

Diversity of the Body

God Unifies the Incompatible

Ephesians 2:11–22

Forest Hills Bible Chapel

February 24, 2019

Unified in Spite of Diversity: Key Take-Aways

- God's grace is the unifying thread in the Church**
- Christ's work on our behalf removes performance pressure**
- The Spirit turns diversity into God glorifying enhancements**

What does church unity look like?

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

Their responsibility is **to equip God's people to do his work** and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such **unity** in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be **mature** in the Lord, **measuring up to** the full and complete standard of **Christ**.

Then we will **no longer be immature** like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will **not be influenced** when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, **we will speak the truth in love, growing** in every way more and **more like Christ**, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body **fit together perfectly**. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is **healthy and growing and full of love**.

Ephesians 4:11–16 (NLT)

Getting into the family

Ephesians 2:1–10

Once **you were dead** because of your disobedience and many sins...

But God is so rich in mercy...he **gave us life**...

God saved you by his grace when you believed.

And you can't take credit for this; **it is a gift** from God.

Ephesians 2:11–22

New Living Translation (NLT)

Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be **outsiders**. You were called "**uncircumcised heathens**" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it **affected only their bodies and not their hearts**. In those days you were living **apart** from Christ. You were **excluded** from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you **did not know** the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world **without God and without hope**.

Ephesians 2:11–22

New Living Translation (NLT)

But now **you have been united** with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now **you have been brought near** to him **through the blood of Christ**.

For **Christ himself has brought peace** to us. **He united** Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, **he broke down** the wall of hostility that separated us. **He did this** by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. **He made peace** between Jews and Gentiles by **creating in himself one new people** from the two groups. Together as one body, **Christ reconciled** both groups to God **by means of his death** on the cross, and our **hostility** toward each other **was put to death**. **He brought** this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near.

Now all of us can come to the Father **through the same Holy Spirit** because of **what Christ has done** for us.

Ephesians 2:11–22

New Living Translation (NLT)

So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. **You are citizens** along with all of God's holy people. **You are members** of God's family. Together, **we are his house**, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully **joined together** in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also **being made part** of this dwelling where God lives **by his Spirit**.

Unified in Spite of Diversity: Key Take-Aways

- **God's grace is the unifying thread in the Church**

Challenge: Are my friendships based on the temporal or permanent?

- **Christ's work on our behalf removes performance pressure**

Challenge: How am I focusing on God's Grace—Christ's work on my behalf?

- **The Spirit turns diversity into God glorifying enhancements**

Challenge: Am I willing to be real, or wearing a mask?