

Unity in the Body

November 14th & 15th, 2015

Ephesians 4:1-6

As we have been going through this passage, we have learned that God, through Paul, is urging believers to walk in a manner worthy of our Christian call. It speaks to us about the call that has been given to the believer; and that call is “to walk”, or to live a lifestyle that is in accordance with our faith, our call and our purpose. In other words, we are called to “walk the talk.” We are to conduct ourselves in accordance with the biblical standard of someone who has been given new life.

❖ So, how do we live in accordance with our new purpose, our new call and our new life?

The principles that maintain the unity in the body

“With all humility and gentleness,”

Literally lowliness “5012 *tapeinophrosýnē* (a noun, derived from 5011 /*tapeinós*, “low, humble” and 5424 /*phrḗn*; ...); that *quality* of mindset of ‘having a humble opinion of oneself, i.e. a deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness – i.e. lowliness of mind’ (J. Thayer).”¹

Romans 12:3-4 “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function,”

Matthew 11:28-29 “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

“Unity does not mean uniformity; it means cooperation in the midst of diversity. The members of the body work together in unity, even though they are all different. Christians may differ on *how* things are to be done, but they must agree on *what* is to be done and *why*.”²

- ❖ As we grow together in the body of Christ we will experience challenges with one another. Humility and gentleness is to lay our selfish interests down and rest in what is beneficial for the body of Christ.
- ❖ As we humble ourselves before one another and as our purpose becomes the purpose of God, unity begins to flourish in the congregation.

“With patience, bearing with one another in love,”

Long-suffering “3115 *makrothymía* (from 3117 /*makrós*, “long” and 2372 /*thymós*, “passion, anger”) – properly, long-passion, i.e. waiting sufficient time before expressing anger. This avoids the premature use of force (retribution) that rises out of improper anger (a personal reaction).”³

- ❖ We are to have patience with one another, bearing with our brothers and sisters. We know that we all stumble and fail, but in those moments we need encouragement and love rather than judgment and rejection.

Romans 12:16 “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.”

- ❖ For the sake of Christ, we are called to bear with one another in the midst of complaints, forgiving our brothers (*Colossians 3:13*).
- ❖ The Bible says that as strong believers, we have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves (*Romans 15:1*).
- ❖ We are called to endure suffering (*2 Timothy 4:5*) and also to bear with the word of exhortation (*Hebrews 13:22*).

1 Peter 3:8 “Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.”

“Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Romans 15:5 “May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,”

- ❖ Unity is a concept that comes to us when we are called to be part of His body, but unity requires effort.
- ❖ Our goal is to live in such unity that peace is a reality in our church. When unity is a reality, we continue to grow in the purpose of the Lord.

Romans 14:19 “So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding”

The foundations that assure the unity in the body

“One body and one Spirit”

Ephesians 5:23 “For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior.”

- ❖ We are one body because we act together at the command of His word. Jesus bought us to be His. Our salvation rests in His redemptive work on the cross and that is what makes us His body!

Ephesians 1:13 “In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.”

“Just as you were called to the one hope”

Colossians 1:5 “because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,”

1 Peter 1:3-4 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you”

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,”

- ❖ Jesus is our Savior and He is our Lord!

John 14:21 “Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

“What is faith? In the simplest manner in which I am able to express it, I answer: Faith is the assurance that the thing which God has said in His Word is true, and that God will act according to what He has said in His Word. This assurance, this reliance on God's Word, this confidence is faith.”⁴

1 Corinthians 12:13 “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”

Galatians 3:26-29

“for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.”

Endnotes:

¹ "Strong's Concordance: Greek 5012. tapeinophrosune" *Bible Hub*. © 2004 - 2015 by Biblos.com. <<http://biblehub.com/greek/5012.htm>>. Web.

² Wiersbe, Warren W. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1989. Print.

³ "Strong's Concordance: Greek 3115. makrothumia" *Bible Hub*. © 2004 - 2015 by Biblos.com. <<http://biblehub.com/greek/3115.htm>>. Web.

⁴ Sims, A., ed. *George Mueller: Man of Faith*. Chicago: Moody, 1965. Print.

♦ Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.