

UNITY, DIVERSITY, & MATURITY

SESSION #6

Review:

What would you do with a prison sentence? Paul the Apostle becomes the greatest New Testament Writer and Intercessor in our Biblical history. John the Apostle turns his Patmos prison sentence into an occasion to receive the clearest 'Revelation' of Jesus for us today. Wow!!!! We hear Paul in essence saying, *"I was placed in prison because I have dared to believe this mystery of God to save and adopt both Jews and Gentile and bring them into His family as one new family. And now, because of this imprisonment, God has allowed me to serve you as an Intercessor and Prophetic Messenger to you."* What will we do with our trial, difficulty, imprisonment, persecution, etc.? We will take it as an opportunity, like Paul, to serve the Lord's heart and let Him serve His purposes through our pain?

Ephesians 4:1-6 *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.*

Wait Paul! You can't say it that way! That's not politically correct. You have to usurp your power and voice to others. You can't stand and speak as the lowest and least! Hahaha. Interestingly, this is the contrast between the culture of this world and the culture of the Kingdom of Heaven. Even Jesus demonstrated His Father's Kingdom by declaring He came to seek, save, and serve all. He left all in order to come and serve all. This is at the heart of the message of the gospel and the Kingdom of Heaven's structure. (**Mt. 20:27-28** *"the Son of Man...not to be served, but to serve"*) I propose that part of the *"greater works than these"* from **John 14:12** is in the context of Jesus giving the new command to His followers: *"LOVE ONE ANOTHER...AS I HAVE LOVED YOU...BY THIS ALL WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES..."* **Jn. 13:34-35**

I. FAITHFUL TO CHRIST' CALLING

- A. **Ephesians 4:1** *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,*
- B. Paul presents himself to the Ephesians church as Christ's servant; to say, he is expressing the Master's heart and serving and communicating His wishes, dreams, desires, and instructions.
- C. Paul is following up his thoughts to his spiritual family after finishing his prayers for them (**Eph. 3:14-21**). Paul says, *"Live in such a way as to honor the One who is living on the inside of you."*
- D. We have all been given an individual assignment to fulfill in the larger calling of Christ' Church to experience and express the fullness of His love.
- E. We will never fulfill the complete calling of God apart from our spiritual family. Our assignment and calling is discovered and maximized through those around us.
- F. **Amos 3:3** *Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?*
- G. The *"beseech"* (strong and emotional) and exhortation is a call to give ourselves as much as Christ has given Himself to the calling of loving others. The more we experience the love of Christ, the more we will be able to love LIKE Christ. This is YOUR life-calling. This is MY life-calling. WOW!!!
- H. **Ephesians 3:17-18** *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height*

- I. When we are “*rooted & grounded in love*” we will be unmovable, and we will produce the eternal fruit of love.

II. BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER

- A. **Ephesians 4:2** *with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,*
- B. **Lowliness**- “*poverty of spirit*” (**Mt. 5:3**) We must have a right perspective of ourselves before we can have a right perspective of others.
- C. **Gentleness**- “*meekness*” (**Mt. 5:5**) Love from our Heavenly Father empowers us to walk and respond in meekness to others. Meekness positions us in second and others in first place. We consider the other person’s greatness in Christ’s will before seeking to fulfill our own comforts.
- D. When we know that all the Father has given us can never be taken away, we are freed in our hearts to give and serve others without being threatened by their success.
- E. When our value comes from others, we are affected by their brokenness and inconsistencies. When we receive our value from the Father’s unchanging heart and thoughts, we are empowered to trust.
- F. **Long-suffering**- “*merciful*” (**Mt. 5:7**) The merciful ones are the ones who are full of mercy. As an apple seed reproduces an apple tree so too extending mercy reproduces and receives mercy in return.
- G. We are equipped to love others and walk with them in their burdens from the place where we have no personal motives.

III. UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

- A. **Ephesians 4:3** “*endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”
- B. **Endeavoring**- to hasten; exerting ourselves; labor for
- C. **Keep**- to attend to with care; to guard; to reserve; to observe; to guard from loss
- D. **Unity**- united agreement
- E. **Of the Spirit**- from or by the Spirit of God;
- F. The phrase “*the unity of the Spirit*” expresses the Holy Spirit’s unity. True and lasting unity can only come from the supernatural work of Christ’s Holy Spirit working in us and then through us.
- G. **In**- by; with; positioned; planted
- H. **The Bond**- that which binds together; describing the ligaments by which the human body is held together, one joint at a time;
- I. **Of Peace**- a state of national tranquility; absence of war; peace between individuals; security, safety, prosperity; of the Messiah’s peace; fearing nothing from God & content in our assigned earthly lot

IV. ONE BODY—ONE SPIRIT—ONE HOPE

- A. **Ephesians 4:4** *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;*
- B. Paul is pointing out that there is only one Body of Christ. There are not multiple Bodies (**ex.** denominations, streams, movements, etc.). Christ only has one Church and the Father only has one Family. God wants us to love His full Body the same way He loves her.
- C. There is only one Spirit. The same Holy Spirit who is earnestly yearning in your heart is also earnestly and jealously yearning for fellowship with all of His children. We want to love the entire Body of Christ, regardless of the denomination, language, color of skin, nationality, etc.
- D. Fellowshiping with Holy Spirit reproduces the fruit of the Spirit. Fellowshiping with darkness reproduces the fruit of sin. The flesh reproduces only the flesh. The Spirit reproduces the spirit.

