

## **Ephesians 4:1-16 – The Christian Life (2)**

We have learnt what God does to make people Christians. The purpose of salvation is that God alone may receive all the glory. Now, how do we actually live a Christian life that pleases God? What should a converted person be seeking to do?

### **1. The church is one**

Paul wants us to live together in humility, patience and peace. Why together? Because we are one. All true believers in Christ have a seven-fold unity. We are one body (v15-16) with the same head; Christ died to make a single people (as we saw in 2:11-22). We have one Spirit; every true believer has the Holy Spirit living in them, who gave them new birth and is now making them holy. We have one hope – one destiny; there is one heaven we are confident of receiving. We have one Lord and Master whom we all bow to and love; we all work for him. We have one faith: there is one gospel and one Bible given to us all to believe and obey. We have one baptism; we all became disciples with the same testimony that Christ washes away sin. There is one God and Father who we bow to and to whom belong all things. This unity is a fact. It is not shared with cults or heretics, even if they call themselves Christians; but it is shared with all who truly repent and believe. We are brethren.

### **2. The church must strive to be one**

If we are one, then we must strive to live as one. We must build on this foundation, and show its strength. Paul tells us to “make every effort” (v3). In a body, if one part suffers, then the whole body suffers (v26); if you have a fever, your whole body is weak. If you break your foot, your whole body is restricted. So, we must struggle – it needs effort. We have the seven-fold unity. But in this life, we are divided by tribe, culture, age and position in life. Jesus wants us to overcome all of those things, for his sake. We must show the same love and seek to express our unity with every true believer.

### **3. Christ gives us the gifts we need to be one**

To help us live in unity, Christ has given his church gifts. As the great conqueror over sin, death and hell, he has won a mighty victory. As the victor, he ascended up to heaven and gave out gifts (v8-10). There are many gifts (1 Cor. 12:26, Romans 12:4-8), but here Paul talks especially about teaching gifts. These are most important, because they help the church to have one understanding and mind. The apostles and prophets laid the church's foundation (2:20) by first revealing the doctrine of Christ. The evangelists take the gospel into new situations and begin new churches. Pastors and teachers build up those churches by explaining the Scriptures to them. Their purpose is to prepare the people to serve each other (v12). All teachers should be servants – and all listeners should be taught to become servants too! The gifts are all different, like the parts in a body – but all help the whole body to grow together. Have you discovered your own gifts and opportunities of service? Are you using them?

### **4. To be one, we must prioritise humility and maturity**

What are our priorities? In verse 2, Paul told us to be completely humble. We must bear with each other; people are difficult, so we must try hard. We must mature, v13. This will keep us safe. As we all grow in the truth, we will all grow nearer; nearer to Christ. Unity depends on us all. Are you humbling yourself and growing in Christ?