

Ephesians 4:1-6

One Body and One Spirit

Read Chapters 2-3

Pray

Read 4:1-6

What is your body like?

Fit, firm? Flabby and weak?

How far does it reach?

President's physical fitness test in gym class

How far does it extend? How well is it unified?

High-fives, hugs, the unity of marriage

Children

Teamwork (team building exercises), your boss, your peers, those you manage

[Psa 127:4-5 NKJV] 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So [are] the children of one's youth. 5 Happy [is] the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

Your children are an extension of your combined bodies and souls. They will reach farther than you have. They should go farther than you have. If you aim them right. If you shoot them straight.

Because there is only so far we can go in this life.

We must leave a legacy.

But what is the most important legacy?

Is it physical fitness?

[1Ti 4:8-9 NKJV] 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9 This [is] a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

It's interesting that a culture so obsessed with physicality is so corrupt out of shape spiritually and morally.

Is it financial security and prosperity?

[1Ti 6:10-12 NKJV] 10 For the love of money is a root of all [kinds of] evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Riches fade, it's glory fails. There's nothing wrong with being rich (we're all relatively rich to someone else in life, unless you're Solomon)

But those who seek after it are pierced through.

You can only serve one master - God or what you want in life

The legacy we leave, as believers, should be one of holy unity:

- 1 - with God
- 2 - with others

(the sum of the commandments Jesus said...Matthew 22:36-40)

[Jhn 13:34-35 NKJV] 34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Do we love one another as believers, as the church?

We say it, but do we really?

Let's look again at Ephesians 4:1-6

V1 - I therefore (because of all we read, all that Christ died, all the unifying work he did...us and God, Jews and Gentiles, past, present, future, all peoples of all time)

Prisoner of the Lord (bound, in bonds, captive, prisoner)

In jail for Jesus

Talking about making decisions...Lord, I don't want to make decisions, I'm your prisoner, tell me what to do, where to go, when to do it. I don't need a choice.

Beseech you (parakaleo [Holy Spirit called the paraklete])

to call to one's side, call for, summon

to admonish, exhort

to beg, entreat, beseech

to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort

When we're divided, don't we need comfort?

Strengthen, instruct, teach

Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you were called

Klesis - a calling to a feast, invitation!

Our spiritual work, our spiritual job is the one we should be most concerned about.

It should dictate every step in our life, in our walk.

And what is it primarily? An invite to a feast!

Does it burden you? Are you ever burdened by an invite to a party?

Only one you don't want to go to.

So if you're burdened by your service...your calling...

Your calling should be the root of your service. Your service should naturally flow out of your calling. Although it might take work to do so

[Luk 9:57-62 NKJV] 57 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, [that] someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air [have] nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay [His] head." 59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." 61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go [and] bid them farewell who are at my house." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Jesus was straight-forward, pulled no punches

Following him, no matter the cost, no matter what you had to leave behind, no matter what you had to "neglect" in the world's eyes, in other's eyes, in your friend's and families eyes...had to play second fiddle in the very least and not exist at all in the very most to your calling...

And what is our calling (primarily)?

To follow Him

So if my calling is to follow Him. And your calling is to follow him, why are we not 100% unified?

Well, maybe we don't believe the same things...

And maybe we don't believe or behave the same way, the way the Bible says we must...

James, Jesus' half-brother...used to be divided from Jesus, until after the resurrection

[Jas 4:1-12 NKJV] 1 Where do wars and fights [come] from among you? Do [they] not [come] from your [desires for] pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend [it] on your pleasures. 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse [your] hands, [you] sinners; and purify [your] hearts, [you] double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and [your] joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. 11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

Well then, how do we walk worthy of the calling?

New shoes?

A different way of doing things. **A way of doing things that is foreign to the flesh.**

V2-3

With all lowliness

the having a humble opinion of one's self
a deep sense of one's (moral) littleness
modesty, humility, lowliness of mind

Gentleness (meekness)

gentleness, mildness, meekness

Longsuffering (patience)

patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance
patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs

Bearing with one another

to hold up
to hold one's self erect and firm
to sustain, to bear, to endure
[Moses, Aaron and Hur]

In LOVE

agape

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit**We must endeavor!***Space shuttle endeavor**to hasten, make haste**to exert one's self, endeavour, give diligence***We must WORK HARD, BE FAST, DILLIGENT, DO ALL THINGS TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT****It doesn't just happen**

We tend to think that the things God wants will just magically happen...sometimes they do, sometimes we have to put forth effort by the Spirit.

Either way, it's a miracle. Because it's by His Spirit.

We must work at it, fight for it, war against the wars in us and against us and others

[Eph 6:12 NKJV] 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenly [places]. (therefore...armor of God)

The enemy wants nothing more than to split the church, because the church being unified brings glory to God. The unity takes effort, the glory then becomes effortless

Unity

unity

unanimity, agreement

The question then becomes who is the church, who is in the Spirit that we should be thus unified with

There is a difference. There is a distinction. It must be true believers. Those who call on the name of Jesus and none other. I do not say that we should be unified with everyone.

We cannot be 100% unified with everyone - we cannot with the world, we cannot with sin, we cannot with those who claim Christ but are not of him

But, just because we don't see eye to eye on EVERY aspect of scripture with another believer does not mean that we can't still be unified.

