

Date: January 9, 2022

Series: Identity: Life in Christ (Ephesians)

Lesson Title: "God's Grace for Mutual Growth" (4:1-16)

INTRODUCTION:

1. For three chs. Paul has been unfolding for his readers the eternal purpose of God being worked out in history. Through Jesus Christ, God is creating something entirely new, not just a new life for individuals but a new society (community) ... the church (ἐκκλησία).

2. Now he turns from mind-stretching _____ to its down-to-earth, concrete _____ in everyday living.

NOTE: His repeated emphasis on a believer's " _____ " (περιπατέω *peripatéō*) is the hallmark of this section. NIV trans. "walk" as "live".

3. What this life is to be like can be determined only by the nature of the _____ of which it is to be worthy.

Two major characteristics:

- it is _____ people (composed equally of Jews & Gentiles).
ἐκκλησία *ekklēsia* – "a called out assembly"

- it is a _____ people, *distinct from ...; & set apart to ...*

4. _____ (4:1-16) and _____ (4:17-5:21) are two fundamental features of a life worthy of the church's divine calling.

5. _____, _____, _____, & _____ are the key concepts of this section (4:1-16).

THE _____ TO UNITY (4:1-3)

1. The _____ is more important than the _____.
This is where he begins, and this is also where we should begin!

A. The first is humility or _____.

B. The next is gentleness or _____.

C. The third is patience or _____ - _____.

D. The fourth, "bearing with one another in love".

2. _____ the _____ what already exists.
3. Concern for peace will mean that Christians will _____ to tolerate each other, even when they have differences.

THE _____ OF UNITY (4:4-6)

Listed are seven elements of unity centered on the three persons of the Trinity. These provide the basis for "the spirit of unity" that should exist in the body of believers.

Two observations:

1. The _____ is an integral part of the list.
2. The _____ in the listing of the three Persons is interesting. Paul began with the H. Spirit rather than with the Father (1 Cor. 12:4-6)

THE _____ OF UNITY (4:7-16)

After discussing the basis of unity (vss. 1-6), Paul now analyzed the means of preserving that unity (cp. "keep the unity", vs. 3) of the body by means of the various gifts. Christian unity is enriched by the diversity of our gifts.

1. The _____ of the gifts (4:7-13)
 - A. God has bestowed gifts to individual believers to enable them to accomplish the goal of walking in unity (vs. 7; cp. verse 13).
 - B. Scriptural proof (4:8-10) for the above assertion is drawn fr. Psalm 68:18. Are the captives "enemies" or "friends".
 - C. The nature & purpose of these gifts are explained in vss. 11-13. *Vs. 11 describes certain gifts given by Christ to the church as a whole, which of course are for the benefit of all believers.*
 - 1) Apostles
 - 2) Prophets
 - 3) Evangelists
 - 4) Pastor-teacher
2. The _____ of the gifts (4:14-16)

The ultimate goal toward which the exhortation to walk in **unity** was directed is stated to be the production of maturity in each believer's life so that the whole church as Christ's body may function as a true organism w. genuine coordination and growth.