

Family Matters

Peace in the Family

Ephesians 3:20 – 4:16

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Feb. 10, 2019

I. What Has Jesus Done to Create Unity in His Church?

Ephesians 4 is not about something that Paul's trying to make happen, but it's about what Jesus had already set in motion and is committed to doing in His church. That's what Paul wants us to be aware of and put our effort towards.

A. Jesus Made Unity the Focus of His Final Prayer

Read **John 17:1-4, 9-11, 20-23**.

B. Jesus Died to Make Unity a Reality

In **Ephesians 2:13-19** we read about what Jesus did to make unity a reality.

Jesus knew that nothing less than His perfect life, death and resurrection from the grave could have the power to break the back of sin and pull together sinners into one family of God who had previously hated each other.

Titus 3:3-5 “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

C. Jesus Wants to Put On Display Something the World Cannot Do – Unity in the Midst of Diversity

Ephesians 4 is about unity in the midst of diversity, not about uniformity.

Unity comes from within and is a work of God's Spirit and God's grace, while uniformity is the result of pressure from the outside.

In **v. 4-6** Paul highlights what makes us the same but then he goes out of his way in this chapter to highlight the diversity that Christ Himself intentionally placed in His body – the family of God.

Ephesians 4:4-6 “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

In **v. 7**, Paul then highlights how we're different.

Ephesians 4:7 “But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”

The words ‘grace’ and ‘gift’ are very similar in the original Greek language. It’s the word ‘charis’ for grace and the word ‘charismata’ for gift. Christ gives every believer a different measure of grace or gifting to serve God in the church family.

II. What Does He Call Us to Do to Maintain This Unity that Christ Already Created?

Ephesians 4:2-3 “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

A. Have Convictions but Cultivate Humility

The way humility is used in **v. 2** indicates something that has to encompass or wrap around everything we do in our relationship with each other in the family of God.

It doesn’t matter how much you know, how much you can do or how gifted you are, if you don’t head into it with all humility you’ll do more harm than good.

Living for yourself and maintaining unity are often mutually exclusive. You can either promote you or you can maintain unity by making much of Jesus and others.

1. Regularly Express Gratitude to God and Others for What You See Happening in Your Church Family

One of the best ways to cultivate humility is to express gratitude for the church family you have instead of complaining to God and others about everything that falls short of what you think it should be.

2. Keep Seeing Yourself as the Biggest Sinner You Know in Our Church Family

See your own sin first. See your sin as worse. See your own sin as what you need to be working on most. When you adopt that kind of posture, you’re entering into all of your relationships ‘with all humility.’

B. Don’t Deny Your Strengths but Cultivate Meekness

The Greek word for ‘gentleness’ or ‘meekness’ in **v. 2** is a word that refers to a powerful animal, like an ox or a stallion, that has been trained so that it is under control and can be useful in serving others.

Meekness is not synonymous with weakness. It takes a very strong person to be like Jesus and to consider the needs of others more than themselves.

C. Be Passionate but Patient and Forbearing with People Around You

In **v. 2** Paul used the Greek word ‘makrathumia’ for patience and it’s focused on being patient with other people around you. God has called us to bear the burden of each other in the family of God.

When you look at God's Word, getting ministry done isn't the primary goal. It's each of us becoming more like Christ. That happens best when you're plugged into a local church family who might slow you down, but they'll make you more like Christ as it gives you a place for putting into practice humility, meekness, patience and forbearance.

Ephesians 4:15 "... grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ."