

Which Every Joint Supplies

“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”
Ephesians 4:16

Introduction:

1. We studied our Lord’s forgiveness of sinners this morning (Luke 15), what should we do now?
2. The forgiven Gentile sinners at Ephesus were formed into a local body for a temple of God (2:22).
3. Chapter 4 begins Paul’s practical exhortation based on the description of God’s grace he gave in 1-3.
4. Observe the meaningful conclusion of 3 with an “Amen” and the beginning of 4 with a “therefore.”
5. Ephesians 4:11-16 is a beautiful sentence of pastor and people working together to build a church.
6. As I promised this church, I intend to preach a sermon on the purpose of the church each quarter.

Call to Christian Unity (4:1-3)

- A. Paul reasoned with the Ephesians, “therefore,” from what God had done for them (4:1).
 1. Notice the division here between the chapters by “Amen” (3:21) and “therefore” (4:1).
 2. He used imprisonment for Christ in order to enhance his appeal to them (Philemon 1:9).
 3. The goal for every Christian is to walk worthy of the vocation to which he is called.
 4. What is a vocation? The special function, position, role, or station God calls a man to fill.
 5. What is a Christian’s vocation? A son of God by adoption (1:5), a citizen of the kingdom of God (2:19, a member of the family of God (3:15), part of one body (1:23; Col 3:15)!
 6. Walking worthy of your vocation is living in such a way to properly fulfill your calling.
- B. Paul listed several prerequisites necessary for Christians to get along with one another (4:2).
 1. These character traits of righteous saints are essential for fulfilling our vocations before God: all lowliness, all meekness, longsuffering, and forbearing in love.
 2. Compare the emphasis on them in other places (Eph 4:31-32; Phil 2:1-8; Col 3:12-15).
- C. Every church member must strive to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:3).
 1. Every member should be a peacemaker seeking to keep the peace (Matt 5:9; Jas 3:17-18).
 2. One Spirit must animate, direct, and motivate a church – the Holy Spirit (I Cor 12:13).
 3. The bond of peace, bound together in peace, gives the Spirit leave to work (Eph 4:29-30).

Based on Unity of God (4:4-6)

- A. The church of Jesus Christ is one body, with one Spirit, and with one hope – heaven (4:4).
- B. There is one Lord Jesus Christ, one faith once delivered to the saints, and one baptism (4:5).
- C. There is only one God the Father, above all, through all, and in all the Ephesians saints (4:6).
- D. While minor lessons can be drawn from each phrase, they are to point out unity in a church.

Diversity of Gifts (4:7-10)

- A. The church is unified in one body as described above, but there is a diversity of gifts (4:7).
 1. While unity in one body is the nature of a church, there are different gifts (I Cor 12:4-6).
 2. Jesus gives grace and gifts for the church (Rom 12:3-8; I Cor 12:8-12,28; I Pet 4:10-11).
 3. All the gifts and graces are designed for the common end of church profit (Eph 4:11-16).
- B. Follow the immediate context: “wherefore” introduces the prophecy of ministerial gifts; which quotes from David and God giving Jesus Christ gifts for His death (4:8; Psalm 68:18).
- C. Follow the immediate context: “and” identifies the limited gifts and their recipients, which is first the official teaching offices of the church, and then the measure of every part (4:11,16).

- D. Within the parentheses, Paul draws a good practical lesson from Christ's ascension (4:9-10).
1. This lesson is precisely that of Phil 2:5-16, which is understood in light of Phil 2:1-4.
 2. The ascension of Christ to the reward of heaven followed his willing humility to death.
 3. While minor lessons can be drawn from each phrase of our Lord's humiliation and ascension, they are designed to point out humble service leading to honor and rewards.

Goal of God's Gifts (4:11-16)

