

“The Nuts and Bolts of Christian Unity”

Sermon Notes: Ephesians 4:1-6

Review:

- In our study of Ephesians, we have seen that Paul’s letter is structured in two major sections. Ephesians 1-3 deals with theology and Ephesians 4-6 deals with application.
 - Last week we saw that p_____, p_____ prayer is essential to the success of the church. We are to pray for each other that we would have God’s power, have a growing awareness of God’s power and love, and have a God-centered passion.
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Today’s Study: Ephesians 4:1-6 – THEREFORE. This word signals a shift in Paul’s letter. It’s as though Paul is saying, “I’ve talked about Truth, now let’s talk about YOU.”

Walk in a Manner Worthy of Your Calling! Paul’s call to maintain Christian unity.

- A. Christian unity has a t_____ basis. (4-6)
1. Paul gives seven present realities that all believers share: one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God
 2. Unity requires an understanding of core beliefs, secondary beliefs, and tertiary beliefs.
- B. The Nuts and Bolts of Maintaining Christian Unity: (2-3)
1. H_____, G_____, Patience, and Bearing with each other in love.
 2. For a church to maintain biblical unity, all of these traits are r_____.
 3. We don’t obtain these traits through mere effort!
- C. Christian unity is essential to and motivated by our c_____. (1)
1. Remember, Paul’s exhortation comes in light of everything that came in chapters 1-3.
Our calling:
 - a. Blessed, chosen and predestined to bring praise to God (1:3-12).
 - b. Once we were strangers of promise – we are now fellow c_____ (2:11-22)
 - c. Through the church, the wisdom of God is made known (3:10).
 2. Our calling is not for the sake of self-worth or e_____. The purpose of being blessed is to be a b_____ to others so that God will be glorified! (Genesis 12:1-3; Eph. 1:5-7)

Applying God’s Word: Let’s Talk!

- Does your Christian walk reveal an inward focus or an outward focus?
- Are you actively maintaining Christian unity? Which traits in verses 2-3 do you struggle with the most? How might you grow in these?
- Walk in a manner worthy of your calling! We all have room to grow here. What does that look like for you? Is there something purposeful you can do?

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Getting Acquainted (15 minutes)

Have you ever attended a church that was different than what you were used to? Share one example of what you found to be the most unusual or the most interesting difference.

Talking It Through (20 minutes)

READ & review Ephesians 4:1-6

- When Paul says, “...walk in a manner worthy of your calling...” what do you think he had in mind for the Ephesians? Why do you think a sense of their calling was important?
- Based on what you know of the Ephesians, which traits in verses 2 and 3 do you think would have been most difficult for them? (Acts 19:8-41 provides some background on Ephesus). How do you think Paul expected them to obtain these traits?
- Think back to a time when you saw unity broken in a church. How could this passage have been applied to the situation? (In sharing, keep it anonymous, and keep it kind!)

Going Deeper (15 minutes)

- What does Gen. 12:1-3 and Psalm 67 say about God’s purpose in calling/blessing people? Do you think being called is primarily for your own benefit or for others?

Some helpful commentary on Genesis 12:

“Election is not a synonym for elitism. On the contrary,... God chose one man and his family in order, through them, to bless all the families on the earth.” (John Stott, The Living God is a Missionary God)

“None of the three promises of blessing, were meant to simply enhance Abraham’s status or ego. Indeed, he and his nation were blessed so that they might be a blessing.” (Walter Kaiser, Israel’s Missionary Call)

- Consider Kaiser’s quote above. Blessing others is not our ultimate purpose. The end goal is God’s glory (Eph. 1:5-7). How does being a blessing bring glory to God? Examples?

Taking It Home (10 minutes)

- Sometimes the topic of unity in the church feels overwhelming but it starts first at an individual level and then within the local church. Pick one of the traits in Eph. 4:2-3 and think of some positive steps you could take to grow in that area.
- As a recipient of the promise of Abraham (Gal. 3:29), what is one way you could be a blessing this week? How does having a purposeful goal of glorifying God make this different than a random act of kindness?

Time to PRAY (10 minutes)

Take a few minutes to share prayer requests that relate to the people in your group, and then pray for those needs. Consider how you can use your prayer time to seek God’s help in the “Taking it Home” questions.