

THE GOSPEL



Week 2: Corporate—Not Just “Me” but “We”

Ephesians 4.1-16

⊕ OPEN

Welcome to our series called “**The Gospel**” in which we are reflecting on a different dimension of its message each week, like the different facets of a well cut diamond. We are considering the personal *and* corporate as well as the private *and* public dimensions of the gospel to develop a comprehensive view of how the gospel intersects our lives and also the lives of others that we interact with. Today we will explore Ephesians 4.1-16: a portrayal of a radiant church that in turn leads to “whole church” evangelism, while lending credibility to the proclamation of the Gospel.

👥 SHARE & RECONNECT

- “Rugged individualism”, a North American distinctive, is captured in a popular phrase like “I’m a self-made woman (or man)”. Share other such phrases that come to mind.
- What are the cultural forces in our society that fuel and reinforce this mentality?

📖 READING

- Read Ephesians 4.1-16
 - Brainstorm the significance of the opening word “therefore.”
 - What does this have to say to the popular demand—“I don’t have time for theology! Give me something practical.”
 - How much do you recall of what went “before the therefore” (Recall Act 5 of **The Whole Story: The Church as God Sees It**).
 - Why does “a life worthy of our calling” begin with a call to preserve unity (cf Jesus’ final prayer in John 17.9-11, 20-23)?

REFLECT

- **Guarding the unity of the Spirit** *through humility, gentleness and patience*
 - Share an example of how you have seen these character qualities promote unity in a group (or how their opposites have fractured it).
 - In which in these have you seen most growth in yourself?
 - And need to grow?
- **Recognizing the diversity of the gifts**
 - Share about another Christ follower whom you are learning to appreciate more, precisely because they are different from you.
 - Share about a time when, making an important decision, you deliberately sought out someone who thinks differently than you. What was the result?
 - Does this come easy or is it difficult? If the latter, any idea why?
- **Maturing in love**
 - Who in your life might say that they have grown through you humbly serving them with your gifts?
 - When it comes to speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4.15) which "pole" do you tend to lean towards: love or truth?
 - Share an experience when someone spoke the truth to you in love.

PRAY

1. Respond to Jesus invitation in Matthew 11.28-20 *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.* What would you say to him in the light of the message? Say it and let it fuel other requests for yourself and each other.
2. Think of the various sub-groups in the church of which you are a part (ministry teams, boards, task groups etc). Imagine how they might be transformed by an increase in humility, gentleness, patience, appreciation of others' differences and speaking the truth in love. Pray that into reality.
3. Pray for the release of gifted evangelists (10%) in the congregation and the other 90% using their gifts to grow together into a loving community in which pre-Christians, new believers and mature adults will thrive.