

Readings

Scripture

¹I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 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. ¹⁵Rather, 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.

- Ephesians 4:1-16 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

What model of the church, then, should we keep in our minds? The traditional model is that of the pyramid, with the pastor perched precariously on its pinnacle, like a little pope in his own church, while the laity are arrayed beneath him in serried ranks of inferiority. It is a totally unbiblical image, because the New Testament envisages not a single pastor with a docile flock but both a plural oversight and an every-member ministry. Not much better is the model of the bus, in which the pastor does all the driving while the congregation are the passengers slumbering in peaceful security behind him. Quite different from either the pyramid or the bus is the biblical model of the body. The church is the body of Christ, every member of which has a distinctive function. Although the body metaphor can certainly accommodate the concept of a distinct pastorate (in terms of one ministry – and a very important one – among many), there is simply no room in it either for a hierarchy or for that kind of bossy clericalism which concentrates all ministry in the hands of one man and denies the people of God their own rightful ministries...So Christ's immediate purpose in the giving of pastors and teachers to his church is through their ministry of the word to equip all his people for their varied ministries. And the ultimate purpose of this is to build up his body, for all its members to use their God-given gifts. These gifts are so beneficial both to those who exercise their ministry faithfully and to those who receive it that the church becomes steadily more healthy and mature.

- John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians* (p. 167-168)

"Some people are hard to hold accountable because they are so helpful. Others because they get defensive. Others because they are intimidating. I don't think it's easy to hold anyone accountable, not even your own kids." That brought a few nods of acknowledgment from some of the team members. Kathryn continued, "I want all of you challenging each other about what you are doing, how you are spending your time, whether you are making enough progress." Mikey challenged, "But that sounds like a lack of trust." Kathryn shook her head, "No, trust is not the same as assuming everyone is on the same page as you, and that they don't need to be pushed. Trust is knowing that when a team member does push you, they're doing it because they care about the team."

- Patrick M. Lencioni

- *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (p. 148-149 Kindle Version)

Sermon Outline

For the Service of the Body of Christ

Ephesians 4:1-16

The Theology of Tears

Brad Anderson

As those who have received the grace of Christ, we must walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called... (Ephesians 3:14-21, 4:1)

How and why are we to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called?

How? With character shaped by the love of Christ... (Ephesians 4:2)

How? Through our unity with the trinity... (Ephesians 4:3-6)

How? With spiritual gifts of grace... (Ephesians 4:7-12)

Why? So that the body can 'grow up' into the love of Christ... (Ephesians 4:13-16)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the *Serendipity Study Bible* for Groups)

- Read Ephesians 1-3 in one sitting to review where we have come thus far in our study.
- Now read Ephesians 4:1-16. Reading between the lines, what problems do you think Paul was concerned about in Ephesus?
- What qualities ought to characterize "a life worthy of the calling?" What happens when believers live out these qualities? How does each quality promote unity? How does viewing God as Father (not just as Creator or Judge) add to our unity?
- What is the purpose of the various gifts in verses 8-13?
- What are the differences between the unity that already exists (Ephesians 4:3-6) and that which is yet to come (Ephesians 4:13-16)?
- What is the climactic point of this whole passage? How will this happen?
- Of the 5 qualities listed in Ephesians 4:2, which one do you feel needs to be developed most in your life? What one relationship will profit from developing that quality now?
- As opposed to love without truth or truth without love, what does it mean to "speak the truth in love"?
- From this passage, what is the problem with trying to live the Christian life apart from the church? In what way do you need others? What strength can you give others?
- Are you using your spiritual gift now? How? If not, what is preventing you from entering into service?