

THE CHRISTIAN WALK CONTINUED

Ephesians 4:4-16

2. Things involved in this appeal for walking worthily. Ephesians 4:4-16.

(1) The unities in grace. 4:4-6.

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

a. One body—the church.

This body is composed of those who have been washed in the blood of Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. According to the New Testament, a church is an organized assembly of those who have repented of their sins and trusted Christ for their salvation, who have been baptized upon scriptural authority after a credible profession of regeneration, who accept the Word of God as their rule of faith and practice, who have covenanted together to disciple all nations, and whose members strive diligently to please their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is the business of a church to evangelize lost sinners, to baptize believers, to teach her own members, to enlist them in doing God's will, and to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

b. One Spirit—the Holy Spirit.

He is the Comforter.

c. One hope—of resurrection and glory.

d. One Lord—Jesus Christ.

Observe that this lovely title comes right in the middle of this seven-fold unity, and rightly so. Lordship denotes possession, power and glory.

e. One faith.

Through faith in Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour men and women are born again and receive eternal life. This faith unites Jew and Gentile.

f. One baptism.

Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ upon a profession of faith in Christ as Saviour and by the authority of a New Testament church. Anything which does not portray the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is not baptism. Only believers in Christ are the proper subjects of baptism. The scriptural order is salvation, then baptism and church membership. Believers should be baptized to do what Christ did, to please God the Father, to obey the command of Christ, to confess one's faith in Christ, and to dramatize the gospel of Christ.

g. One God.

He is the Heavenly Father of every Christian. He is sufficient for all our needs. We are to honor Him by loving obedience.

(2) The diversities of gifts. 4:7-11.

a. Christ Jesus makes the gifts. Verse 7.

"But to each one of us was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

Christ does not distribute gifts unwisely. He gives grace proportionately to our needs. His gifts are hand-tailored.

- b. The gifts are bestowments of grace. Verse 7.
They are not measured by our necessities, merits, or anything in us, but according to His own benevolence.
- c. The gifts are the outcome of His glorious victory. 4:8-10.
"Wherefore He says, having ascended up on high He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. But that He ascended, what is it but that also He descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also who ascended above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." His gifts are bestowed through His triumphant ascension.
- d. His gifts enumerated. 4:11.
"And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers."

It is Christ who saves these religious leaders, gives to them the call to service and the talents qualifying them for this service.

- (a) Apostles.
Apostles are sent ones--called, separated, ordained, endowed and sent forth as heralds or ambassadors for Christ.
- (b) Prophets.
They are men with a special insight into the will of God, and men with a definite commission to speak for God.
- (c) Evangelists.
They are declarers of the good tidings. The task of the evangelist is not that of serving churches already established, but that of a pioneer going to regions where no churches exist and seek to win men to Christ.
- (d) Pastors and teachers.
These are two functions of the same office. Pastors and teachers have the oversight of churches and are to be engaged in giving spiritual guidance and instruction. They are of great necessity to the churches. Other works will fall to pieces without their labor.

Neither of these can serve the Lord as well in any other vocation. The trouble with many in our modern church life is that they expect one man to combine all the functions named here in his own personality.

(3) The purpose of these gifts. 4:12-16.

- a. The perfecting of the saints. Verse 12a.
"With a view to the perfecting of the saints." Christ gave gifts unto men to enable them to be lightbearers, witnesses to the lost and builders of churches. Differences in temperament require a variety of approaches; no one individual possesses all gifts. The perfecting of the saints means to put in first class order that which has become disordered, to place in proper alignment what is dislocated, and to clear a connection which supplies power.
- b. The work of service. Verse 12b.
"For the work of the service." Helping to remove imperfections from the lives of church members does not provide any place for selfish ambition or vain glory. It requires preaching, teaching and admonition.
- c. The growth of the church. Verse 12c.
"For building up of the body of the Christ." This task is worthy of our best talents and finest training.

- d. The unity of the church. Verse 13a.
"Until we all may arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God."
- e. Christlikeness. Verse 13b.
"At a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ." The fulness of Christ implies a complete surrender of self to Him. Christ gives Himself in all His fulness to us, and we should be as complete in our surrender to Him.
- f. Escape from protracted childhood. Verse 14.
"That no longer we may be infants, being tossed and carried about by every wind of the teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to the systematizing of error." Our Lord wants Christians to advance toward spiritual maturity. Paul urged his readers to be stable, strong and dependable. Children are so easily led astray. They are seldom able to distinguish between right and wrong. Paul denounced those who substitute their own thinking, if it can be called thinking, for the Word of God. He taught that false doctrines are not what they appear to be.
- g. Growth in grace. Verse 15.
"But holding the truth in love we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, the Christ." Our Lord never intended for any Christian to remain a spiritual infant.
- h. The proper functioning of the church. Verse 16a.
"From whom all the body, fitted together and compacted by every joint of supply according to the working in its measure of each one part." A quarrel or dispute is as dangerous to spiritual health as an infection is to the body.
- i. The growth of the church in love. Verse 16b.
"The increase of the body makes for itself to the building up of itself in love." Opportunities for Christian growth and service are never exhausted.