

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on February 3, 2019:**

**"Transforming Life Lessons
for the Church Today from Ephesus:
Part 8 (Ephesians 4:1-16 – Part 1)
The Church's Unity"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows how the characteristics of God's unity – humility, gentleness, patience, and love are reflected today in the body of Christ.]

Notes

Introduction:

- This week the Y here had their first annual senior summit.
- The board members were asked to attend and since pastor Craig is a board member, he did.
- He was, then, asked to give the invocation and benediction.

- 60 seniors attended to discuss their views of the Y.
- Pastor Craig did have the opportunity to comment about our Sunday church services here. So the word is slowly getting out.
- But, as we know, our growth will mainly come through relationships.

- So, today, we're going to continue with our study of Ephesians.
- In the first 3 chapters, Paul essentially lays out the theology for "new mankind" and that God has created a new mankind through the church.
- And, believers, by having the Holy Spirit and Christ within them, become a new humanity.

- So the first 3 chapters have dealt with what that means.
- And now in chapter 4, Paul moves into some application of what that looks like for a church and for believers.

Recapping the summary points of part 7 (Ephesians 3:14-21):

1. Paul models humility in prayer by bowing knees before God.
2. All church families in heaven and earth derive their name from God the Father.
3. Believers' inner man is strengthened with power through God's Spirit.

4. Jesus Christ dwells in our hearts through faith.
5. Believers are to be rooted and grounded in love.
6. Believers are to know the vast wonder of Jesus' love for us that surpasses all knowledge.

7. Believers are to be filled to the fullness of God.
8. God is able to do far more beyond all that we ask or think according to his power (the Spirit) working in us.

9. God is given glory in the church and in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 4 intro:

- In the first 3 chapters, Paul has shown us the blessings that God has given us, which are the indicatives before the imperatives.
- So now beginning in chapter 4, Paul shows us how God's blessings are lived out in the lives of believers.

Ephesians 4:1 (NASB), Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

- Does the walk of our calling in Jesus come naturally?
- If so, then Paul would have taken a different approach.
- Other translations tell a Christian to walk in a "diligent" manner.
- The Greek word here is written in the emphatic meaning "leave nothing undone" in living out this life.
- Paul tells us that we need to have this relationship with Jesus so that in walking this life we've been called to, truly makes a transformative difference.
- And Paul is going to show us how in these next 15 verses.

1. First, Paul shows that church unity rests on the foundation of love (verse 2).

- So we ask, "What does unity mean?"
- "Is unity an outcome?"
- "Is unity an input?"
- "Is unity something we do or is it something we reflect?"
- Paul is going to tell us that unity will be reflected 4 ways:
 - a) We'll see that through humility
 - b) Through gentleness
 - c) Through patience
 - d) And we'll see it through love
- Now what's interesting is that the Greek's didn't have a word for "humility."
- In fact, the Christian church coined that word.
- The Greek term that was used that came closest to the word "humility" always had something snarky related to it.
- That's because humility was look down on in the Greek culture.
- To be humble, to live a life of humility was disregarded.
- For them, to be humble, was far removed from their way of thinking and living.
- The Christian connotation was for one to live out the same humble life that Jesus showed.
- Now the Greek word "gentleness" is not likened to "weakness."

- Gentleness is more tied to the term “meekness” which is also not likened to weakness.
- It’s connected with being strong in the faith and being confident in one’s relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- And “patience” means to be forbearing to those who are aggravating to us.

- Now, we know that it’s not easy to live out these qualities.
- But Paul is going to show us that these characteristics are based on love.
- Here is one of pastor Craig’s Ditty Meister’s rhymes about unity:

“Unity in community provides impunity and immunity from disunity.”

2) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3) being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- These four traits here are also talked about in another place in Scripture and are referred to as – the fruits of the Spirit.
- So, how are the fruits of the Spirit produced?
- First, we know that the fruits of the Spirit are a supernatural thing and that it will not happen out of our humanity, or out of our human nature, or out of our unbelief.

