



EXALTING JESUS CHRIST

PROCLAIMING GOD'S GRACE

"We Really Are One"

EPHESIANS 4:1-6

MAIN POINT: THE GOSPEL CALLS TO MAINTAIN OUR UNITY.

I. The Call (4:1)

"The gospel...reminds me that my righteous standing with God always holds firm regardless of my performance, because my standing is based solely on the work of Jesus and not mine. On my worst days of sin and failure, the gospel encourages me with God's unrelenting grace toward me. On my best days of victory and usefulness, the gospel keeps me relating to God solely on the basis of Jesus' righteousness and not mine." (Milton Vincent)

II. The Character (4:2)

Humility: "honestly assessing ourselves in light of God's holiness and our sinfulness." (CJ Mahaney)

"Nothing in history or in the universe cuts us down to size like the cross. All of us have inflated views of ourselves...until we have visited a place called Calvary. It is there, at the foot of the cross that we shrink to our true size." (John Stott)

Gentleness:

Patience:

Forbearing Love:

Additional Questions:

- Do we hold others to a higher standard of godliness that we do ourselves?
- Are we able to help others without crushing/bruising them? Or do they just feel our frustration at their lack of progress?
- Do we bear with others weaknesses even when they provoke us?
- Are we able to return and love others even when they have wronged us?
- Do we view others who are weak with a long-term vision know that they are a work in progress?

III. The Cause (4:3-6)

"Paul grounds our unity in the unity of the Trinity, not in our ability to get along. We get along because Father, Son, and Spirit have allowed us to do so. We can give grace because we have been given grace. Jesus humbled himself. The Father gently and patiently works out our salvation. The Holy Spirit forbears and abides with us even in the face of our sin, convicting and correcting us but never

condemning. Father, Son, and Spirit were torn apart so that we might be united with them and with each other.” (Paul Tripp and Tim Lane)

Application Questions:

- 1) Ephesians 4:1-6 helps us from merely “playing church”. From our perspective, what might be some characteristics of just “playing church”? Do you see any of these characteristics in your relationships?
- 2) According to Ephesians 1-3, who are you? Fill in the blank: I am _____, therefore I can _____. What do our relationships say about our understanding of our identity?
- 3) Why is it possible for Christians to be humble? Gentle? Patient? Forbearing in love? Who perfectly embodied these character qualities? How is God building these character qualities in your life right now? What tools is He using (i.e. trials, relationships, health, etc.) to perfect these qualities?
- 4) When was the last time you were humbled by the cross? If it’s been a while take some time to meditate on Philippians 2:5-8; Isaiah 53:3-12; John 19:16-37; Revelation 1:10-2:5.
- 5) Are we eagerly maintaining the unity of the church? Do we see our relationship with other Christians as part of the unity with have with the Trinity?