

We can summarize the last study in one word, unity. Recall that we previously examined this blood-bought unity and the implications it has for each of us in conduct and corporately as those that have been united together into Christ. Today, we shift the focus away from unity to the uniqueness amongst the body.

Eph 4:7-10 - But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

- The purpose of this text is to demonstrate Christ's right and authority to distribute gifts to the church
 - *But*, contrasting what has just been said with what is about to be said, Paul moves from the subject of the unity of believers ("all," v6) to that of the uniqueness of believers ("each one")
 - V7-8 – Each believer has a unique spiritual gift that God individually portions out according to his sovereign will and design (cf. Psa 68:18). It is by grace - God's unmerited favour.
 - V9-10 – Christ descends to earth and triumphantly ascends in glory to the heavens filling all things (the fullness of God which upholds the universe). It is his right and prerogative to bestow gifts to his subjects.

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

Eph 4:11-14 - And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until 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, so 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.

1. Christ empowers individuals with specific gifts to serve the church. How does each leader serve within the body?

a) Apostles and prophets (cf. Eph 2:19-20; Acts 1:21-26; Acts 15:32)

b) Evangelists (cf. 2 Tim 4:5)

c) Shepherds and teachers (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-2, 1 Tim 5:17)

2. What is the end purpose of giving these leaders to the church? Summarize the above passage into your own words.

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3. _____ (e n i s m s r t i) of the word are called to equip the saints for the saints own work of the ministry.

- i. How is the body of Christ built up (c.f Acts 20:32, 2 Tim 3:16-17)?
- ii. How do we attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God (cf. Eph 4:3-6, Phil 3:8-10)?
- iii. How do we mature into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph 3:17-19; Col 1:28; 2 Cor 3:18)?
- iv. Why is it so important that we be mature and no longer be like children... (cf. Rom 16:17-18, Gal 1:6-7)?

4. What role do you play in the work of the ministry today (cf. 1 Cor 15:58)?

Eph 4:15-16 - Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from 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.

5. What is this love that is stated (cf. Eph 4:1-3)? How does the body grow in love (cf. 2 Cor 4:2)? What does it look like when the body works properly in love (cf. Eph 4:25-32)?

6. Sunny has been a good church friend who you consider to be your closest Christian brother/sister. Reflecting, you've realized that socializing, having fun and catching up on your week is the core of the friendship. Outside of church, you never pray, confess sin or discuss spiritual matters with one another. Based on the passage, how does this relationship need to change and why? How can you practically build one another up and speak truth to one another in love?

Contrasting to human cunning and wisdom, Paul makes an urgent appeal to proclaim sound doctrine, in order to lead the Christian into maturity and Christlikeness. This is done in love and always with the others best interest in mind which results in corporate growth into Christ who is the head. This body which is made up from many different individuals and a wide degree of gifts and ministries ultimately depends entirely on the provision of Christ for growth and direction!