

Episode #3-07 Ephesians 4 Part 4 - Comparing Two Unities

- I. In Ephesians 1-3, the Holy Spirit revealed to us all the glorious things that are true of us “in Christ.” Now, in Ephesians 4-6, we are told of the “worthy walk” that we should live in love and gratitude to God for the glorious position we have received.
- II. In Ephesians 4:3-6, we learned of the unity of the Spirit, which all believers today are to keep. Yet now the great question that arises: though we have a unity that God gives us, why cannot we have unity among all believers? Isn’t this what Christ asked for in John 17:21? Did not all believers live in unity in early Acts? (Acts 2:44-47, 4:32-35) Why cannot we see unity among all believers today?
- III. Ephesians 4:7-10. Christ gave gifts.
 - A. Verse 7. Paul explains that in Acts, to every one of them (though NOT to us) grace was given, not according to some superior faith they had, but according to the measure of the gift of Christ. The gift was according to Him, not them! “WAS,” not “IS.” Paul is talking about something that is in the past, in the Acts period.
 - B. Verse 8. Quotes Psalm 68:18. When He reascended on high, He captured captivity. This just means he took Satan’s captives and made them His Own captives. To be “in Christ” is not to be free, but to be bound to Him. Once He had done this, He gave gifts to men. These were the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, given to every believer. Given according to the measure of Christ, not those receiving them.
 - C. Verse 9. Paul cannot help but make an aside here. How could He have reascended, if He had not first descended into the lower parts, that is, the earth? This proves that Christ was not just a man like other men, but had come from above, and was Divine!
 - D. Verse 10. The same One Who descended also reascended. He ascended up over all of the heavens. These are heaven up (exalted) beings, not places. If He ascended above all heavens, He would have gone out of the heavens altogether! He is filling all these heavens. He was the one who filled all those who had miraculous gifts.
- IV. Ephesians 4:11. Christ gave many guides to the believers.
 - A. Apostles, or ones commissioned with authority to do His work.
 - B. Prophets, those who were able to speak His inspired word (fresh from Him, not reading from a Bible.)
 - C. Evangelists or “gospelizers” are those who proclaim the right message (gospel) of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - D. Pastors is translated everywhere else as “shepherds,” and speaks of those who were given the job of leading the sheep, God’s people Israel.
 - E. Teachers were those whom God gave not only the ability to teach, but also the curriculum. A teacher was like a prophet, but more long-term.
- V. Ephesians 4:12-16. The Goal of the Gifts.
 - A. Verse 12. The purpose for giving these gifts.
 1. First, the saints are outfitted.
 2. Secondly, the work of dispensing. Whenever a believer needed anything.
 3. Thirdly, for the building up of the body of Christ. They built each other up.
 - B. Verse 13. The final goal was that the believers all come into unity regarding what they believed. This happened! Acts 2:44-47, 4:32-35. If you had a God-given teacher, prophet, or apostle to go to when you had any different opinions about doctrine or

practice, it would make it much easier to be in unity. Without these, we sometimes just have to agree to disagree.

VI. Conclusion: We might wonder why all believers cannot be unified today. The reason they were unified in Acts is that they were given God-inspired leaders to bring them to unity. Today, without these leaders, we will never reach unity in what we believe. Yet we should at least be unified around the truths of the Bible, and we should be growing up into Christ and into maturity in our walks with Him. Let us all strive to live worthy, and keep His unity of truth.