

A BREATHTAKING VIEW OF THE GOSPEL

Ephesians 4:1-16

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KEY SENTENCE:

Ephesians 4 gives us a breathtaking view of the grace of the Gospel of Jesus, as it empowers the individual believer in his own walk, as it equips him to join in unity with other believers to form the church for works of service, and propels the church to maturity in Christ.

I. GOSPEL EMPOWERED LIVING

In the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul has taught strongly on the purposes of God in the outworking of history – how that God was busy through His Son, doing a new thing in the world! Chapter 4 marks a turn in Paul’s attention to specifics on how we – those called by His name, believers in Jesus – should live and behave in this “New Covenant” that was birthed by Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross.

“Paul sees an alienated humanity being reconciled, a fractured humanity being united, even a new humanity being created. It is a magnificent vision.”

~ John Stott

WALK IN A MANNER THAT IS WORTHY

“The believer who walks in a manner worthy of the calling with which he has been called is one whose daily living corresponds to his high position as a child of God and fellow heir with Jesus Christ. His practical living matches his spiritual position.”

~ John MacArthur

WITH ALL HUMILITY AND GENTLENESS

John Wesley made an observation that “neither the Romans or the Greeks had a word for humility.” The very concept was foreign to their minds!

Humility in action **PRODUCES** gentleness!

WITH PATIENCE, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE

A patient believer is constantly working to believe the best, to think the best, and to trust in the Lord implicitly.

EAGER TO MAINTAIN THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE

This phrase is the “why” for all of these virtues – the fact that God is making us all to become HIS BODY, HIS PEOPLE...

II. GOSPEL EQUIPPING - TO BECOME THE CHURCH

The next section possessing a breathtaking view - God’s **plan** for this newly formed people.

“The essence of the gospel is not in what men should do for God, but in what He has done for men.”

~ John MacArthur

The GIFTS were now to be disbursed. These gifts make up what many theologians refer to as “The 5-Fold Ministry” of the church.

APOSTLES, PROPHETS, PASTORS, TEACHERS, AND EVANGELISTS.

These gifts – in the form of *called men* – were given to serve the church, to enable the church to be equipped for works of service.

APOSTLES AND PROPHETS

Foundational ministers – “wise master builders.” Gifted by God to lay the original structure and revelation for the church. Prophets were gifted men who spoke for God, second to the apostles (and judged by apostles). They would sometimes speak revelation from God, other times expounding on revelation already given.

EVANGELISTS

Simply stated, one that is gifted by God for the advancement of His Kingdom. In one sense, we are all called “to do the work of evangelism.”

PASTORS AND TEACHERS

While some separate these as two distinct gifts, their work is closely related.

The word **pastor** means shepherd, with the general meaning of the “one who watches over, cares for, protects and leads the flock.” **Teachers** – this has to do with the primary function for a pastor, the office of leadership of a local church.

III. GOSPEL PROPELLED MATURITY - He desires for us:

1. To do works of SERVICE – this is an earmark of a mature church. It is not for the pastors to “do everything” ...instead, the pastors are to be teaching and equipping the church for the work.
2. Maturity in believers results in a steadiness in our faith. We are not going to be battered by every wave of doctrine or spiritual fad that comes our way.
3. We are to grow in our understanding and knowledge of His word to such a degree that we become more like Christ – in how we live, and how we love.

Application:

1. What are the Christian's hindrances in “walking in a manner that is worthy?”
2. Describe the reasons that make humility a foundational virtue for a believer.
3. What role does God’s grace have in our walking out the Christian life?
4. John MacArthur says that “forbearing love” could only be **agape** love. What would be the reasons for that statement?
5. What are some of the reasons why many Christians struggle with Paul’s statement in verses 5 and 6 – that “there is only one faith?”
6. True or False: (Give reasons for your answer!) Maturity will enable a church to be more effective in the Kingdom.