

Throughout Eph 1-3, Paul has been building a foundation of doctrinal truths. As we move onto Eph 4-6, Paul now builds upon the practical implications this body of truth should have to our daily life and conduct. His thesis statement for this portion of the text answers, what characteristics will be evident in a life founded upon the truths of the gospel of grace?

1. What are some of these theological truths you recall from our previous studies? How do they impact the way you live and view your own life?

- Eph 1
 - Spiritual blessings we have in Christ
 - God's election, adoption, giving of the seal that guarantees our inheritance... etc
 - Can't comprehend all the blessings we've been provided in Christ
- Eph 2
 - Once were dead but now have been made alive
 - The wall of hostility has been torn down – united together in one body!
 - Part of the body, Christ is the cornerstone
- Eph 3
 - Mystery revealed that Gentiles are partakers of the promise in Jesus Christ
 - Comprehend the unimaginably depth of God's love for us
 - Christ indwells us through his Spirit

Theology should lead to praise and worship in our own lives. It is accompanied by acts.

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

The "therefore" in v1 signifies the transition from doctrine to duty, principle to practice, position to behaviour. Paul reminds his readers that he was imprisoned on the account of the gospel of Christ. This is a reminder that the faithful Christian walk (or conduct) can be costly and there can be a considerable personal price paid for obedience. Paul then shifts his attention to the corporate body laying out practical teaching.

Eph 4:1-3 - I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

2. What is the manner in which the church is called to walk in? Also consider Eph 1:4-5.

- There is a worthy and unworthy manner
 - Called to walk in a Christ-like manner... live in light of what he has done (recall chp 1-3)

Ephesians 1:4-5 - ...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, (ESV)

- Christians are to live in a manner worthy of their adoption, holiness and unity to which they are called.
 - Adoption – take on your father's characteristics
 - Holy and blameless by our union with Christ
 - Recall it is not merited, not earned

Define the following; practically, how can your life exemplify these qualities (the evidences of grace) more?

a. Humility (cf. Phil 2:3-8):

- Humbleness, putting the needs of others in higher esteem than yourself. Thinking about others first.
 - The opposite is pride and selfishness
 - Note that it does not mean that you think lowly of yourself

Philippians 2:3-8 - Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (ESV)

- The example of Christ
 - Jesus lowers himself to be subjected to the flesh. He empties himself of his rights and privileges for to save mankind
- Practically, this speaks to our heart motivations in the way we serve and view others
 - Are we willing to do the things for no recognition?

b. Gentleness(cf. 1 Thess 2:7-8; Gal 6:1):

- Quality of being kind, tender, or mild-mannered, recognizing the fragile-ness of the others

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 - But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (ESV)

- Gentleness plays out in characteristics of being accommodating, caring, peaceful, looking to the interest of others, and looking out for one another (related and builds on top of the idea of humility)

Galatians 6:1 - Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. (ESV)

- More specific example of restoring a sinner
 - Gentleness plays out in not being overly harsh or condemning of others; restoring the sinner in a spirit of kindness and forgiveness

c. Patience (cf. 1 Thess 5:14):

- OT brings about this picture of long-suffering, waiting.
- Tolerating, perseverance, capacity to accept (to some degree)

1 Thessalonians 5:14 - And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. (ESV)

- We are called to bear with others in their weaknesses, limits and to encourage them by helping them.
- Practically speaking, to be put patience in practice as you wait without grumbling, it builds on top of humility (putting others above yourselves) and being gentle with them (kind and accommodating nature)
- 2 Pet 3:8-9 – God is patient towards us, giving mankind time to turn to him for salvation

d. Bearing with one another in love (cf. 1 Pet 4:8):

- This is a combination of the previous three attributes.
 - NOTE: all these attributes are relational, they happen with others!
 - Related to the church community
 - We can only love one another after we've realized the love of God (Eph 2)

1 Peter 4:8 - Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. (ESV)

- We put our desires and self aside for others, loving one another and **forgiving them**.

