

Building the Church: #1 1.7.18

A Study of Ephesians 4 Series

Paul's goal was for everyone to **DISCOVER** their life's purpose and then use it to **BUILD** the church. Actually, God has made everyone great at something and has called everyone to do something great. You see, our gifts and abilities are God's gifts to us, but how we use them is **OUR GIFT** back to God.

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

TODAY'S PASSAGE: Ephesians 4:1-2

Just to give some background, in **Ephesians 1-3**, Paul focused on finding our identity in Christ, telling the Ephesians that even though you were once spiritually dead in your sins, you are now alive in Christ (see **Ephesians 2:4-5**), you are His workmanship, created unique to do good works (see Ephesians 2:10) and you are part of God's family (see **Ephesians 2:19-22**). But now Paul is writing to tell all of us that there is a **RESPONSIBILITY** that goes along with your identity.

- **We are not called just to believe in Jesus, but we are called to daily LIVE like Him.**

¹ As a prisoner for the Lord,

By mentioning his imprisonment, Paul reminds his readers that HE KNOWS that living the godly Christian life can be costly and that he has personally **PAID** considerable cost himself because of his obedience to the Lord. He did not ask them to walk in a way in which he had not himself walked or pay a price that he himself was not willing to pay.

¹ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you

Paul knew how difficult it is to live a life worthy of the calling we received.

- The word used here for *urge* (*parakaleo*) means to come along side to encourage and is the same word used in to describe the Holy Spirit's role in our lives.
- **If you need a spiritual jump start**, listen to the Holy Spirit in your life.

¹ I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

- Just to clarify, by definition, **this is a calling they have received**, so Paul is making it clear that we cannot earn our salvation, but our salvation **must be easily VISIBLE to all who watch us**. (see Ephesians 5:15-16)
- **The point is that it is not enough to just know the truth, but the truth must be LIVED out.**

Paul gives us four things to help us watch our tracks in Ephesians 4:2:

#1 In order to show others Christ in our lives is to be completely HUMBLE.

- **Many see humility as a characteristic of weakness and cowardice, but with Christ, humility is STRENGTH.**
- **Humility** is not thinking less of ourselves but rather **lifting** up others. (see Philippians 2:3-4)

- Think about the humility of Paul, who called himself *not fit to be called an apostle* in 1 Corinthians 15:9, the *very least of all the saints* in Ephesians 3:8, and *the worst sinner in the world* in 1 Timothy 1:15.

#2 In order to show others Christ in our lives is to be GENTLE.

- It is one of the fruit of the Spirit, qualities that the Holy Spirit helps us with (see **Galatians 5:22-23**).
- Gentleness is basically **strength under control**, where you are careful and calm when dealing with a situation.

#3 In order to show others Christ in our lives we need to have PATIENCE.

- Patience is what we want others to have with us, but something we lose when others irritate us.
- **Patience has two directions of meaning: persevering and having restraint.**
- Unfortunately, the only way to learn this patience is through **TRIAL** and error.
- If you have the ability and opportunity to avenge yourself when you are wronged, but you refuse, do you know what that sounds like to the world? **Absolute FOOLISHNESS** (see 1 Corinthians 1:18).
- No one is perfect, **so we can't go through life taking offense** to everything that goes on.

#4 In order to show others Christ, we need to bear with one another in love.

- **But notice that this is NOT JUST TOLERATING or putting up with someone, but it is doing it in love.** This supernatural, Christ-like behavior is only possible by the strengthening of our inner man by the Holy Spirit.
- And this is something that we do together; **after all, if Christ's love isn't in us, then Christ's love will not be AMONG us.**

Four ways to encourage unity in the church:

#1 If someone has wronged you, JOIN the CROWD.

- There are only two things we control: our attitude and response. (do them well)

#2 If you wronged someone, LEAVE the CROWD and seek forgiveness.

- An apology might not change their relationship with you, but it will change you.

#3 If you still have bitterness, let it go and be FREE.

- It's dangerous to drive while you're looking in rearview mirror.

#4 If someone talks to you about someone else, DON'T LISTEN, but encourage them to go talk to them.

- Live by the **MATTHEW 18:15-17** principle.

Why is this important? The world thinks that the church is judgmental and negative, but God calls us to be love. **Every one of us is called, but in order to impact the world around us, everyone needs to have character.** We can say we are whatever we want, but our **CHARACTER** will prove what we really are.

- **And it must start in this building, in the church.**
- **Our church needs to be the nicest place on earth.**