

EPHESIANS

Bible Study 4:1-16

Questions will be posed and space will be allowed for a written response. Make every effort to answer the questions before looking below for the answer. **The answers will be in bold print at the end of the “questions” section.**

Unity if the Body of Christ - Ephesians – 4:1-1-16:

1. So far Paul has taught that God brought Jew and Gentile into a new relationship to each other in the church and that he called the church to display his wisdom. Paul now shows how God made provision for those in the church to live and work together in unity and to grow together into maturity. Does this mean that we have to compromise what we believe to achieve this unity?
2. In verse 1 “worthy” is the Greek word “walk.” What does that mean for us in our daily life?
3. What is the “calling we received” (v. 1) in our baptism? What does it mean for our lives?
4. In verse 2 a number behaviors are listed for Christians to exhibit in their lives. The qualities listed in this verse are characteristics that Christ Himself displayed while on earth. Can you think of a situation where Jesus modeled all of these?
5. List the qualities found in verse 2. Then try to explain what each one means.
6. What do you think “make every effort” means here? (v. 3)

In verses 4:4-6 there are seven “ones” which define the unity of the church. Seven is the number of completion or perfection.

7. How do the first three elements of oneness look to the present?
8. How do the second three look back to the historical origin of the Church?
9. How does the last one look to the ultimate origin of the Church?
10. What is described in verses 7-10?
11. Describe what each of the people mentioned in verse 11 do.
12. Give the reasons God gives the people listed in verse 11. (See vv. 12-16)
13. What is your favorite verse/phrase in this section?

Some Answers to the above Questions:

1. Paul is talking about a unity that has both Jews and Gentiles being one because they both believe that they are saved by God's grace. There is no compromise with those Jews who hold unto the belief that the ceremonial laws (circumcision) need also be done. There is to be no compromise with any doctrine that is not founded on the Scriptures

2. Today we might say, "walk the talk." Our lives should be a reflection of what we confess with our lips.

3. In our baptism and through the Word we are called by God to have a part in His Church, the communion of saints. In response to God's love we serve God and our neighbor and share the good news of God's free salvation.

4. Jesus' Trial serves as an example of Him exhibiting humbleness, gentleness, patience and bearing with others. There are also at other times during His ministry on earth that these traits were evident. Jesus was extremely patient with His disciples frequently not getting that His mission was to die for the sins of the world.

5. "humble." This is the opposite of pride or haughtiness of spirit and is the quality of one who does not seek to gain prominence for himself but give others the credit. It may be brought about by our remembering what we were when God's grace took hold of us.

"gentle." This person will not use any strength to hurt other or the faith of others but will use it help (gentle giant). It is found in men of great strength and character.

"patient." This could be better translated "longsuffering." The idea is the willingness to not give up hope for improvement in a troubled relationship. A long holding out of the mind before it gives room to action or passion.

"bearing with one another in love." This means to hold back from reacting to annoyances. It also means to be tolerant of other people's quirks. 1 Peter 4:8 "love covers over a multitude of sins."

6. This means to have deep a burning craving for the cause of unity. BUT, it does not mean to compromise and Scriptural based doctrine.

7. These three need to be present in our church today. When they are present that congregation will prosper.

8. The first Christians were given these by Jesus. They used these for the foundation of the early church as is spread throughout the world.

9. Our heavenly Father looks after all and watches over them. With His matchless grace He works through His believers to accomplish His saving purpose.

10. V – 7 Here grace does not mean salvation, forgiveness of sins, everlasting life. It simply means "gift" something with which to serve the church. Each of us has

been given the gift measured out by Christ who gave it.” There is no such thing as a Christian who has not received some gift with which to serve the church.

V – 8 “Ascended,” according to Paul’s opinion is the ascension of Christ into heaven is meant here

V – 8 “captives” means Satan and hellish hosts, defeated at the cross. Paul sees in Christ’s ascension a triumph over the forces and powers of darkness.

V – 8 “gifts to men” means that the ascended Lord has taken gifts among all people. These gifts of men are now His own and who are with whole heart devoted and subject to Him. These gifts will be introduced in verse 1.

V – 9 “ascended...descended” refer to Christ’s coming to earth (his incarnation) and his subsequent resurrection and ascension. Some interpret this passage as referring to Christ’s descent into hell, but this is probably incorrect

V- 10 “to fill the whole universe” speaks of the exalted, other-worldly one, (Christ) who sits at God’s right hand. Christ now fills all things by his powerful, effective omnipresence.

11. This is the Office of the Ministry and the men who hold it are Christ’s gifts to the Church. There is one office, but a diversity of callings, within it and some men held more than one role. The first two callings listed here (and perhaps the third) belong only to the first generation of the Church, though their message is preserved in Holy Scripture.

“apostles.” Means to be a “sent one.” Someone who is delegated to be an ambassador (special messenger) of the Gospel. Acts 1:21-22 defines an apostle as someone who: (1) was with Jesus the whole time and (2) witnessed his resurrection. In a broader sense Paul was also an apostle (Ephesians 1:1). The “apostles” were the original group who founded the Church.

“Prophets and evangelists.” Prophets and evangelists were special gifts of the primitive Church. The prophets, and these are the NT prophets, for special purposes received special revelation, which they then expounded to the Christian assemblies in inspired speech. The evangelists, to whom, for example, Philip belonged, (Acts 21:3) were missionaries of the Gospel; they carried the apostolic Word to those regions where apostles themselves had not gone. The office of the present-day missionaries corresponds somewhat to their calling. (Stoekhardt)

12. V – 12 “To prepare God’s people for works of service.” No member is excluded from the edifying of the church. This is not just doing tasks for the church but also serving others in society.

V – 12 “body of Christ may be built up.” This means that Christians are meant to grow stronger and that more people may become Christians.

V – 13 “reach unity in the faith.” It is the oneness in belonging to the family faith and to grow in the knowledge of God.

V – 13 “become mature...Fullness of Christ.” This is not only the full maturity of doctrinal conviction. It is also the maturity of the perfectly balanced character of Christ.

V – 14 “no longer infants.” Infants are helpless against assaults; they must be protected, carried in the arms of others.

V – 14 “tossed... by waves.” Spiritually immature people are like unsophisticated buyers being “worked” by a slick salesperson. Because they don’t know the product, they’re taken in. Without knowing it, immature Christians may not be getting pure doctrine or correct teaching. They may be accepting spiritual snake oil from false teachers.

V – 15 “speaking the truth in love.” This is all about having concern for true doctrine and love for one another are not alternatives, but belong together (1 Peter 1:22).

V – 15 “grow up into Him (Christ).” Growth in knowledge, and truth is not only intellectual progress but includes, in every respect growth in Christian character, faith, and life. (Luke 2:52) It is an intimate unity of ourselves with Christ our Lord and Head.

V – 16 “Whole body...grows.” The whole body grows and builds itself up “as each part does its work.” Every Christian is an important part of the church, because growth and improvement in the church come “from him,” that is, from Christ. It is not from us.