

Building the Church: #1 1.7.18

A Study of Ephesians 4 Series – Paul’s eight building blocks of the church

Paul’s goal was for everyone to DISCOVER their life’s purpose and then use it to **BUILD** the church.

Building Block #1: We are all **CALLED** to live a life worthy of the gospel. We are all called to live out our faith in front of everyone in our lives, not just in this building.

Building Block #2: CHARACTER. Our calling means nothing if our character doesn’t **PROVE** our calling. **Basically, my beliefs have to be backed by my BEHAVIOR.**

- God wants us to build His church, and that starts by building you.

Today’s Passage: Ephesians 4:3-6

- The third building block of the church is **UNITY of the Spirit**.
- I want you to notice that Paul is not challenge us to just be unified. When issues are against God’s word and the truth, unity and uniformity is not the answer.
- We all have been given different gifts and abilities, but God wants us to **work together** and **FIGHT** together to keep unity in the Spirit.
- When we are unified in the things of God and with the people of God, God can accomplish so much good together through our lives. (see **Acts 2:46-47**)
- **After all, two Christians are better than one---when they’re ONE.**
- When we are unified in the Spirit, **God will work on unity in the body.**

³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

- Sadly, the natural tendency in the church is to **DISUNITY**. There is enough of the flesh in every one of us to wreck any church or any other work of God. Every day, we must fight our own petty, personal urges and attitudes to get what we want, and work together in peace for the glory of God.
- **Theologian St. Augustine once said, In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity.**
- When love prevails among believers, especially in times of disagreement, it shows the world the power of the gospel.
- This is why we are all called to be **PEACEMAKERS**. (see **Hebrews 12:14-15**)
- We are all **INTERDEPENDENT** on each other that we will work together for unity.
- We are far more powerful when we all face the same direction.

Paul lists **7 elements** that unite believers into one. And when this unity in these seven “one’s” is coupled with humility, gentleness, longsuffering, and loving forbearance (v.2), any debatable issues are less likely to become divisive.

⁴ There is one body (see also 1 Corinthians 12:12,27 and Colossians 1:18,24)

- **Romans 12:5 (NIV)** ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.
- If the church stops being a **COMMUNITY** where relationships are cultivated, then soon the building will be empty.

⁴ There is one Spirit (notice the capital S, which is the Holy Spirit)

- The truth is, there are many spirits in this world, but there is only **ONE** HOLY SPIRIT. This same Spirit which inspired the start of the early church centuries ago is the same Spirit that we have in us them moment we ask Christ into our lives. (see **1 Corinthians 3:16** and **1 Corinthians 6:19**)
- Our challenge as a church is that each individual needs to be **SENSITIVE** to the Holy Spirit in our lives.

⁴ There is one hope

- The **one hope** is not peace on earth, but it is **GOODWILL** toward men in the future. This expectation of heaven when we die and seeing Jesus coming back for His people is referred to as our "Blessed Hope" (see **Titus 2:11-14**)

⁵ There is one Lord (with a capital L)

- Only **ONE** road leads to heaven and it is only through a relationship with the **Lord** Jesus Christ. (see **Acts 4:12**) **Missionary Hudson Taylor once said, Christ is either Lord of all, or He is NOT Lord at all.**

⁵ There is one faith

- **If you have one Lord, it means you can only have one faith** (see **1 Corinthians 15:3-7**). Christians may differ in some matters of interpretation and church practice, but all true Christians agree on **FAITH** in Jesus Christ—and to depart from “the faith” brings disunity within the body of Christ. (see **1 Timothy 4**)

⁵ There is one baptism

- Water baptism identifies us as believers and unifies us and the baptism of the Spirit can unify us through an interpretation. We don’t need to be baptized in water or in the Holy Spirit in order to go to heaven, but it is a step of faith to be united with your fellow believers in one baptism, whether in water or in the Holy Spirit by speaking in tongues.

⁶ There is one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- And God, the Father, adopts all of us through Jesus Christ to be His sons and daughters when we come to faith in Christ. (see **2 Corinthians 6:18, Romans 8:14-17, and Galatians 4:4-5**). **Just as the triune Godhead works together in unity, so are we to be unified with other BELIEVERS.**

God’s ambition for His people is simple – God wants all the followers of **Christ to focus on what UNITES them, not on what DIVIDES them.**

- When the world sees a church where people actually enjoy being with each other, the world becomes amazed.
- And that gives us a great opportunity to tell the people about the love of Christ. **We are ONE church. Will you fight with me to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the Chester Christian Center community?**