- A. In rank of importance are four revelatory or teaching gifts in the church (4:11; I Cor 12:28).
1. The use of "some" indicates that not all members in a church are one of these offices.
 2. The use of "some" indicates the one office of pastor and teacher, a shepherd that teaches.
 3. The first three gifts or offices have disappeared, as they applied only to the apostolic age.
 4. Christ's apostles were special eyewitnesses of His resurrection (Acts 1:21-22; I Cor 9:1).
 5. Christ's prophets were special revelatory gifts until the N.T. was finished (I Cor 13:8-10).
 6. The evangelists, illustrated by Philip the evangelist, could perform signs and wonders; and they preached the gospel to those that had never heard (Phil 8:4-13,26-40; 21:8-10).
 7. The idea of "evangelist" today, a man traveling from church to church for one week at a time, preaching canned messages and taking advantage of flocks made ready to his hand, avoiding all the work of the ministry, is not a Bible evangelist at all (II Cor 10:10-18).
 8. There are two offices in the church – bishops and deacons (I Timothy 3:1-13; Phil 1:1).
 9. An ordinary bishop is to do the work of an evangelist as part of his job (II Timothy 4:5).
 10. Pastors are shepherds, or those that feed and protect flocks of sheep (Jer 3:15; 23:1).
 11. They cannot choose this office, for it is God that puts men in it (Eph 4:7-8,11; Heb 5:4).
 12. Remember the intent of the context. What role do pastors have in church unity (4:1-10)?
- B. Paul listed three aspects of ministerial labors that apply to the four offices given (4:12).
1. Apostles built churches; prophets instructed; evangelists expanded; teachers maintained!
 2. Jesus Christ gave these ministerial gifts, one office that remains for today, for the church.
 3. They were to perfect saints, which would not occur otherwise (Col 1:28; II Tim 3:16-17).
 4. Ministerial work is reading, exhortation, doctrine, prayer (Acts 6:2-4; I Tim 4:13-15)?
 5. To edify, or build up to maturity and completion, the church personally and corporately.
 6. This verse is not teaching that pastors perfect saints to be ministers to edify the church: this heresy is part of the seeker sensitive and mega church plan to make ministers of all.
- C. One goal is unity in faith and knowledge until the church matches Christ's stature (4:13).
1. Members must be brought to believe the one apostolic faith once delivered to the saints.
 2. Members must be taught the complete and correct knowledge of Jesus Christ their Lord.
 3. A perfect man is the goal – a church that functions like a fit athlete for Christ its Head.
 4. As opposed to childish wavering that he describes next, here he describes a mature man.
 5. The goal is for the church in all its members to be like the Lord Jesus Christ in godliness.
 6. Faithful ministers will seek for their whole church to think, speak, and act like Christ.
 7. The Father seeks brethren conformed to Christ, and ministers help it (Rom 8:29; 12:1-2).
 8. With Jesus Christ fully measured, church members should grow to that full stature.
- D. The road to unity in faith and knowledge requires ministerial war against all heresy (4:14).
1. Growth to become a mature and perfect man cannot allow childish confusion in doctrine.
 2. One of the hallmarks of maturity is consistency, continuity, caution, deliberation, etc.
 3. Immature children are subject to exciting fads and lack critical observation and prudence.
 4. Children are unstable and easily moved to a new position or belief, but not mature adults.
 5. A ministerial goal is to get a church stabilized and dedicatedly holding the one true faith.

6. Some are like ships at sea, moved back and forth in new directions by every gust of wind.
7. There are many corrupters and false teachers, using craft speech to deceive (II Tim 3:13).
8. Consider the cunning craftiness of legalism, Sabbath keeping, seeker sensitive, baptismal regeneration, covenant salvation, Preterists, Roman Catholics, Mormons, etc., etc.
9. They lie in wait ... out to capture naive souls ... like creeping into houses (II Tim 3:6-7).
- E. God's ministers want members to grow up like Christ in speaking the truth in love (4:15).
 1. A church is growing when all its members (a) speak (b) the truth (c) in love (I Pet 3:15).
 2. Growing up begins with standing in the truth and speaking it in love (Eph 4:29; Col 4:6).
 3. But it seeks much more than that – it seeks to grow up in all things to be like Jesus Christ.
 4. The all things here are all things of life and godliness that are true to Christ (II Pet 1:2-4).
 5. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, the body, and we ought to give Him a great body.
 6. The church as a body is a mystical metaphor, but we are organically united by the Spirit.
 7. We cannot forget the mystical, legal union we have: we sit in heavenly places (Eph 2:6).

Which Every Joint Supplies (4:16)

- A. "From whom the whole body" introduces the actions of the members, supported by the Lord.
- B. Every member in an obedient church has been added by the wisdom of God (I Cor 12:18).
- C. Jesus Christ gifted every part; if every joint and part works together, spiritual growth results.
- D. The compact tightness, unity in one body, is dependent on every joint working together well.
- E. Every joint has something to supply to the body, the measure of grace given to it by Christ.
- F. The church can compact itself together when every member forgets self and loves the others.
- G. Every part must work effectually – working to produce the desired effect of spiritual growth.
- H. Every part has a measure: the measure of Christ's gift in bestowing grace on each one (4:7).
- I. The church can grow spiritually when every part effectively uses the grace Christ gave it.
- J. Increase of the body by edifying itself in love is a church built up by loving workers within.
- K. The body is increased – spiritual growth occurs – by loving labor from within, first by the ministerial gifts (4:7-15), and then by the individual contributions of every member (4:16).
- L. What can a joint supply? There are several useful examples and exhortations in Scripture.
 1. Assemblies are to consider others to provoke to love and good works (Heb 10:23-25).
 2. Exhorting one another is reminding them of their duties and pressing them (Heb 3:12-13).
 3. Saints are to warn, comfort, support, and be patient toward other members (I Thess 5:14).
 4. Every joint and part should consider others joints and parts more important (Phil 2:1-4).
 5. Hospitality and providing for needs of saints is supplying the whole body (Rom 12:13).
 6. It is effectual work to rejoice with the blessed and weep with the mourning (Rom 12:15).
 7. Much more honor is to be given to the uncomely members in a church (I Cor 12:23-25).
 8. Godly members will condescend to the uncomely members (Rom 12:16; Luke 14:12-14).
 9. Strong members will not seek their own pleasure, but the benefit of others (Rom 15:1-7).
 10. The qualifying traits of a widow indeed list several good works to follow (I Tim 5:10).

Conclusion:

1. Do not ask what your church can do for you, but what you can do for your church. Help it grow!
2. If you are thankful for what God has done for you in Jesus Christ, then serve His other children.