

## Ephesians 4 3-11 Body building pt 1

Good morning and thank you again for joining us. Would you please turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 4? Last week you'll recall we made it through a whopping 2 verses, as we discussed what it meant to walk worthy of our call.

And we all nailed it this week right? We all walked worthy in lowliness and gentleness I'm sure!

Praise God for His grace!!

**SHOW PIC** You might be surprised to know that the fitness industry generates \$35b each year in America. In fact, there are over 112k fitness centers and gyms in our nation. Obviously, taking care of our bodies is important business. **CLOSE PIC**

But let me share with you a truth about Jesus you may not have known... Jesus is also into body building!

You don't believe me? Well, just think of all the dumbbells He's lifted up over the years! In fact, I bet there's some dumbbells here this morning.

**SHOW PIC** One of the more popular movements in gyms today is something called a clean and jerk. It's a full body movement that produces rapid results. **CLOSE PIC**

But did you know Jesus also likes clean-n-jerks. I'm the classic example. He cleaned up this jerk - and I'm thankful every day.

Jesus promised in **Matthew 16:18** **And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**

The exalted Christ is far from idle. For 2000 years He's been busy building the Church - His body! And in Chapter 4 Paul reveals Jesus' body building plan.

This morning we're gonna tackle verses 3-11, and the title of this morning's message is Body-building pt 1

Let's pray

Now to make sure we're keeping the verses all in context let's remind ourselves of what we studied in verses 1 and 2

**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.**

Now the word endeavoring that's used here in verse 3 is a word that in the original Greek describes exertion. Why does this matter?

Well have you noticed that lowliness, meekness and long-suffering don't come naturally to us? They don't come naturally to our tongue. They don't come naturally to our thoughts. They don't come naturally to our marriages. They don't come naturally to our parenting.

That word endeavoring is used here, this exertion, because there must be effort on our part to do these things, especially to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The word keep means to guard. So verse 3 tells us we're gonna have to both exert and guard ourselves to have this attitude of walking worthy, with lowliness and meekness and long-suffering, to keep our unity. It takes effort, but we have to do it.

We've gotta apply ourselves to let there be an outworking of this kind of nature, because the world that we live in is hostile towards it and is constantly pushing against it.

Have you noticed when the world sees someone who has a tendency towards lowliness and meekness and long-suffering, the world immediately wants to step on them and take advantage of them don't they?

When the world sees unity in peace, they want to destroy it. You know why that is? It's because the world is operating by a completely different set of standards.

But as followers of Christ we should be endeavoring, exerting ourselves and guarding the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And it's challenging because we live in a world that knows none of these things that verses 1-3 describes do they? Our world loves to divide people into factions and silos and separate. But we're called to be united.

Now as we go and look to seek this unity, verses 4 through 6 give us 7 elements of unity that unite believers in the church. And these are listed for us to remember whenever we're tempted to break unity. As we go through them you'll notice all three members of the Trinity play a part in the process of maintaining unity

So let's read verse 4 then we'll break it down here...

**4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;** The one body mentioned here is the church, the universal body of believers.

CCC is a non denominational church, but I'm very grateful that there are denominations. I thank God there are Lutherans and Baptists and others. Because some people really desire an environment like that to learn and worship God.

Some people need to put on a suit and a tie to worship the Lord and there's nothing wrong with that. Listen, if we think that we're better because we don't, then we're the Pharisees. Be on guard for that!

But some people need certain kinds of environments to just feel order and respectful and they draw close to God through that. And I'm glad there are places for them to go because they would be very uncomfortable here. And this is the only place I could ever be a pastor, too. I wouldn't make it in any other group.

You've heard me say, and I hope you know, that the Body of Christ is much bigger than Calvary Chapel.

But you know some people love stained glass windows and incense. Some need to be very vocal and creative in their worship, and they're uncomfortable here because they can't whoop and holler and scream and use crash symbols in every song. Hey you wanna do that go ahead, be part a fellowship that will let you. You're not gonna do that here.

There is one body. And it's made-up of the church-the Ecclesia, the called out ones.

It doesn't matter if you're labeled a Catholic, whether you're a Baptist, whether you're Lutheran, Methodist, Calvary Chapel, if you in fact are a true believer and disciple of Jesus Christ, you make up the body of Christ.

**Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

And there's no man-made unity that could ever improve upon this.

