

Ephesians Chapter 4
Week 5 – MidWeek Bible Study
3 January 2024

“The prisoner released from prison who continues to wear his prison clothes and act in accordance with the ways of prison is not really a free man.” – Pastor David Guzik

GROUP GATHERING (10-15 minutes)

1. Read Ephesians 4 Slowly Together
2. Discuss what you notice, what verses or words stand out to you, what connections you see being made.
3. What questions or confusion do you have that you hope to learn tonight?

Inductive Bible Study Review

STEP 1: OBSERVE	STEP 2: INTERPRET	STEP 3: APPLY
<p>“What does it say?” Ask good questions, make observations, pray “to notice”</p>	<p>“What did it mean?” What did Paul mean to write to these Ephesians? How did they understand it? What did Paul mean?</p>	<p>“What does it mean?” What do these chunks of Scripture have to say to us? How will we live differently because of their messages?</p>

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

- Therefore → Great hinge of the book
 - o Chs. 1-3 theological/doctrinal development of what Christ has done (reconciliation)
 - o Chs. 4-6 what should a believer do in light of what Christ has done?
- Walk worthy
 - o Called to be heirs, seated in heavenly places, testifying to the goodness of God
 - Looks like: Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Bearing in Love, maintaining unity, peace
- Maintaining Unity
 - o We don't create/manufacture it, we maintain what God has created
- We walk worthy because God loves us NOT SO THAT God will love us
- ONE ONE ONE

- Unity is because of what we share in common
 - Pencil, Ink, & Blood Issues → See others as great brothers and sisters in Christ
- In Christ, we share: the same Lord (Jesus), the same faith, the same baptism, etc.
- The basis for God's distribution of spiritual gifts is God's GRACE
 - Not hardwork, striving, excellence, intelligence, etc.

GROUP TABLE DISCUSSION: What are some subtle or sneaky ways that we can begin to walk *unworthy* of our calling if we are not careful? When do you notice this temptation or challenge the most?

⁸Therefore it says,

**“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men.”**

⁹(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

¹¹And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

- Ascending on high: triumph and glorification in heaven at resurrection
 - His defeating the bondage of death also set captives free
 - This was the occasion to gift us
 - The giving of the Spirit (John says it is better than I go...)
- Psalm 68 not quoted exactly, may be quoting a targum (ancient translation/interpretation of the text)
- “Lower parts of the earth” → controversial passage
 - Possible talking about 1Peter 3:19 of Jesus preaching to the spirits in prison
 - Possible it literally just refers to Jesus initially leaving eternal heaven to be born on the earth...
- 5 Fold... errrrr.... 4 fold Ministry
 - Apostles: ambassadors of God's Work / those establishing the work of God on earth
 - Prophets: speak forth the word of God (always bound by the Scripture)
 - Often think “predictive” but mostly “warning”

- Evangelists: specifically gifted to speak boldly of the salvation available in Christ and invite
- Shepherd-Teacher: the caretakers of a flock, primarily through the teaching of God's Word
 - Why teaching? → Theological foundation for understanding all things
 - Greek: 1 title with 2 descriptive words
- Purpose of these gifts: EQUIPPING THE SAINTS TO BUILD UP THE BODY
 - "Equipping" – God's people do the work of the ministry!
 - Only appears once in the New Testament
 - Same word as completing a renovation / fixing a broken fishing net
 - No "professional ministers"
- Ultimate goal: UNITY OF FAITH
 - Different ways of operating and expressing, but the faith must be unified
- Knowledge of God
 - When gifts are exercised accordingly, people come to deeper understanding and intimacy w/ God
- Maturity
 - Maturity looks like the stature of Jesus! We look like Him, we act like Him, we talk like Him, we hurt like Him, we grieve like Him, we celebrate like Him
- Not like Children / those deceived
 - Tossed to and fro – same term as the Sea of Galilee (Luke 8)
 - Those who do not pursue maturity are easy targets to be led astray
 - Don't know God's Word
 - Don't know God's voice
 - Don't know God's people

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

- Followers of Jesus always operate out of love, but truth is not a sacrificial lamb on love's altar
 - Often we want to "love" and think we must avoid the truth or the whole truth
- Not a flow chart or pyramid scheme, we are a body
 - When we operate as we are called, the body grows and builds itself up
 - Self-strengthening organism by the power of the Spirit

GROUP TABLE DISCUSSION: What are the common ways the enemy can use our culture to "toss us to and fro like children," or lead us astray by "human cunning" and "deceitful schemes?" How do you fight back against

these forces that are set against you?

The New Life

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!—²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

- No longer walk as Gentiles
 - Futile minds – arguments (like the enemies cunning) leads to moving away from God
 - Darkened Understanding – no longer able to interpret the world correctly
 - Alienated from God in ignorance – mind so warped it no longer even thinks of God
 - Hardness of Heart – no longer tender to be tilled
 - Callous to sin – not even a second thought / gladly flaunt sin as a badge of honor
 - “Sensuality” / Licentiousness – sin that flaunts itself proudly
- Christians are Different
 - Put off your old self – “look good, feel good”
 - Deep connection → Act and begin to see the outcome
 - Paul: there must be a clear and distinct BREAK with the past and your former way of living
 - Renewed mind – the mind is where all motives and actions begin: it is shaped & redeemed by God
- New Self!
 - Motivated by righteousness and holiness to the glory of God!
 - New man is in tune with conscience and conviction, willing to be corrected, deeply sorrowful about sin, interested in abundance of life!

²⁵Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

- Speak truth to your neighbor
- How to deal with anger – assumption that there will be anger
 - o Anger = wonderful opportunity for the devil
 - o Take stock of anger and get it away from you
- Clear break from former life
 - o Don't steal things to provide, but do so honestly
 - Not just for provision for yourself, but see the opportunity to contribute to others!
 - o Get the reigns around your voice
 - Words are for building up, take into consideration the occasion and bring grace to hearers
- Do not grieve the Holy Spirit
 - o “I think I now see the Spirit of God grieving, when you are sitting down to read a novel and there is your Bible unread... You have no time for prayer, but the Spirit sees you very active about worldly things, and having many hours to spare for relaxation and amusement. And then he is grieved because he sees that you love worldly things better than you love him.” (Charles Spurgeon)
- Bitterness, Wrath, Anger, Clamor, Slander, Malice, etc. be put away from you
 - o The “New Man” has the self-control to take control over emotions that arise
 - o Instead of these things, show kindness and compassion
- Root of forgiveness: recognition that you were dead in your sins!

GROUP TABLE DISCUSSION: How can you grow in “not allowing any corrupt talk to come out of your mouth, but only such as is good for building up?” How can your group be praying for you this week as you pursue this depth of maturity in your faith in action? Be sure to pray together before dismissing your group.