

Ephesians: Unsearchable riches of Christ

Study 18: Strive to maintain unity

READ Eph 4:1-6 and LISTEN to Pastor Craig Baxter's [sermon](#).

As a consequence of God's great plan of salvation and the believer's new identity in Christ (Ch. 1-3), Paul begins a series of admonitions for the readers (Ch. 4-6). In our text he appeals to them to maintain the unity that Christ secured on the cross. This unity is an essential and natural by-product of the common faith they confess, but it must also be maintained through developing the various virtues associated with selfless love. What is clear is that a church that displays the glory of God is a church that works very hard to maintain the unity that God has created.

Main lesson: Given that we all have a propensity to walk according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit we must conscientiously work toward maintaining the unity Christ has established.

Questions:

1. How important do you think unity is for the church? Provide a scriptural bases for your answer.
2. What does it mean to "walk in a manner worthy" of your calling (v. 1)? See Phil 1:27; 1 Thess 2:12. Give particular thought to what "worthy" here means.
3. In v. 2 there are four qualities. Try to provide a one-sentence definition for each quality and state why it is integral to unity within the church.
 - a) Humility (see 1 John 1:8-9; Is 6:5):
 - b) Gentleness (see Matt 5:5; 11:29):

c) Patience (see James 5:10; Rom 5:3):

d) Loving forbearance (see 1 Pet 4:8):

4. Consider the opposite of these unity-producing qualities and state how they might destroy unity within the church?
5. If unity among believers is so important, how can we know when (if ever) we should divide?
6. Why do loving relationships in the home and the church require effort? Isn't love supposed to be spontaneous?
7. In vv. 4-6 Paul provides seven doctrinal points. How does sound doctrine undergird the church and provide the basis for unity instead of, as many may claim, dividing the church? See Acts 2:42-44.
8. From our study, how might you practically work to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (v. 3)?

STOP AND PRAY:

Praise: the Lord for His sovereign work in bringing into being the body of Christ

Thank: God that He has established unity within the church through His Spirit

Pray: for growing humility, gentleness, patience and forbearing love