Why? Because we all have the same God. Same Lord. Same calling. Same destination. We just see things, some perhaps right, some perhaps wrong, some perhaps just from different angles.

However, cults are not Christian. To be Catholic is not Christian. To be unified with those who might seem similar to Christianity but the core, the Spirit, is not the same, is not the unity God calls for.

Many have erred trying to bring unity at the cost of the Spirit and the Word.

But denominations? Not found in the Bible.

[1Co 3:1-9 NKJV] 1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual [people] but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able [to receive it], and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where [there are] envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like [mere] men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I [am] of Apollos," are you not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who [is] Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, [you are] God's building.

Denominations are man splitting the church based on adhering to another man's personality, following, or teaching. These branches are not necessarily all there for good.

Yes, there are seven lampstands, seven churches in a sense, seven ages...

But they've always been

[Mat 13:31-32 NKJV] 31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

Birds of the air nest in it's branches...it shouldn't be grown that large, it's weird, it shouldn't be so many branches...and what do those many branches give opportunity to? Birds (evil, sin, etc) to come and nest there.

False doctrine, division, sin, worldliness, all live there...but where is the glory to God? Where is the service, the love the ministry? Perhaps all that is eaten up by the birds and we only think we're doing something great because we're feeding a bird that shouldn't be there instead of being a unified, stronger branch bearing fruit.

[Mar 11:12-14, 19-26 NKJV] 12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 13 And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard [it]. ... 19 When evening had come, He went out of the city. 20 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." 22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. 23 "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them], and you will have [them]. 25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Faith should lead to praying for things to happen...but when you're praying for God to act, and you remember that there's something unforgiven...that it must be dealt with.

I dare to say that there are branches where there should be boughs, there are boughs where there should be trunks, because there was unforgiveness.

**Healthy divison - cell division, childbirth, growing up and out, leave and cleave
Cutting off something that is bad...tooth extraction, amputation, surgery**

**But all too often I think we jump to judgment, because we haven't kept the unity of the Spirit
We've warred and lusted after our own kingdoms, instead of His kingdom.**

**Just because something is different, doesn't mean it's wrong
Just because God isn't using you to do it, doesn't mean God isn't doing it**

[Jhn 21:17-22 NKJV] 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. 18 "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry [you] where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." 20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what [about]

this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what [is that] to you? You follow Me."

Now does that mean that everything different is good? No
 That just because someone says it's a work of God it is? No
 But I think we ought to think more about endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit.

Bond of peace

Paul was a prisoner, desmios

syndesmos

that which binds together, a band, bond
 of ligaments by which the members of the human body are united together
 that which is bound together, a bundle

This is tightly bound like a prisoner, but in love, naturally, like a body, or even just how we might tie something together (packing, moving, tying knots)

It's one thing to be unified, like the Republicans and Democrats when they "cross the aisle" on an issue...but they're not really unified. It falls apart quickly.

It's another thing when there is unity in the Holy Spirit...because it is bound and wrapped up in peace

:4-6

One body - the church (even as we have one body in ourselves and the Spirit indwells us, so there is one body, the church, that Jesus is the head of - the individual body, filled with the spirit, comes together with other individuals filled with the Spirit, and the body of Christ is able to perform works)

One Spirit - do you realize that the same Holy Spirit in you is the same as in me? The one who speaks to you, is grieved, leads and guides, comforts...

Called IN THE Hope of your calling

[Eph 1:17-19, 22-23 NKJV] 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what [is]

the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ... 22 And He put all [things] under His feet, and gave Him [to be] head over all [things] to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

One Lord

We all have the same master, do we not? We say that, but I don't know that we always act like it

One faith

There is only one true faith - the faith that saves...in Jesus

We say that, but do we act like it, just because they sing hymns and you prefer electric guitar?

One baptism

They went under, you went under, they came up, you came up. We both identified with Jesus.

One God and father of all

God is my Father, He is your Father

We say that, but do we really believe it?

We each tend to think we have the corner on the market of Christianity! We don't!

He is the cornerstone!

Do more like us! Don't do it that way, do it this way!

How about, let's do it HIS WAY!

We can't copyright it, register the trademark, make it our own style, if it's God's style.

Let's not make God in our image, let's be made more into His likeness!

Above all, through all and in you ALL

Do we always get everything right? No

Maybe if we looked at our brothers and sisters in Christ with more loving eyes, more unified in the Spirit, we'd see that we have much to learn from each other.

That only talking to believers in our small circle becomes quite unhealthy (think of a small town never marrying outside the small town...)

Now, we can't just eat anything or be unified with everything, but if they're of the faith, and we're of the faith, don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Music, books, theology...God tends to give the gifts out then we gather based on the gifts instead of him. Some people have great spirit-filled worship, but the doctrine is light, others have great doctrine but the worship is less than heartfelt...well, what if they got together...the one learned to worship more from the other and the other learned to be grounded in the word more from the other...but no, we fight, cut each other off and completely ignore each other. That is

dysfunctional. Jesus isn't glorified in that. The kingdom isn't advanced. Because our spiritual unity isn't there.

[Phi 2:1-4 NKJV] 1 Therefore if [there is] any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind. 3 [Let] nothing [be done] through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

[Jhn 17:20-23 NKJV] 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 "that they all may be one, as You, Father, [are] in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

[Eph 4:1-3 NKJV] 1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.