



Ephesians 4:1-16 – Christ’s body, His people

This weekend at the Bible Teaching Weekend, Richard Gibson’s going to be speaking on the ‘Search for the Perfect Church’.

So tonight we’re going to be looking at Ephesians 4:1-16 to see what Paul the Apostle thought Church should look like and why.

To warm up, what do you think the world’s view of Church is? What’s your view of Church?

Read through Ephesians 4:1-16.

1. THE CALLING & FOUNDATION (v.1-6)

1. In v.1 Paul calls Christians to “live a life worthy of the calling they’ve received”. Look back to Ephesians 2:1-10 – what calling do you think he has in mind?

2. What are the characteristics of those with this calling (v.2-3)? What’s the common thread with all these characteristics?

3. From v.4, Paul is obviously concerned that his readers understand ONE thing. What’s that one thing, and how is it related to the characteristics and calling he’s just spoken about?

4. Considering the calling (v.1) and the foundation (v.4) of Christ’s people, discuss the following issues:

think

4.1: Is conflict a good thing? Under what circumstances should we risk having the possibility of conflict within the body of Christ?

4.2: There will inevitably be conflict at times within any church. What should be the way this conflict is carried out? What does this look like in practice?

2. THE EQUIPPING (v.7-13)

Paul sees Unity not as an optional extra in Church, but as a natural expression of our calling and foundation. He therefore calls upon Christ's people to make every effort to maintain that unity.

But we're sinful, often have memories like a goldfish, and are prone to wanting things our own way - so what hope is there for us in this world? Let's look at Paul's answer.

5. What has Christ given, and who's he given it to (v.7)?

6. From v.11, what has he given His people that benefit them all?

If you've got time - Paul's proof.

The proof Paul gives for knowing this is found in vv.8-10, and drawn from Psalm 68:18. As a group, what do you think Paul is referring to here? Are there other places in Ephesians that you know of that use similar language or ideas?

7. And what's the aim in giving these gifts to His people? (v.12-13)

8. In day-to-day life, how would you describe the connection between God's people being prepared for service AND the body of Christ being built up? (v.12-13)

9. Discuss the following issues in light of v.7-13:

think 9.1: Many Churches will have a large focus on music or multi-media OR many will have a focus purely on teaching the Bible. How do both these sit with v.11-12?

think 9.2: Many would argue that all Christians should be exhibiting the gifts described in v.11. How would you respond to a claim like that in view of v.7-13?

think 9.3: Many Churches will say that their focus as God's people should be being a force for good in the community, and being involved in social welfare. Others will say that the purpose of God's people is to deal with people's real problem (alienation from God), and therefore they should focus on preaching the Gospel. From vv.7-12, how would you answer both these positions?

God calls through Christ into the one body through the one Spirit. And in this calling he gifts his people to live out lives of service and maturity within that body. So having said this, Paul wants to lay out before them two options. The bad and the great!

THE TWO OPTIONS (v.14-16)

10. In v.14, what's the option that Paul wants people to avoid?

11. Keeping in mind what Paul has said in previous verses, how has Christ gifted his people to avoid it?

11. In v.15-16 we see the avenue Paul wants Christ's people to go down. What are the characteristics of a Church that IS being built up in Christ?

One of the defining ways of dealing with people for Paul is that it's done "in love". We're supposed to be humble, gentle and patient "in love" (v.2), as well as speaking the truth (v.15) and building the body up "in love" (v.16).

Conclusion

Paul longs for Unity within the Church, and he actually expects it to be possible. Christ has gifted the Church so it will become mature, but it is up to each of those who have been called to play their part.

In light of this passage:

think

1. What is the responsibility of each of the parts of the body towards the entire body?
2. In what ways can we be actively creating unity within the body at mpc?
3. How can we be speaking the truth in love to others in the body so that we're not infants tossed back and forth, but achieving maturity?
4. What things within mpc do we need to protect in order that we might have unity in Christ?

Pray:

- For our Church that it might be obvious in the way we relate that we are united in Christ;
- Thanking God for his Word through which we can know His will, and for the people he has provided within the body to teach it to us;
- That we might resist the temptation of the world, but that we would seek after being mature in Christ;
- For Richard Gibson as he speaks at the Bible Teaching Weekend this weekend (See following page).

Combined Services Program

Saturday 1 September—at mpc

545pm—session 1

630pm—sausage sizzle

730pm—session 2

815pm—supper

845pm—session 3

930pm—close

Sunday 2 September

930am—session 4 Combined Service **at Albany Hills State School**

715pm—session 5—**at mpc**

The Bible Teaching Weekend promises to be a great time of bible teaching with Richard Gibson speaking on 'The Search for the Perfect Church'. It's also going to be an excellent time of fellowship with the coming together of people from mpc morning services, Late-church and Eatons Hill.