But our unity does need a local practical expression. So thank God that there are diversity in churches and denominations because there has to be an expression of that one body, because the world is not standing around looking for the mystical body of Christ.

Warren Wiersbe tells the story how a friend of his had a church. And in this church a missionary kept coming around the church wanting financial support. So the pastor asked the missionary what church are you affiliated with? The missionary said 'I'm affiliated with the Invisible Church of Jesus Christ.'

The pastor tried to be gracious, and the guy was back later in the week and asking for support again. So the pastor said well really I'm curious what part of the body, what denomination, what are you involved with it? He said I'm involved with the invisible body of Christ. So by the third time this guy did to him, Weirsbe's friend said, OK, let me give you some support. Paid him with invisible money. It didn't go over so well.

The invisible Church is not going to do a world with eyeballs any good. So there has to be a local expression of the body of Christ.

V4 **one Spirit**, The one Spirit is the Holy Spirit who indwells every individual believer, and the church as a whole.

Finally verse 4 ends with **just as you were called in one hope of your calling** The one hope is the hope of the future that not only every Christian has, but the hope that the whole church has. **1**  
**Thessalonians 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?**

Praise God we have hope! We don't have to freak out and panic over current world events-we know how the story ends-we win!!!

**5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism**; The one Lord is Jesus Christ, the Head of the church.

**one faith**, One faith describes the faith that each Christian, and the whole church collectively, has placed in Christ as the one who saves us from our sin. Our faith isn't in a church, or a denomination, or a pastor. Our faith is in Christ

**one baptism** We don't get baptized into a church, or a denomination. Because a church cannot save you. There is only one baptism, and that is the baptism into Jesus Christ.

**6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you[fn] all**. The word all is used 4 times here, and is referring to all believers. God is the one God and Father of all believers, who are His children, both Jewish and Gentile believers. He is above all-sovereign over all things.

One scholar writes "Over all" implies God's sovereign purpose, "through all" presents God's power, and "in all" His indwelling presence.

So in verses 4-6 it lists seven elements of unity because verse 3 spoke of the need for us to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Now, in the next several verses it begins to lay out and discuss the gifts God has given to His church.

So before we move on think about what we've read in these 6 verses. It's as if Paul's saying, OK, we've come to this point. Your

God's kids, reflect the family values. Be lowly, walk humbly, stay unified!

This is emphasized so much because unity is no small thing to God. Never forget that just before His crucifixion Jesus prayed for our unity in John 17. That night, He prayed for our unity. The next day, He paid for it.

**7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.** Although there is unity within the body of Christ, there is also diversity. We are all united in Christ, but there are differences among us due to the different gifts we've been given.

In our physical bodies, our hands function differently than our eyes, which function differently than our toes. So, too, in the body of Christ, each part functions in a unique way according to the gift each has been given. **1 Cor 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. 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. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.**

The Bible tells us that every one of us is important to each other. Every one of us has a sphere of influence because we're attached to other believers as part of the body of Christ. There's no lone rangers or soloists in the body of Christ. **1 Corinthians 12 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say,**



“Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

We'll talk more about the specific gifts next week, but if you wanna read ahead also read 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 that describes the gifts of the HS God has given.

8 Therefore He says:

“When He ascended on high,  
He led captivity captive,  
And gave gifts to men.”<sup>[fn]</sup> referencing ps 68 here.

**SHOW PIC** In those days when a conquering general returned home from battle, he was greeted by the raucous applause of the crowd. The public lined the streets and threw tokens of affection at him. And the victorious general received their gifts and accolades. **CLOSE PIC**

But the victor also brought gifts for his people, he would come with the spoils of battle. Point being that the victorious General not only receives gifts, but gives gifts.

And this is what Jesus has done! He's our conquering hero. He entered the battle to wrestle us from Satans grasp. We were once prisoners of sin - but Jesus has freed the slaves. We praise and

honor and worship Him! And just like a conquering general, He also gives gifts to us.

9-10

9 (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first[fn] descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) Most scholars believe Jesus’ descension mentioned here describes what Jesus did after His death.

Before Jesus died and rose again, Luke 16 describes the place of the OT dead as a duplex.

