

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on February 10, 2019:**

**"Transforming Life Lessons
for the Church Today from Ephesus:
Part 9 (Ephesians 4:1-16 – Part 2)
The Church's Unity"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows how church unity encourages growth in spiritual maturity within the body of Christ.]

Notes

Introduction:

- The first 3 chapters of Ephesians, Paul laid out this theological plan for a “new humanity” that Jesus created.
- And that new humanity is the church.
- And so in the first chapters, Paul lays the foundation and beginning in chapter 4, Paul shows how the church members would reflect their relationship with Jesus.

Pastor Craig's unity phrase from last week:

- “Unity in community provides impunity and immunity from disunity.”
- Pastor Craig asked the members to repeat this statement together.
- Remember that Paul tells us that if we, as a church, are going to live out the love of God, we're going to reflect it in unity.
- Now, we need to realize that unity is not just something we can do on our own, it's a reflection and outcome of the Holy Spirit working through us.

The importance of unity:

- Pastor Craig also asked last week, that if we were to assign a numerical representation to unity i.e., what number would best be assigned?
- And the answer is: “1”
- Our theme is that “we go together” – and we go together as one.
- Now God tells us, the church, that unity is so important.

- We can definitely say that we live in a society that isn't unified and reflects a lot of disunity.
- We see that play out in the corporate board rooms and in the political sphere.
- But you know that when a not-yet-believer sees the church for the first time, he/she should see unity that's reflected out of the love we have for each other.

Church unity:

- As we'll see, church unity arises out of the unity of the Triune God of Father, Son and Spirit (verses 4-6).
- So, we, as the church, are reflecting God's unity.

- The Father, Son and Spirit are what the Greeks call that perichoretic relationship – one God yet distinct in three persons.
- In fact, that unity and love for each other was so great, that they were seen and viewed and established as one God.
- And they wanted their love for each other extended to humanity.
- Unity shouldn't be viewed as something trivial – it's the very essence of God.
- And Paul is saying that the church should reflect this unity in all that we say and do.
- These two verses reflect why we, as a church, go together and not apart.

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.

- Is there any two-ness or three-ness in these verses?
- We see that unity is reflected in our hope, our faith, and our baptism.
- Now, because we are to be one, it doesn't mean that we are all to be yellow pencils.
- There is definitely diversity – it's reflected by the various spiritual gifts that God has given us for service.
- Here in these verses, we'll see that these are gifts of church offices.
- There are three things to note here:
 1. The giver of spiritual gifts is the ascended Christ.
 2. The character of spiritual gifts is varied:
Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and teachers.
 3. The purpose of spiritual gifts is service.

7) But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

- Now, we're going to see that this is the gift of service through grace.

8) Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men."

- Now this is kind of an obscure passage taken from Psalm 68:18 where Paul uses it to reflect the fact that spiritual gifts come from Jesus Christ.

9) (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?

- Paul is saying here that Christ descended from heaven to this earth in humility.
- The Word set aside His divine privileges to become human.
- Jesus became like one of us through the incarnation.

10) He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) 11) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

- Now, the term “apostle” meaning “one sent” was a special office for those who witnessed the life of Christ here on earth before the New Testament was written.
- It’s not an on-going office today as it was only true for a short period of time in the first century.
- Now, prophets were an office given to herald God’s revelation to a people who didn’t have Scripture which would reveal that revelation.
- Today, we have the New Testament so the prophet is no longer necessary.
- Although, there might be some today who have the gift of prophecy or a special word of direction, but it’s not the typical type of office today as it was during the first century.
- And finally, evangelists are called to be a witness and a testimony about Jesus to the not-yet-believers.
- It’s usually people who are specially gifted to reach people in a specific area of the world with the gospel.
- It’s not a common office today.
- Now the primary office today would be pastors and teachers or sometimes called pastors-teachers.
- We know that pastors always have a role as teachers, but not all teachers are pastors.

