

Live As One Ephesians 4:1-16

Because of what Jesus Christ has done for us, not just individually but also corporately, we are one. That's a fact. Now our task is to learn to live as one! Each of us can help by discovering our unique design from God, and then putting to use all of His gifts for His glory and for the good of others.

Ephesians 4:1

- Summarizes of 1-3 in one word = *Calling* with which you have been *called*
 - 1:3; 2:8-10; 2:13-14; 3:10
 - Our “calling” by Christ recreates us into one new humanity. In Christ, we are one. Therefore, live as one.
 - Metaphor: “walk worthy”
 - Ch. 3 ended in a prayer. Why? We can’t do this in our own strength!
- Bill Hybels, “The local church is the hope of the world. The hope of the world is not government, academia, business, but the church because it is to the church that God has entrusted the message of salvation, which truly changes people’s lives and hearts.”
 - You are the salt of the earth (Mt. 5:13)
 - You are the light of the world (Mt. 5:14)
 - I will build My church, and the gates of hades will not overpower it (Mt 16:18)
- 2016 Gallup poll – 72% of Americans say that the influence of religion on American life is decreasing – the church is becoming less and less relevant to the culture we live in.
- How can we, the Church, once again become hope of world? Live out our unity in Christ

1. Guard our unity in Christ – Ephesians 4:1-3

- We are one, but we won’t live as one unless we guard and protect our unity
- **Unity requires sacrifice – 4:2**
 - ALL humility – Phil 2:3a; do nothing from selfish ambition
 - Gentleness – quality of not being overly impressed with one’s self-importance
 - Patience – bearing up under provocation; long fuse
 - Showing tolerance = putting up with. You are stuck with people not like you.
 - ...in love. Not begrudging, not grumbling
 - Impossible apart from the Spirit
 - Phil 2:3. Regard one another as more important than yourself!
 - We can only come together when we all go low together
 - We extol these virtues in theory, but this is hard in practice
 - Are you willing to die to yourself for roommates, wife, co-workers, Church
- **Unity requires defending – 4:3**
 - “being diligent to preserve”; lit. keep watch over (noun = guards); be zealous, take pains, make every effort
 - 2 Cor 2:11. We are not ignorant of his schemes
 - Division is Satan’s most powerful scheme
 - 1 Cor 1:10
 - #1 distinctive of “church” = unity that flows from love
 - John 13:35; John 17

- Philippians = thank you letter; way to go; one primary exhortation
 - Remain humble, sacrificial, unified so that your partnership in the gospel can continue. Philippians 2:5-8
- **Unity requires discernment – 4:3-6**
 - unity not an excuse to compromise; can't pursue unity at the expense of truth.
 - List: essential truths that make the Church the Church
 - Essentials list has gotten shorter but I hold it more passionately
 - Important doctrines, but not essential
 - Non-essential issues; matters of freedom
 - Cause is Christ, not unity. Pursue Christ together and experience unity
- Paul: we are one, but our experience of oneness is not guaranteed.
- Unity is always under attack. It is always gaining ground or giving up ground. In the remainder of the book Paul will give the church specific ways to gain ground

2. Grow our unity through “graces” – Ephesians 4:7

- What is this “grace”? What is the measure of the “gift”?
 - Grace = unmerited favor. That favor comes to us in many forms – Eph 3:8
 - Grace also shows up in our lives as “spiritual gifts” – 1 Peter 4:10
 - manifestations of the Spirit; manifestations of God's grace in Christ
 - Define: supernaturally empowered ability to serve the Church – inside the walls and outside the walls (bringing people in)
 - 1 Corinthians lists, 1 Peter, Romans 12

1 Peter 4:11 (2)

Speaking
Serving

1 Cor 12:6-10 (9)

Word of wisdom
Word of knowledge
Faith
Healing
Miracles
Prophesying
Discerning of spirits
Tongues
Interpretation of
tongues

Ephesians 4:11 (4)

Apostleship
Prophesying
Evangelizing
Pastor-teacher

1 Cor 12:28 (8)

Apostleship
Prophesying
Teaching
Miracles
Healing
Helping
Administering
Tongues

Romans 12:6-8 (7)

Prophesying
Ministering
Teaching
Exhorting
Giving
Ruling
Showing mercy

1 Cor 12:29,30 (7)

Apostleship
Prophesying
Teaching
Miracles
Healing
Tongues, Interpretation

- Not all lists the same; not exhaustive but illustrative
 - Ephesians list – gifts, not offices, that help the church discover its gifts
 - That's not me. I'm not a gifted person. Oh, how wrong you are!
- **All are “graced” – 4:7; 1 Cor 12:7, 11**
 - 1 Corinthians 12:7
 - But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
 - How do you discover them?
 - What do you enjoy doing that blesses others?
 - What does the body of Christ need? What does this broken world need?
 - Find things that God designed you for, the things that give you life!

- Why I think this is so important. None of us can be “mature” alone!
 - 1) We can’t call ourselves mature if we are not working together in unity
 - You can’t experience “maturity” if you are not building up other believers
 - We are designed to be deficient without one another.
 - We are different on purpose. We are deficient on purpose.
 - 1 Cor 12:14-25. We are Mr. Potato Head
 - 1 Corinthians 15:58
 - Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord....
 - 2) Our gifts came at a great cost
- **All are “graced” out of sacrifice – 4:8-10**
 - Paul is not so much quoting Psalm 68 as he is using it as an illustration.
 - Victor celebrates; celebrates by sharing the spoils of His battle
 - Explain parenthetical statement
 - Descended into the grave. He ascended = resurrection and exaltation
 - Victory over His enemies = Satan, fallen angels, sin, death – Col 2:15
 - Father celebrated Jesus’ victory by allowing Him to give gifts; share spoils
 - Designed to motivate us!
 - Jesus has given you a gift. Why wouldn’t you unwrap it? Wear it?
 - Why should you discover and use your gifts?
 - Your gifts were purchased at great cost
 - Your gifts are valuable to you and to the rest of us.
- **All are “graced” for maturity – 4:11-13**
 - “new man” needs to become a “mature man”
 - What is “maturity”?
 - Three relational spheres in which we experience all of life
 - God: Grow in Christ
 - Church: Connect deeply with the church – Hebrews 10; don’t forsake
 - Broken world: Engage actively with the world
- Our maturity requires 100% participation!

Result of our mutual commitment – 4:14-16

- Culture moves away from God; not surprised and not shaken
- Tragedies erupt all around us; not surprised and not shaken
- Yet we remain immovable. The light of the world
- 1 Corinthians 15:58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Application

Pray for the church in this community

- Clear, consistent gospel
- Unity around the essentials

Discover and enjoy using your spiritual gifts

- Link: www.grace-bible.org/giftsurvey
- Ask a friend or family member, “How do you think I can contribute to the maturity and unity of the Church?”