

## Ephesians 4:1-16, part 2

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 9-2-15

### Context

1. New Life in Christ (1:3-2:10)
2. The New Society (2:11-3:21)
3. **New Standards - unity and purity** (4:1-5:21)
4. New Relationships (5:21-6:24)

Ephesians chs. 1-3 → God's magnificent vision for a reconciled, unified humanity, new community  
Pivot point: Chapter 4 → New society to new standards; from doctrine to duty

**General principle:** oneness of God's new society:

1. It arises out of the unity of God (vv. 3-6)
  - Connect to John 17 - his life becomes our life
2. It depends on the charity of our character and conduct (v. 2)
  - The HS enables this unity, but we have to preserve it
  - 5 heart characteristics necessary: lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearance, and love (Col. 3:14 - "perfect bond of unity")
  - "Be diligent" to preserve it
3. It is enriched by the diversity of our gifts (vv. 7-13)
  - "to **each one of us**"
  - Spirit-enabled unity AND diversity (of gifts)
  - Purpose: to "equip the saints for works of service"
    - **NO** comma in v. 12
    - Cf. 2:10
  - Result: "the building up of the body of Christ"
    - Cf. 2:19-22

### Notes:

#### **Our Oneness Demands the Maturity of Our Growth (vv. 14-16)**

Built up in what way? 3 phrases:

- unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God
- to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ
- which we all will attain

Note: "preserved" (v. 3) vs. "attained" (v. 13)?

- Paul is talking about degrees of unity
- Unity grows as a result of Christian faith and knowledge

This full unity also called “mature manhood” (v. 13)

- Context suggest this is a corporate reality
  - The church = a single organism (body) growing into adult stature
  - Cf. “one new man” (or humanity) in 2:15
  - Nothing less than the stature of the fullness of Christ
    - Sonship, holiness, blamelessness, love, etc.
  
- Yet it depends on the maturing of the individual members of the body (vv. 14-15)
  - Be innocent like children, but not unstable like children
    - Immature Christians: unstable little boats, “whirligigs”
    - Cannot resist “the cunning of men” - lit. “dice playing”, human treachery
  - In contrast to doctrinal instability, we should v. 15a - “Speak the truth in love”
    - Lit. “truthing in love”
    - We need them in balance
      - Every time “truth” is spoken without being conditioned by love it is at the expense of a person.
        - Without love, you have nothing left but an assortment of facts.
      - Others sacrifice truth for the sake of “love”
      - Love softens truth. Truth hardens love.
      - Holy Spirit of truth whose firstfruit is love (cf. Jn. 14:17, 15:26, 16:23; Gal. 5:22)
  - V. 16 goes with v. 12 - the saints’ works of service builds up the body of Christ...as each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow.
    - The church cannot grow as God desires it to unless each part is exercising its gift.
  
- The result is unity and maturity - a body that is “healthy, growing, and full of love” - he begins and ends with love

**Summary:**

- God has gifted everyone who has received the Spirit
- God has provided teachers/Shepherds to help equip everyone to use their gifts for the sake of the whole body
- The body grows into Christ when its members engage in ministry enabled by the Spirit
- Rather than being immature Christians who are tossed to and fro, the Spirit enables us to be a people of truth and love.