it toward us, we must also display that kind of love toward one another by being humble, gentle and patient.

The three virtues, humility, gentleness, and patience can only thrive in the rich soil of mutual love.

- **The Purpose the Exhortation**

- Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit
“The only interpretation in accordance with the ordinary usage of the words and with the context, is that which makes the phrase in question mean that unity of which the Spirit is the author.”⁴

¹ Leon Moris, *Expository Reflection on the Letter to the Ephesians*, pg. 113-14.

² Charles Hodge, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, pg. 141.

³ Leon Moris, *Expository Reflection on the Letter to the Ephesians*, pg. 114.

⁴ Charles Hodge, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, pg. 142.

- **The Basis of Our Unity – Our Commonalities**

- One Body and One Spirit
- One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism
- One God and Father of All
 - Who Is Over All → He is our master who commands us to be united. Will we not obey Him?
 - Who Is Through All → Does He not work through us by His enabling grace?
 - Who Is in All → Are we not all His children?

- **The Necessary Diversity of Gifts that Promote Unity**

- There is one body, but the body is composed of parts
“But to each one of us grace was given (v.7)”
- Each One of Us Is Gifted by Christ
“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift”
 - The Timing of the Gifts
“When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.”
 - When Christ ascended on High
 - When He led captive a host of captives
 - The Nature of the Gifts (vv. 7-11)
 - Some as apostles
 - Some as prophets
 - Some as evangelists
 - Some as pastors and teachers

The Unity of the Spirit Promotes God's End-Goal for the Church (vv. 12-16)

The unity of the Spirit is not commanded in a vacuum. God has purposed to grow His body the church, and the means by which He attains this is by the command to preserve the unity of the Spirit among diverse individual gifts.

God also means to show us that “*all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body... for the body is not one member, but many.*” (1 Cor. 12:12b,14). By understanding this, we will use our gifts to the benefit of the body of which we are a part and not to the benefit of ourselves which opposes God's goal for the church.

- The Purpose of the Gifts (v.12)
 - For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry
 - To the building up of the body of Christ
- The Duration of the Gifts (v.13)
 - Until we all attain Christ likeness

“... until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”
- The Result of the Gifts (vv.14-16)
 - We are no longer to be children, characterized by being
 - Tossed and carried about
 - By every wind of doctrine
 - By the trickery of men
 - By craftiness in deceitful scheming
 - We are to grow up
 - By speaking the truth in love
 - Into Christ who is the Head
 - From Whom the whole body causes the growth of the body
 - Dependent upon Christ - Christ fits and hold the body together
 - Active involvement of each individual believer – by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part.

So, Christ has gifted the church with ministers to equip the saints for the work of ministry. This ministry is for the building up of the body of Christ. Christ has gifted His saints with spiritual gifts and when His saints supply their gifts to the body or put them to work, this causes the growth of the body.

We all want to be part of a healthy and mature church but not all of us want to put their gifts to work. According to the text, it is an impossibility to expect the growth of a church while we choose to fold our hands and observe from the distance as mere spectators.

Therefore as obedient and faithful stewards of God's varied gifts, let us use our gifts for the building of the body while being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit among the members who, though many, are one body.