- The fruits of the Spirit are produced by having Jesus live in us.
- Do we have a role to play in that? YES, it’s through prayer, study and meditation that we establish a flourishing relationship with Jesus.
- We can’t be patient or gentle or meek or loving to others on our own, because it’s a supernatural thing.

- The key is to continually come back to the source.
- And so to have that relationship with Jesus living in us, it happens indirectly.
- Now, we can’t have unity in the church or with others without reflecting these behaviors Paul is addressing here.
- These behaviors of humility, gentleness, patience and love are outputs and fruits of and generated from the Spirit.

- But, we must never forget that we can’t do this on our own.
- Our only input to this is that ongoing relationship with Jesus.
- Remember that salvation is defined as a relationship.

- So, if we are to show unity through gentleness and humility and meekness and love, it has to come out of that relationship.
- And when it does, it simply flows; we don’t have any way to stop it because the Spirit just works through us.
- So, if we expect to win on the field of life, so to speak, as we engage our children, our family, our co-workers, our teachers or fellow students, it takes a different approach to show unity.

- How many times have we’ve seen disunity displayed in this world?
- The recent US government shut down is an example of a dis-unified world.
- In fact, we can see disunity in just about everything we do.

- We can see disunity driving down the freeway, we can see it at work, we can see it on TV, we can see it in our government system, we can see it in our economic system of supply and demand.
 - So, if we're going to be a light and an example to all the disunity around us, we have to be linked to a different source.
 - Unity, as Paul describes it, is a big deal!
 - Now, if we were to give a numerical representation to unity i.e., what number would we give it?
 - The correct answer is one.
 - So, why is the number 1, the best reflection of unity?
 - It reflects that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one.
 - In unity, we're one!
 - As a church, we're a family – we are together as one.
 - That makes sense that we are all one.
 - Now, being one doesn't mean we're all a bunch of yellow pencils.
 - We are going to see that there is diversity in unity.
 - Now, in God's life, as Father, Son and Spirit, as one God, there's diversity, but there is also unity.
2. Secondly, Paul shows us that church unity arises from the unity of the Triune God (verses 4-6)

4) There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6) one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

- Can we see why oneness and unity is so important?
- We have to realize that unity doesn't come naturally!
- Unity is a response; unity is a reflection; unity is what the Spirit does through us.
- Prayer and study and meditation, gathering here together in fellowship and worship – these are all reflective of God's relationship working through us.
- That's why our relationship with God is so important.
- We have to be in relationship with God for these traits of unity – humility, gentleness, patience, and love to be exhibited.
- Now, if we're going to start our day with prayer in the morning, we have to go against our unbelief system that tells us we're too busy.
- We have to challenge ourselves!
- Jesus desires to hear our voices of prayer in the morning, but doesn't force us.
- If we want to be unified and reflecting humility, gentleness, patience, and love to others and to be a light, then we have to counter and challenge our normal life style.
- Pastor Craig gave a personal example of what happened to him even when he was still in the financial business world.

- His day went so much better when he was in relationship with God through morning prayer.
- It helped him do business deals better, it helped him to relate to the people he was working with better, it helped him to relate to his boss better, it helped him to face pressure better.
- But when he didn't establish that morning relationship with God, his day was quite different.

Concluding comments:

- So, the bottom line is this: no matter what your working life style is like, please make sure that at some point in the day that works best for you, establish that renewal process with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- In this way, you will be able to reflect the fruit of the Spirit of humility, gentleness, patience, and love to others.

Communion:

- When we engage in the Lord's Supper, we have communion with the Father and the Son, which reflects the unity that God wants us to have in the church.
- When we partake of the elements that represent Jesus' body and blood, it helps us keep in our minds and hearts an attitude of unity reflected through gentleness, humility, meekness and love.
- We pray that God helps us to enter communion together as one church family.

Closing prayer