3. The end goal of the Christian lifestyle exhibited in the characteristics of humility, gentleness, patience and love is corporate unity within the church. What does it mean to eagerly maintain the unity of the Spirit (cf. Phil 1:27, 2:2)? What is this bond of peace that maintains the unity (cf. Col 3:14-15)?

What does it mean to eagerly maintain the unity of the Spirit? [Or the unity that comes from the Spirit]

- The Spirit of Christ (covered Eph 3) creates a unity among the believers by tearing down all the hostility and making us into one.
- The believers are called to **eagerly** (BE EAGER TO) maintain the Spirit made unity.
 - We are called to be united intentionally, protecting the Spirit made unity, not letting divisions tear it apart

Philippians 1:27 - Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, (ESV)

Philippians 2:2 - complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. (ESV)

- We are called in this verses to be corporately united to one another being in the same mind
 - Serving alongside one another side by side in one spirit

What is the bond of peace that maintains the unity?

- Jesus is the peace that unites us (Eph 2:14)

Colossians 3:14-15 - And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (ESV)

- Love binds us all together, it is the bond!
- The peace of Christ rules in us and trumps all else, it takes supremacy in our lives.

Eph 4:4-6 - There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

4. Paul continues his appeal for church unity reminding his readers that it is built upon seven blood-bought realities.

Our common unity is built on... [GROUP ACTIVITY]

<p>i. One BODY (cf. Rom 12:4-8)</p> <p>Romans 12:4-8 - For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. (ESV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United but diverse at the same time. We all have a role to play in the body. Everyone is important. 	<p>ii. One SPIRIT (cf. Eph 3:14-19)</p> <p>Ephesians 3:14-19 - For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (ESV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ indwells us and enables us to know God and this great love. This in turn enables us to love others.
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<p>iii. One <u>HOPE</u> (cf. Eph 2:12-13)</p> <p>Ephesians 2:12-13 - ...remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (ESV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are united together by Christ, and have been brought near to God. Previously we were separated. • Reminder that we all have the same end goal, we should not be divided in our purposes. 	<p>iv. One <u>LORD</u> (cf. Eph 1:22-23)</p> <p>Ephesians 1:22-23 - And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (ESV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have one leader, the head. He rules us and we are to submit to him as Lord. • We are united in our submission to Christ.
<p>v. One <u>FAITH</u> (cf. Jude 3)</p> <p>Jude 3 - Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. (ESV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are united together by the same message that was delivered to all the saints. We all share in the same message by faith. 	<p>vi. One <u>BAPTISM</u> (cf. 1 Cor 12:13)</p> <p>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. (ESV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all spiritually baptized into the same body. • Baptism is used metaphorically here to refer to the Spirit's work within the believer to unite him or her to the body of Christ, which is also the corporate body of believers • This is a reality to acknowledge.
<p>vii. One <u>GOD</u> and <u>FATHER</u> (cf. 1 Cor 8:6)</p> <p>1 Corinthians 8:6 - yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. (ESV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are united together by our common God who is our Father. Corporately, we are brothers and sisters to one another. • We are made for him 	<p>We are called to be united to the triune God; Father, Spirit and Son. We are called to be united to the omnipresent God (cf. Psa 139:7-12).</p>

5. Dave made some unflattering comments about you in a group setting a few years ago. You have held a grudge since that time, feigning pleasantries and conversations with him. What should you do and what needs to change based on what has been covered in the study?

If time permits, role play and encourage the group to incorporate what has been taught today. Get to specifics, what will you do?

Ex. How is humility, gentleness shown in this context? What is done... etc

As we fix our eyes on Christ over the upcoming days, reflect on your place within his body. How can you promote unity within it? Remembering the price paid for this unity, do you desire it? How can you exemplify the characteristics laid out today? As we continue onwards in Eph 4, we will see that Christ will give gifts to his people to build one another up so that we would obtain our goal; to be mature and united in him (cf. Eph 4:7-16).