

Contra Mundum

The Body of Christ

Ephesians 4:7-16

April 19, 2015

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. **-Ephesians 4:15-16**

I. BUT GRACE... (vs. 7)

- Paul begins vs. 7 by qualifying what he has just said in vss. 3-6. We are one in Christ, but we are not exact replicas of one another (1 Cor. 12:7, 11).
- The “grace” that Paul speaks of here is the grace of Christ that allows us to utilize the gifts for His service. Grace is a free gift which not only saves, but also enables/demands us to do good works (Matt. 10:8; Rom. 3:24; 5:1-2).
- This gift is Christ’s gift. The Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom. 8:1-2, 9; 1 Peter 1:11).

II. FALLING TO RISE (vss. 8-10)

- Paul utilizes Psalm 68 to make a point about the ascended Savior. Jesus conquered at the cross, and his glory is now shared with his “captives” - his people (Psalm 68:18; Isa. 60:11; 2 Cor. 2:14).
- Jesus descended at the Incarnation. He ascended higher than all the heavens, to fill all things. He descended so he could ascend (Eph. 1:23; Phil. 2:8-11).

III. THE GIFTS HE GAVE (vs. 11)

- He gave leaders in the church, some for a time, some for all time (Eph. 2:20; 2 Thess. 2:15).

IV. THE REASON HE GAVE THEM (vss. 12-16)

1. To equip the saints (vs. 12)
2. To build up the body (vs. 12)
3. So that we will no longer be ignorant and misled (vs. 14)
4. So that we will grow up in love (vss. 15-16)

KNOW: We have been gifted so that the entire body of Christ may benefit. Not for our glory, but for the fullness of Christ. It leads to unity, knowledge, and an ability to hold fast against false teaching.

DO: Seek the fullness of Christ for the benefit of the body of Christ.

Suggested Reading:

The Church: Contours of Christian Theology, by Edmund Clowney

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please read Ephesians 4:7-16

1. Take some time to speak more about the “grace” that Paul speaks of in vs. 7. What is this “grace?”
2. Paul said that “he led a host of captives” in vs. 8. I said the captives are us, but most say the captives are Christ’s enemies or demons. What do you think? Why? Does it matter?
3. Vss. 9-10 are hotly debated. What do you think of them? Did Christ descend to Hell during his three days in the grave? How were you taught growing up about this, if you were taught about it at all?
4. Why is unity such a strong theme for Paul in Ephesians? Why is it so important in the church?
5. How does the gift of church leaders help us combat poor doctrine?
6. Read 2 Timothy 4:1-5. Is there cause to be guarded against poor doctrine? What is Paul’s admonition to Timothy here?
7. How do we speak the truth in love? What does it look like?