

"The Practice of the Believer"

Ephesians 4-6

Part 2

Introduction: Last week in our study of Ephesians we started into the practical part of the letter. It was in the first three chapters that we learned who we are in Christ. We are a part of something that never existed before and that is the church. We have been given the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ and we are now members of the royal family of God.

Based upon this Truth Paul enters into chapter 4 with a desire to now instruct the Gentile believers at Ephesus how they were to live.

I. A Call for Unity

Part 1

A. The Foundation for Exhortation.

Notice Ephesians 4:1

Paul calls upon all believers to walk worthy of their calling. In other words, now that we are children of God, we should live in a way that magnifies that to those around us. We are to live in a way that God is glorified.

Colossians 1:10-14

¹⁰ That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

¹¹ Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

¹² Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

¹³ Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

B. The Character of a Worthy Walk.

Notice Ephesians 4:2-3

In these two verse Paul mentions 7 graces that should be exercised in the life of every believer.

1. Lowliness
2. Meekness
3. Longsuffering
4. Forbearance
5. Love
6. Endeavoring to KEEP the unity
7. Peace

Each of these graces are to be exercised as we endeavor to KEEP the unity.

John 17:11, 20-21

¹¹ *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, **that they may be one, as we are.***

²⁰ *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

²¹ ***That they all may be one;** as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, **that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.***

C. The Grounds for Unity

Now we are about to see why there should be no divisions within the church. There have been many over the years that have attempted to bring believers into unity in ways which are not Biblical. Years ago, there was a group known as the "Promise Keepers" and they were all about unity. But they wanted to set doctrine aside in order to have unity. I have heard people over the years say that they do not discuss doctrine they were instead focused upon love and coming together. But here in the book of Ephesians Paul spends three chapters on doctrine before he teaches us about unity. **Unity that is not built on solid Biblical doctrine is on shaky ground and it will not last nor will God have anything to do with it.**

Paul is now going to remind his readers of 7 spiritual Truths which call for unity.

Notice Ephesians 4:4

1. There is one body.

There are not many different bodies of Jesus Christ. There are local churches but there is one true body of Jesus Christ and we who know Jesus Christ are members of that one body.

Now this does not remove the responsibility of becoming a member of a local church. I have heard people say that they do not need to join any church because they are a member of the ONE TRUE BODY of Jesus Christ. This is true that we are all members of the body of Jesus Christ if we are saved, and the Bible does not directly command you to join a local church. But the Bible does give the idea of membership.

Matthew 18:15-17

¹⁵ Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

¹⁶ But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

¹⁷ And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

If someone offends us and they will not listen and make it right Jesus tells us to go to the CHURCH with the matter. Now you would not take your offence to THE CHURCH in Altoona. You would go to the local assembly which you belonged to.

Membership shows commitment, it gives you a vote in the business of the church, and it makes you accountable to the church you belong to.

2. There is one Spirit.

We who know Jesus Christ as Savior are indwelled with the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9

⁹ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

We receive the Holy Spirit the very moment of our conversion. We all have the same Spirit dwelling within us. There is not a spirit for you and another for me. We are all sealed with the same Spirit.

Ephesians 2:18

¹⁸ For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

1 Corinthians 12:4

⁴ Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

3. There is one hope of your calling.

This is a reference to our hope of the return of Jesus Christ to rapture us away.

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

¹⁴ Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Let me remind you that it ONLY the church that has this hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

In the Great Tribulation the hope of the believers will be the EARTHLY return of Jesus Christ to set up His Kingdom.

Zechariah 14:4, 9, 11-12

⁴ And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

⁹ And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

¹¹ And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

¹² And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

Our hope is the rapture. It will be then that we will receive glorified bodies. We shall escape the seven years of Tribulation. Our faith will become sight. The struggles and the trials will be over. This alone should cause God's people live in unity.

4. There is one Lord.

Jesus Christ is Lord over all of His church. It is difficult to believe that two believers who claim to be walking in obedience to their Lord cannot get along. The Lordship of Jesus Christ should be a major part of causing us to seek to live in unity.

5. There is one faith.

This is a reference to our SAVING faith. There are many "faiths" in the world but there is ONLY ONE SAVING FAITH. The only faith that saves is faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ as the payment for our sins.

- Faith in good works does not save.
- Faith in church membership does not save.
- Faith in church attendance does not save.
- Faith that God exists does not save.
- Faith in denomination does not save.

It is ONLT faith in what Jesus did for us that saves. There is ONE FAITH.

John 3:14-18

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

6. There is one baptism.

There are two possibilities which Paul is referring to here.

a. Spirit baptism.

1 Corinthians 12:13

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

This happens at the moment of salvation. This is not something we seek later. It is not something we pray for. The moment we are saved we are "PLACED INTO"/baptized into the body of Jesus Christ. This would truly contribute to the unity in the church.

b. Water baptism.

There are some teachers that believe this is the baptism that is spoken of here. This would be the first step of obedience after salvation. This is publicly identifying with Jesus Christ.

This is an act of obedience that separates the believer from the world. Today it is difficult for us to know what baptism was like in the early church. It would often cost the believer as much as his or her life.

Acts 2:38

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

If this is the baptism which Paul is referring to then we can clearly see in his day how this public demonstration of faith in Jesus Christ would contribute to unity in the body of Jesus Christ.

7. There is one God and Father.

There are two families on the earth. There are those who have God as their Father and there are those who have Satan as their father. When we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior we were born again, we were born into the family of God and so God became our Father.

John 3:3

³ *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

John 1:10-13

¹⁰ *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

¹¹ *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

¹² *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

¹³ *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

The bottom line is as believers we are all members of the family of God. Therefore, we should desire to walk in unity in order to please our Heavenly Father.

Conclusion:

A story is told about a father who catches his two sons quarreling. He calls them in and gives the oldest one a small stick and asks him to snap it. The son did so with a rebellious smirk on his face. The father handed him two sticks together and asked him to snap them which he did easily. Then it was three, four, five and six sticks and by this time the boy was straining to snap the sticks. Finally with seven sticks he had to admit defeat. Then the father cautioned his sons that "A house divided cannot stand." You can be defeated one by one but if you stand together your united strength will cause your enemies to have second thoughts.