

Eph 4:1-6

1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Take note of two important words in verse 1.

“therefore” and “beseech.”

Therefore indicates that

- Paul is basing his exhortations to duty
- on the doctrines taught in the first 3 chapters.

Romans 12:1-2 parallel what Paul is speaking of in Ephesians 4.

Beseech indicates that God, in love, urges us to live for His glory.

In the OT the Lord said: "If you obey Me, I will bless you." In the NT He says "I have already blessed you—now, in response to My love and grace, obey Me."

It's our responsibility to live for Christ.

The main idea in these first sixteen verses is the unity of believers in Christ.

It's time to put into practice what we've learned.

Now Paul encourages believers to walk in unity. What a testimony to others when they see the church walking in unity.

Later in Ephesians Paul encourages the church

- to walk in purity (Eph 4:17-5:17),
- then in harmony (Eph 5:18-6:9) and finally
- we are to walk in victory according to chapter 6:10-24.

Eph 4:4-6

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

In these 3 verses Paul mentions 7 basic spiritual realities that are true of all Christians:

1: One body: means one church.

1 Cor 12:12

12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

2: One Spirit: A born-again believer has the Spirit of God residing in him.

1 Cor 12:13

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

3: One hope: one hope of our calling - third stage of our salvation.

The three stages are:

- 1 Salvation
- 2 Sanctification
- 3 Glorification

Paul himself had this same hope.

When he stood in defense before Felix in acts 24 he said, “I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.” Acts 24:15, Tit 2:13

4: One Lord: Speaks of Jesus.

Rom 10:9

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

5: One faith: I have to develop my own faith and I need the church body.

Solomon said:

Prov 18:1

1 One who isolates himself pursues selfish desires;
he rebels against all sound judgment.

The Apologetics Study Bible

6: One baptism:

The bible mentions different forms of baptisms.

- One is being baptized into the body of Christ.
- Then there is water baptism.

7: One God and Father:

There is only one eternal Father.

Eph 4:4-6 show the trinity. There is unity in the trinity.

In verse 4 of Romans 12 Paul says:

Rom 12:4-5

4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

The Lord brings both Jew and Gentile together to form one church.

And Jesus is the head of the church.

Col 1:18

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Eph 4:6

6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

In the first 6 verses Paul says:

- Unity is necessary for the building of the church.

Now he uses the contrasting word “but.”

God has made each individual unique, we each have different abilities and talents and gifts.

It's the Lord that gives you those talents and gifts.

- He uses what we have
- for the edification of the church body.

God gives to each one grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

- Paul spoke of grace 148 times.
- And it carries the meaning of favor,

Rom 12:3 God has dealt to each man a measure of faith,

Rom 12:6 speaks of a portion of faith,

1 Cor 12:4 says there are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit.

Every gift God gives us is useful for our personal edification and for the edification of the church.

Verse 12 that we are to be used for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

verse 11 - some are given to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some Pastors and teachers.

8 Therefore He says:

"When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men."

This is a quote from Psa 68:18.

This is a Psalm by David of a victory over the Jebusites.

1 Chron 11:4-5

4 Then David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (or Jebus, as it used to be called), where the Jebusites, the original inhabitants of the land, were living. 5 The people of Jebus taunted David, saying, "You'll never get in here!" But David captured the fortress of Zion, which is now called the City of David.

2 Sam 5:6

When David and his armies conquered the Jebusites city of Jebus it became Jerusalem.

So what is Paul saying in verse 8?

After a victory the king would take the spoils of the city after the war to help build their treasury for future wars.

They'd parade the captured soldiers in the streets to show their victory over the enemies.

The king paraded his soldiers previously captured that were now recaptured by the king to show they'd been freed.

We were once held captive by the enemy, "Satan"

- but now we've been set free by our King.

Next, Paul uses a parenthetical sentence in verses 9 & 10.

9 (Now this, "He ascended" – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? (refers to death and burial) 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

This discusses the incarnation of Jesus,

- His resurrection and His ascension.

- Jesus ascended to heaven following His resurrection.

Since Jesus ascended

- He had to have descended
- a previous time to earth.

Because Christ “descended into the lower parts of the earth”

- Paul is speaking of His incarnation
- thus making it possible for Him to experience death.

Paul says that Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth.

- See 1 Peter 3:18-22, Luke 16 and Acts 2:25-35

Another interpretation is that of Christ’s incarnation

- He left heaven and came down to earth,

The New Living puts it this way:

Eph 4:9

9 Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. (this refers to death and burial)

Jesus put it this way,

Matt 12:40

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (this speaks of His death and burial that preceded His resurrection)

He descended to earth then ascended,

- Thus returning to heaven.

What is Paul trying to teach in this passage? Was he simply wanting the reader and the Ephesians to know that Christ came to earth, died for our sins and was buried then rose from the grave and is now in heaven?

In John 8:23 and in Jn 16:28 Jesus said

- He was not of this world
- and was returning to His Father.

Regardless of what Paul’s intent was,

- Jesus conquered death
- thus bringing reconciliation between Himself and mankind.

I think Paul may have been saying,

- there can be unity

- but it has to be in Christ.

Jesus defeated sin and death thru His resurrection

- thus making them powerless
- much like a Kings victory over his enemies
- rendered them powerless.

The gifts in verse 8

- are forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

The analogy is that of Jesus sharing the spoils

- of His ultimate victory over Satan with believers.

Eph 4:11

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

This is a partial list of gifts given to the believer, both Romans and 1st Corinthians mention other gifts.

The gifts listed here in Ephesians are foundational to Christianity.

Let's take a closer look.

He gave some to be apostles:

Apostles:

The requirements of an apostle were,

- they had to have been with Jesus,
- they had to have witnessed His resurrection
- and performed certain signs.

That's why Paul said in 1 Cor 9, Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

In a strict sense

- there are no more apostles today.

However, in a functional sense there are apostles.

Barnabas for example,

- he didn't witness the resurrection,
- nor did he perform miracles,
- yet he's called an apostle.

Timothy didn't witness His resurrection,

- nor did he perform miracles,
- yet he's called an apostle.

Prophets: We think of prophets as one who foretells the future. And while that is true, he also speaks forth the truth by warning of judgement.

Isaiah is an example of this,

- he foretold the future or
- warned kings of judgement to come.

Evangelists: The evangelist thru the moving of the Holy Spirit is a soul winner.

In Acts 2, 3K people were added to the church when Peter taught.

Next Paul says something interesting, some are Pastors and teachers. This is actually one person that Paul is speaking of.

In the original grammatical Greek these two words "Pastor and Teacher" are called the Grandville Sharpe rule. So in the Greek, it is literally a Pastor that is a teacher.

There are other times where this rule is applied in scripture, one is Titus 2:13 and another is 2 Peter 1:1. Both speak of "God and Savior Jesus Christ" meaning that both God and Savior Jesus Christ refer to the same person of Jesus Christ.

So Paul is saying a person called to be a Pastor must be able to teach as well.

Why:

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

The Pastor's job is for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry.

Listen, we are called a body of Christ because

- we are all to fulfill our role in the church body.
- Paul uses the metaphor of "the body"
- in his teachings to show how the Spiritual body should act.