V. ONE LORD—ONE BAPTISM

- A. **Ephesians 4:5** *one Lord, one faith, one baptism;*
- B. Jesus is the One Lord, Master, and He is determined to lead us into His love.
- C. One faith means that there is no complicated order or instruction to receive eternal life from Christ. We simply and humbly surrender to Him with childlike faith.
- D. **John 17:21** *that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

VI. ONE GOD & FATHER

- A. **Ephesians 4:6** *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*
- B. **Ephesians 4:6** *And He is the perfect Father who leads us all, works through us all, and lives in us all! (TPT)*
- C. What a beautiful reminder and promise from God. The only true, living, and all-powerful God, the God who is above all other would-be gods, has promised to work in us and through us and live IN us. WOW!!!
- D. The fullness of God is waiting to be experienced and expressed through His Church as a Family in all the earth to prepare the earth for His only Begotten Son's coming back to earth to rule and reign.
- E. Our intimacy with Christ leads to Unity with His Family which expresses Christ full Authority, then will hasten Christ's coming in Glory!

VII. ONE BODY WITH MANY PARTS

- A. **Ephesians 4:4-6** *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.*
- B. The primary purpose of the corporate church and Body of Jesus is "to equip the saints to do the work of ministry" in the Church and in every sphere of influence in our lives. It is not God's intention for pastors to attempt to equip and build up the body alone. There are no scriptures that even suggest that one senior shepherd has been given everything necessary to perfect a particular congregation. Unfortunately, the modern Church of Jesus in many nations has neglected the 5-fold ministry gifts of leadership and positions of service which has left the Body ill-equipped and underdeveloped.
- C. In God's wisdom, He loves to perfect unity in diversity. Both are of value in His heart as they express and reflect His leadership.

VIII. JESUS DISTRIBUTES SERVICE GIFTS

- A. **Ephesians 4:11-12** *And He Himself (Jesus) gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*
- B. Spiritual gifts are empowerments for building up the church and extending the Kingdom of God on the Earth.
- C. Fivefold Ministers are meant to cooperate in their special giftings and abilities, and together govern, lead, and protect God's people.
- D. The Holy Spirit is the owner and dispenser of the spiritual gifts (**1 Cor. 12:7, 11**). As believers, we are stewards of the gifts of God (**1 Pet. 4:10**). Every believer can expect the Holy Spirit to minister through him or her with spiritual gifts. This is one of IHOP-Miami's core values.
- E. **1 Corinthians 12:7** *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

- F. **1 Timothy 4:14** *Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.*
- G. Spiritual gifts are not natural gifts and talents but are supernatural gifts. There are ‘power gifts’ and ‘services gifts’.
- H. Spiritual gifts are received by Holy Spirit, both at our conversation and salvation, as well as by the laying on of hands as a form of divine impartation. Our caution is that it is ALWAYS the work and impartation of Holy Spirit, though at times God allows us to cooperate with Him in the distribution.
- I. We want to view these five-fold ministry gifts as ‘functions’ rather than ‘offices’. Offices tend to communicate an “arrival” mentality rather than a working job-description. Jesus carried and expressed all five of these leadership functions while He was on the Earth. When He ascended, He distributed these job descriptions through the Person and function of Holy Spirit to serve His Body and to equip her to fulfill His Kingdom plans on the Earth.
- J. Jesus as our model for leadership became the greatest servant of all.
- K. **Matthew 20:25-28** *But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. ²⁷ And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*
- L. **5-Fold Ministry & Leadership Gifts-** Some view these gifts from the perspective of one hand having 5 separate fingers. Each finger offers a different function, yet all of them provide the full use of the hand. When one is missing, the work becomes that much harder to accomplish.
1. **Apostles-** The Greek word ‘apostolos’, means “a messenger” or “one sent on a mission.” Apostles were literally commissioned messengers carrying out a task or mission.
 2. **Prophets-** They were spokespersons for God, whose role was known from the Old Testament and continued in the New Testament church. A prophet is one who is divinely inspired to communicate God’s will to His people and to disclose the future to them.
 3. **Evangelists-** An Evangelist is “*one announcing good news.*” In the New Testament, the good news is the death, burial, resurrection, and the ultimate ascension of Christ. Christ now offers to all of humanity the gift of eternal life by being born again.
 4. **Pastors-** The term pastor is found only once in the English text of the New Testament. However, the Greek word ‘poimen’ is found about eighteen times in the New Testament, translated once as “pastor” and the remaining instances as “shepherd.” The word ‘poimen’ is found in **John 10** as Jesus is revealed as the Good Shepherd. Only in **Ephesians 4:11** is shepherd found in reference to a function in the Church.
 5. **Teachers-** Teachers are expounders of the Scriptures and the testimony of Jesus. If they functioned like Jewish teachers, they probably offered Biblical instruction to the congregation and trained others to expound the Scriptures as well.

IX. THE CHURCHES WORK IS THE GREAT COMMANDMENT & GREAT COMMISSION

- A. We want to begin to cast vision for the Church to see ourselves as maturing into the work of the ministry. We must move beyond attending a weekend service to be fed. We must mature into learning how to feed ourselves in the Spirit regularly so that we are no longer malnourished.
- B. As we mature into feeding ourselves on our relationship with Holy Spirit, then we will reproduce God's Kingdom and "bare much fruit" (Jn. 15:7). If we are not baring spiritual fruit, then we are neglecting to fellowship and feed on Holy Spirit's life in us.
- C. **Matthew 28:19-20** *"¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..."*
- D. **Acts 1:4; 8** *(Jesus) ...commanded them... to wait for the Promise of the Father...⁸you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses..."*