

One

Living Life for The Praise of His Glory: A Study of the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians

Recently a survey was conducted to determine what audiences believed were the most touching good-bye scenes captured on film. Among the top ten was the closing scene in the movie, *Dead Poet's Society*, when Professor John Keating learns that his efforts to impact the lives of students really did pay off. Standing on desks the students salute their teacher with words from Walt Whitman's poem, "O Captain! My Captain!"

Another one was the closing scene of *Casablanca*, when bar owner Rick Bain (Humphrey Bogart) selflessly sends off Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) and her husband Victor Laszlo to America, with parting words, "Here's looking at you, kid."

Of course, there is also that touching good-bye scene in *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. With the Ring destroyed, Middle-earth saved from Sauron and Aragorn crowned king of Gondor, the time has come for the dominion of man. A ship awaits to take Gandalf and Frodo away to the Gray Havens. Before leaving, Frodo embraces his fellow Hobbits and his long, trusted friend, Sam. He joins Gandalf and together they walk hand-in-hand to the ship. As the ship sails, Frodo smiles, and after a final glance back to his friends, nods, and looks straight ahead toward the brightness of the Gray Havens that awaits.

In Acts chapter 20 there is also a touching farewell scene. Elders from the church at Ephesus traveled to the port city of Miletus to greet the Apostle Paul on his journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem. In what would be their last face-to-face meeting, Paul celebrates their love and ministry together but warns of threats from without and dangers that can arise from within (Acts 20:29-30).

In Ephesians chapter 4 we are reminded that unity achieved by Christ's cross and revealed by God's Spirit must be preserved. In the words of verse 3, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

Focus: Ephesians 4:1-32

I. The Ground of Our Unity Is Truth (4:4-6 *NIV*).

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

II. The Glory of Our Unity Is Diversity (4:7, 11-12 *NIV*).

“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it...So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”

III. The Goal of Our Unity Is Maturity (4:13-16 *NIV*)

“...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

IV. Guarding Unity Requires Effort

A. Cultivate an Attitude of Self-effacement: “Be Completely Humble...” (4:2).

B. Develop a Response Pattern of Self-containment (4:2).

1. Be gentle.
2. Be patient.
3. Bear with one another in love.

V. Unity Begins with You! (4:22-32)

A. Put Off the Old Self and Put on the New (4:22-24).

B. Do Not Give the Devil a Foothold (4:27).

C. Do Not Grieve the Holy Spirit (4:30-32).