

Center for Christian Living: Bridging the Generation Gap

The Believers Call to Unity

Ephesians 4:1-6

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The Subject: In the book of Ephesians, Paul uses chapter one to focus on who the believer is and the power they have in Christ. Chapter two is focused on who the believer was and what Christ did for them. Chapter three focused on what the new body (the church) calling is in light of what God has done for them in Christ. This section is built around the ascension of Christ (4:8), and its main point is that believers should conduct themselves in a manner worthy of their high calling in Christ. The believers high calling in Christ called for unity in the body of Christ (4:2-6).

Message Statements – Believers are called to be Unified

Homiletical Outline: Ephesians 4:1-6

I. **Walk Worthy (vs. 1)**

A. **Walk** – to conduct one’s life, comport oneself, behave live as habit of conduct:

i. **Manner** – Suitable, corresponding to God

ii. **Worthy** – live a life that corresponds to the standard (God) set when he called you

- B. **Calling** – invitation to experience special privilege and responsibility, call, calling. Invitation. The state of having been called to a particular task and/or relation—calling

II. **Walk Like (vs. 2)**

A. **Humility** – without arrogance

- i. Humility is a grateful and spontaneous awareness that life is a gift, and it is manifested as an ungrudging and unhypocritical acknowledgment of absolute dependence upon God.

B. **Gentleness** – the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, courtesy, consideration, meekness

- i. It is closely connected with the spirit of submissiveness which becomes the keynote of this letter when, in 5:21, the apostle turns to speak of human relationships. Moses is aptly described in Numbers 12:3 as 'very meek'. puts it, meekness 'is the spirit of one who is so absorbed in seeking some worthy goal for the common good that he refuses to be deflected from it by slights, injuries or insults directed at himself personally, or indeed by personal considerations of any kind
- ii. This is the opposite of self-assertion, rudeness, and harshness. It suggests having one's emotions under control

C. **Patience**- state of being able to bear up under provocation, forbearance, patience

- i. It is used of God's patience with humanity (Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:15), and the corresponding and consequent quality that the Christian should show towards others (1 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 5:22; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:2).
- ii. Patience is the spirit which never gives up for it endures to the end even in times of adversity (James 5:10). It is the self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong

D. **Tolerance** - tolerance, endure, bear with, put up with

- i. 'It involves bearing with one another's weaknesses, not ceasing to love one's neighbors or friends because of those faults in them which perhaps offend or displease us' (Abbott). It is 'that mutual tolerance without which no group of human beings can live together in peace' (Stott). Such forbearance, and indeed all these four qualities, are possible only in love. For love is the basic attitude of seeking the highest good of others

III. **Diligent Preservation (vs. 3)**

A. **Diligent**- to be especially conscientious in discharging an obligation, be zealous/eager, take pains, make every effort, be conscientious

- i. Preserve- of holding on to something so as not to give it up or lose it

B. **Preserve Unity** – Protect what God has put together so it is not easily lost

i. **Four Things about Unity (Pastor Cannings)**

1. Unity is not normal, it is spiritual
2. Unity takes intentionality
3. Unity is achieved when we fight for God's purpose before our preference
4. Unity means putting God first

C. **Bond of Peace** – Spirit that lives in all believers is our bond of peace

(1:13-14; 3:16-19).

i. **Christ is our Peace** (2:14)

IV. **Elements of Unity (vs. 4-6)**

A. **One Body** - One mystical body of Christ (the spiritual church or kingdom, cf.

1:23; 2:16).

- i. One body refers to the universal church, all believers (1:23; 2:16; 3:6).

B. **One Spirit** - One Holy Spirit, grammatical neuter gender (not to be referred to by "it," but by "he").

- i. One Spirit is the Holy Spirit who indwells the church (2:22).

C. **One Hope of your Calling** - The same hope as a result of their calling for both Jew and Greek as shown in chapter 2.

- i. The words, just as you were called to one hope when you were called, indicate that all believers have a common hope regarding their future with God (cf. 1 Peter 1:3; 3:15), a confidence that began at the time they were “called” to salvation (Eph. 1:4, 18; 2:7; 4:1).

D. One Lord - The Lord Jesus Christ and he alone.

- i. One Lord (cf. Rom. 10:12) refers to Christ, the Head of the church (Eph. 1:22–23; Col. 1:18).

E. One Faith - One act of trust in Christ, the same for all (Jew or Gentile), one way of being saved.

- i. One faith speaks, most likely, not of objective faith, that is, the body of truth believed by Christians (as in Acts 6:7; 1 Tim. 3:9; 4:1, 6; Jude 3) but subjective faith which is exercised by all Christians in Christ their Lord (cf. Col. 2:7).

F. One Baptism - There is only one act of baptism for all (Jews and Gentiles) who confess Christ by means of this symbol, not that they are made disciples by this one act, but merely so profess him, put Christ on publicly by this ordinance.

G. One God and Father - One God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all refers to God the Father and His relationship to all believers. The fourfold use of “all” refers to “all believers,” not “all mankind.” Certainly these characteristics are not common to all people. God is the Father “of” all

who believe; they are His children (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26). And He is “over” all them as their Sovereign. He lives “through” them and manifests Himself “in” them.

V. Practical Steps to help us Achieve Unity

A. Older Generation

- i.** Avoid General Statements (“Young people just don’t listen”)
- ii.** Seek to understand before you criticize
- iii.** Realize that “Your Way” is not “The Way”
- iv.** Get to know the younger generation outside of the church walls

B. Younger Generation

- i.** Learn to be a part of a ministry before you criticize it.
- ii.** Stop saying you’re going to do something and then not being consistent in doing it.
- iii.** When an older person tells you something that you don’t like, evaluate it based on the word of God and not your feelings.

iv. If you were genuinely offended by an older person, lovingly go to them rather than avoid them.