12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

- This is a huge verse because it reflects part of the unity that Paul is speaking about and it certainly impacts us today.
- So, when we see those words, “the equipping of the saints”, what comes to mind; what does it mean?
- Answers from the congregation:
 - To learn the Word of God.
 - To use the spiritual tools God has given us.
 - Participation in church worship, Bible studies and small groups.
- So, is equipping a positive or a negative or a neutral thing in our lives?
- Definitely, equipping is a positive thing.
- What’s the key purpose for equipping?
- It’s, as Paul states, “to build up the body of Christ.”
- Now, if we as a church, here in Monrovia, aren’t reflecting God’s unity as He desires of us, aren’t reflecting that love for God and for others, why would God call anyone to our family as a church?
- It’s pastor Craig’s passion and pursuit that as we reflect the love of God, there is no reason why we wouldn’t be the group that God would draw people to who are searching for God’s love.
- Now all of us have a part to play in this; it just can’t be just one person.
- So, when we, as a church, reflect God’s unity and live out this relationship of loving God and loving others, we are positioning ourselves to be the church God is calling us to be.

- Pastor Craig told the congregation what his agenda is all about:
 - He's all about our lives being transformed by the very mind and heart and soul of Christ.
 - And to be that body of loving God and loving others and reaching out in growth and renewal.
 - He says this about every week – so it's no mystery.
- As we said earlier, the key purpose for equipping is “to build up the body of Christ.”
- We have a high calling to shine the light of Christ and offer hope to others who live in this darkened age.
- Doesn't this make a lot of sense?
- Now in verse 12, does that indicate a one-man show, or a one-woman show? Or is that just something the full time paid pastor does?
- The pastor's role is to equip the saints, but he is always willing to do what he is asking and encouraging others to do. In other words, he is in front leading the way.
- In our service here to the church, we are building each other up in love, which reflects the unity that Paul is speaking about here. This supernaturally accomplished.
- Now let's break down some of our old cultural baggage.
- One of them was that unless you are tapped on the shoulder and asked to do something, you shouldn't volunteer to do things.
- But this is not what we see here in Ephesians.
- Paul tells us that all of us are given gifts “for the work of service and for the building up of the saints.”
- Our role is to recognize what our gifts are, what our passions are, what our abilities are and how we can step out and serve.
- If you feel that there is an area that the Spirit is drawing you to, please let pastor Craig or the members of the pastoral team know.
- Now we have three pathways to whole life discipleship to build up the body of Christ: groups, teams and classes.
 - Teams are those involved in the ministry and in service for our church like setting up the chairs here Sunday morning, or getting the snack area ready.
 - Classes are there so we can learn the Word and have Bible studies.
 - Groups, like our Flourishing Care Groups, help us to draw together to enhance our family unit, praying for each other and also studying the Word.
- We are all called to serve in different ways, because each of us has different abilities.
- Service reflects the family that we are.
- Now finally in verses 13-16, we going to see that church unity demands growth in maturity.
- This is also very important.

13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

- It is right here as to why is so important to have a flourishing relationship with Jesus.

- Our role as believers in this day and age is to have our hearts and minds and souls conformed to the very mind and heart and soul of Jesus Christ.
- There is nothing more important on the face of this earth that we can be engaged in, right now!
- And this is a supernatural transformational process for it to happen.
- Pastor Craig has been asked, “Why did you leave the success you had and come out here to the most expensive place on earth?”
- He knows what this life is really about – it’s not about his banking career or a great place to retire.
- It’s about this supernatural transformational process we are experiencing.
- It’s absolutely priceless!
- And so this growth process that we’re talking about involves serving others, loving others and being involved in missional work.
- And this helps us to reach “the stature of the fullness of Christ.”
- In working with our congregation, there are times that pastor Craig has to ask sensitive questions, there are times that he has to be a bit more directive, but it’s always done out of love.
- Pastor Craig does the prep work before talking with others because he wants the heart and soul of Jesus talking through him, instead of relying on his human nature.

14) As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15) but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

16) from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

- The key is “speaking the truth in love.”
- This is part of our being unified.
- As we grow together and are unified, we will be speaking that truth in love and reflect the Holy Spirit in that process.
- To accomplish what verse 16 talks about, we do that together, not individually alone.
- Now when we do things together, it means that we will probably move more slowly.

Concluding comments:

- The renewal process means that we are being changed.
- Now not everybody likes change.
- But, God’s change in us is a positive change.
- There can be no greater change we could ever experience than having our heart and mind and soul molded and shaped into the very heart, mind and soul of our Creator, Jesus Christ.
- That is it – that’s why we are here!

- And this understanding makes a difference in the Monday through Saturday external things that hit our lives.
- We do this together, in unity and when we do, we reflect oneness.
- Please don't ever take our transformational change for granted.

Closing prayer