**SHOW PIC** Hades had two sides - paradise and a torturous prison. They were separated by a unscalable gulf. Those in the OT who died believing God's promises went to Paradise. Unbelievers went to the place of torment. **CLOSE PIC**

In the OT, before the work of Christ on the cross, the door into the presence of God was closed. Animal sacrifices covered mankind's sin, but didn't erase them. Hades served as a holding tank for heaven - until Jesus, the Lamb of God could offer Himself - the sacrifice to end all sacrifices as sin's permanent solution.

Today, when an unbeliever dies he or she still goes to Hades. It's flame and torment until the great white throne judgment takes place.

In Revelation 20:14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.[fn] 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

That's the fate of the unbeliever... whereas the destiny of the believer's has changed dramatically! Those who die in Christ no longer go to Abrahams Bosom-the good part of Hades - but straight into God's presence.

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

So what are some of these gifts that Jesus has given to the church? Verse 11 tells us and we'll end our study here...

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, He Himself means that Jesus established these-they are the work and appointment of Jesus, not some man. Neither are these human inventions either.

This is a picture of God's grace to the church, to build up the body of Christ, you can't but these things. You can't get them at seminary, bible school, or special training. Jesus alone gives these!

Please don't misunderstand, I'm not knocking seminary or training, those are wonderful helps to these gifts. But these gifts must come first because God gives them

These are not career paths to try. These are callings. **Romans 11:29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable**

First mentioned is Apostles. The qualifications for being an apostle included having been with Christ during His ministry, having personally witnessed Jesus after His resurrection, and having been empowered by the Holy Spirit to perform miracles or signs-those were the 12 apostles.

Now the word apostle simply means one who is sent. So today you could call a missionary or a church planter an apostle. They're being sent out

But to be clear nobody rises to the level of the original 12 apostles. Jesus gave them special authority. I like the designation "big A" and "little a" apostles. A "big A" apostle was one of the twelve. A "little a" apostle might be a cross-cultural missionary - or a church planter.

The next one in v11 is Prophets. God also gave prophets to the church. Prophets didn't only foretell the future, but more often their job was to exhort, encourage, and strengthen God's people in accordance with God's word.

An Evangelist is a person who's gifted in leading sinners to Jesus. Billy Graham, Greg Laurie, John Wesley each with the gift of evangelism.

**SHOW PIC** Raul Ries story: It's kinda a joke b/c Raul speaks perfect spanglish. English and mexican mix.

There was one time Raul came out to teach, he said. 'I was studying all day, man. But the most important thing is that you get saved. So I'm not teaching till to you come forward. You come forward right now, give your life to Jesus. More than 30 people came forward. **CLOSE PIC**

A pastor I know was scheduled to teach there after Raul and he was dumbfounded, he goes 'I thought, this is unfair. I can explain this perfectly clear, he doesn't even teach and just says give your life to Jesus'. It's a gift.

I'm not Billy Graham, nor do I have his gifts. In fact, most evangelists are not as high-profile as Billy. Some of the Lord's most effective evangelists have never occupied a pulpit. They fulfill their ministry at the kitchen table with a neighbor - or in the coffee shop with a friend - or at the ball game with a client...

Every Christian should be a witness - and testify of what Jesus did for them - but we're not all evangelists.

Finally the last part of verse 11...

**some pastors and teachers**, the ancient Greek clearly describes one office with two descriptive titles. It describes the man who shepherds the flock of God through teaching the Word of God.

The word "pastor" is Latin for "shepherd." A pastor is a spiritual shepherd. He's to nurture the flock, retrieve the stray, mend the

bruises, protect from predators. And on top of that, the pastor is to lead the flock to suitable pasture-to feed the flock.

Jesus said to Peter, If you love me, feed my sheep. That's the primary responsibility of a shepherd is to feed the flock of God. And how does this occur? With the word of God.

Which means a pastor must also be a gifted teacher. That's why "pastor" and "teacher" go hand in hand. In fact, this is the construction in the original language. It's literally, "pastor-teacher" - one word

My job as a pastor-teacher, and our priority - isn't to whip the saints - or win the sinners. Winning folks to Jesus is what we should be doing Monday through Saturday.

In fact, when I do conduct an altar call it's usually an addendum to the sermon. I felt compelled that morning to invite a stray sinner or two to respond. But whether anyone steps forward isn't the measure of its success. 99% of the time the message was geared to build up the Body of Christ, and cause Christians to grow.

And so all these gifts, what are they for?

The purpose of Jesus' body building is a stronger Body, a fitter Body, a maturer Body, a more active Body, a more loving Body.

And every one of us has a role.