

## Session 4 – How then shall we live?

Throughout the past few days, we've looked at what Scripture says about God's motivation, expectation and provision for His church.

We conclude this weekend by looking at what our response ought to be, in light of all that we've learned. What does it mean to 'live a life worthy of the calling you have received.' (Eph 4:1)? There are two major aspects that characterize this calling that God has given the church that we'll study in this session. In recent times, some churches have embraced one at the expense of the other. As we shall see, God desires both to be ever present, and indeed, complimentary.

### Read Ephesians 4:1-16

**From this passage, what is one distinguishing hallmark of God's calling for His church? (v. 3-4, 13) How is the importance of this demonstrated in what Paul commands in verse 3?**

- Unity in the body of Christ
- "Make every effort to keep the unity..." → NOT at the expense of purity, however, as we shall see

**What important qualities do believers need to demonstrate in order for there to be unity with one another (v.2)? From the cross references below, how are we to practically demonstrate these in the church?**

- Humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance and Christian love
- Phil 2:3-4 → Humility: Consider others better than yourselves; Look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Pride is behind all discord, while humility is single secret of living at peace.
- 2 Cor 10:1 → Gentleness (or meekness) is not synonym for 'weakness'. It is gentleness of the strong, whose strength is under control. Meekness is "the absence of the disposition to assert personal rights, either in the presence of God or of men" (Stott). Gentleness and meekness were characteristics that Christ demonstrated, so we too must do the same.
- Rom 2:3-4, 1 Tim 1:16 → (Rom 2: Do not pass judgment on others. God demonstrated His great patience to us, while we were still sinners. In a similar manner, we too ought to demonstrate this patience in our dealing with others; 1 Tim 1: The kind of patience we ought to strive towards is the same 'unlimited patience' that Christ displayed, even with the 'worst of sinners')
- Col 3:14 → Love is to proactively seek the welfare of others, and binds all other virtues together

**Ultimately, why ought we to live in this manner (v.4)? What aspects of God's nature are clearly seen here?**

- Christian unity arises from the unity of our God. Because there is only one God, one Lord and one Spirit, there can logically only be one faith, one hope and one baptism... thus Christians ought to worship with one heart and one accord
- The Trinitarian aspect of God: "one Spirit... one Lord... one God and Father of all..."
- one Father has created one family
- one Lord Jesus creates one faith, hope and baptism
- one Spirit creates one body

**Paul continues by describing one (perhaps surprising) way in which God equips His people to build unity in the church. In what way can unity be built up, and to what purpose (v. 11-16)? By what means has God given these to us (v.7)?**

- Enriching Christians with a diversity of spiritual gifts, which have been 'apportioned by Christ through His grace'

Purpose:

- 1) Prepare the church to serve God,
- 2) Build unity in the church, based on faith (strengthened through exercising spiritual gifts) and knowledge of Christ,
- 3) Grow in maturity in our faith so that "we will no longer be infants..."
- 4) Develop true, authentic faith based on God's Word, being able to reject false teaching

- Christ is the giver of our gifts, hence we have nothing to boast about

As we grow together as a community of believers, we must remember that Christ is at the centre of our unity, for it is "from Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." (v.16)

### Read Ephesians 4:17 – 5:21

**From this passage, what is a second distinguishing hallmark of God's calling for His church?**

- Purity, holiness, distinct from the secular world, set apart

This passage is full of contrasts and comparisons between how the world lives, and how Christians ought to live. Ultimately, purity has very much to do with being 'called out' from the darkness to live a life of distinct holiness. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, what does Paul say are aspects that characterize how non-believers live? (Fill in first column)

Living as the world does...	Living as Children of Light...
4:17 → futile thinking, warped, hopeless minds	4:32 → kind and compassionate, forgiving of others in recognition and thankfulness of Christ's forgiveness
4:18 → ignorant, hardened hearts	5:1 → seek to imitate God's holiness, living life of love
4:19, 5:3 → shameless, living in perpetual sin	5:4 → Not ungrateful, but instead, thankfulness
4:22 → corrupted by own desires (selfish vs. selfless)	5:7 → will not partake or even condone sin
4:25 → lie to one another	4:21-24 → grow in the truth of Christ, having a renewed mind, seeking to be like God in true righteousness and holiness
4:28 → steal things from each other	4:25 → speak truthfully to others
4:29, 5:4 → people who speak unwholesome things to others	4:26 → strive for righteous anger, that is self-controlled and does not bear a grudge
4:31 → bitter, full of rage and anger, who resort of physical and verbal abuse	4:28 → will not take what is rightfully others, hard-working, generous
5:18 → drunk on wine, leading to debauchery (excessive living)	4: 29 → speak in consideration and help of others, with the loving goal of building others up
	5:9 → bear fruit as children of light (goodness, righteousness, truth)
	5:10 → desires to please God, to find ways of exalting God
	5:11 → expose darkness and those that practice deeds of darkness
	5:19 → Encourage one another with gratitude through words (psalms, hymns and spiritual songs); worship God both publicly and privately
	5:21 → Submitting to one another

**What will be the result of those who live in this manner? (4:18, 5:5-7)**

- Separated from a life of God
- Does not inherit the kingdom of Christ and of God
- God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient

**In contrast, how ought Christians live, both individually and in the church community in relationship with others? What does it mean to live a pure life? (Fill in second column)**

### Reflection and Application

As we see from this passage, unity and purity are both important characteristics of the calling that God has given the church. Being properly united (i.e. based on a God-given foundation) enables the church to grow into a mature knowledge of Christ, and to experience His fullness (4: 13, 15). In turn, our deepened knowledge of Christ protects the church from false teachers and their teaching (4:14). Purity is critical to the church as we were called to represent God, and display His character in this corrupt and darkened world (Eph 1:3-6)

However, spiritual and visible unity must be founded on Christian purity. Any move to unite people apart from the love of Christ and obedience to His Word is hollow at best, and will ultimately lead to spiritual and moral compromise, as all sorts of depravity and immorality are accepted within the church, all in the name of 'maintaining unity'. It is only when we speak God's truth in love, and edify one another in word and deed, that Christ Himself unites and builds His church (Eph 4:15).

Resolve today to actively and urgently encourage others in the church to be 'imitators of God', since each of us who know Christ have been made new in the very attitude of our minds, to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph 4: 22, 24).