

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for October 7, 2018

The Basis for Unity
Ephesians 4:4-6

I. The unity of the Spirit (4:4)

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—

- “There is one body”
 - Paul already stated that the church is the body of Christ
 - Ephesians 1:22-23 “And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”
 - Paul further explained how the one body of Christ includes equal access among all peoples, whether Jew or Gentile
 - Ephesians 2:14 “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one...”
 - Ephesians 2:15 “... that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,”
 - Ephesians 2:18 “For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”
 - This equal access became reality when both Jews and Gentiles trusted in Christ alone for their salvation and deliverance from sin
 - As is evident in this passage, the emphasis is on the word, “one”
 - There is only “one” body of Christ and thus, there is only “one” church
 - This was true for Jews and Gentiles who became members of that one body in Ephesus

- “and one Spirit—”
 - The believer’s union to the one body of Christ is made possible by one Spirit
 - 1 Corinthians 12:13 “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free...”
 - The Holy Spirit grants us access to God
 - Ephesians 2:18 “For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”
 - The Holy Spirit resides within us as believers and the church
 - Ephesians 2:22 “In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

- This simple truth would confront the magical and mystical background of many Gentile believers in Ephesus
 - “For the Gentile readers of this letter, this confession of allegiance to one Spirit represents a significant departure from their former beliefs and practices. In the common folk belief of the area, they would have believed in and sought the help of numerous spirits.”¹
 - Acts 19:19 “And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.”

- “Just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—”
 - All believers have been called and drawn near by God
 - Paul states that this calling of God upon the lives of believers is for the goal of attaining to one hope
 - This calling and hope was mentioned back in Ephesians 1
 - Calling
 - Ephesians 1:11-12 “In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.”
 - Hope
 - Ephesians 1:13-14 “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”
 - Paul even prayed that the Ephesians might have a better grasp of their hope that God had called them to
 - Ephesians 1:18 “having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,”
 - What is the one hope exactly?
 - It is our eternal inheritance in Christ

¹ Clinton E. Arnold, Ephesians, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 233.

- 1 Peter 1:3-4 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,”
- The Spirit has called us and brought us into one body so that we might have one hope

II. The unity of the Son (4:5)

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

- “One Lord”
 - Paul is identifying again that Jesus is Lord or God
 - Lord = Yahweh in the Old Testament
 - Jesus is identified as Lord or Yahweh in the New Testament
 - Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”
 - John 8:58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”
 - Specifically, Paul is saying that there is only one Lord who brings salvation
 - Acts 4:12 “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
 - Romans 10:12 “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.”
 - Again, this would challenge the background of the Ephesians who worshipped Artemis as their great god among other gods in the Greek and Roman Pantheon
- “One faith”
 - Knowing that there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, who brings salvation leads into the fact that there is only one faith in that Lord in order to receive salvation
 - There will be no boasting or bragging in the Kingdom of God
 - No Jew nor Gentile would be able to make bold claims about earning, achieving or even deserving their salvation
 - It is all of faith and trust in Christ alone
 - The faith exercised by Jews and Gentiles was the same
 - Romans 1:16-17 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’ ”

- Romans 3:30 “since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.”
 - This faith expressed in the one Lord, Jesus Christ, becomes the means by which we can have unity
 - We are not striving to have unity for the sake of unity
 - We are not endeavoring to join together across regions and religions for ecumenical purposes
 - We join together on the basis of our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation
- “One baptism”
 - While baptism is taught both physically and spiritually in the Scriptures, it is preferred to understand Paul’s meaning here as one of spiritual baptism
 - Whole passage has to do with primary doctrines of the gospel and God
 - Physical baptism is the act of obedience that follows the inward spiritual transformation
 - Paul’s point here is to emphasize how we as believers have been baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - More plainly, Paul is stating that we identify with Christ our Lord
 - Romans 6:3-4 “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”
 - Galatians 3:27 “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
 - Thus, through our faith in Christ, we have been baptized into Christ and we now identify with Him
 - We have died to sin and we now walk in newness of life

III. The unity of the Father (4:6)

6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- “One God and Father of all”
 - The Old Testament repeatedly supports this concept of monotheism
 - Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”
 - Deuteronomy 32:39a “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me...”
 - Isaiah 46:9 “... for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,”
 - Paul has already talked about God as the Father of all

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- Ephesians 3:14-15 “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named”
- “Who is over all and through all and in all.”
 - Paul affirms three attributes of God in this simple phrase
 - God is over all things
 - God is supreme or transcendent
 - He is the One who has planned and brought about all the glories of redemption
 - He is the One who brought the exact people that He desired into His church
 - He is the One who brought the exact people that He wanted into Valley Bible Church
 - Our efforts to preserve and maintain unity acknowledge His supreme transcendence over all things
 - God is through all things
 - God is powerfully working in all things
 - God is operating actively in His church
 - He is constantly working to make His church more holy
 - He is at work in all situations of all churches with all the people that make up those churches
 - Our efforts to preserve and maintain unity depend completely upon His working through us all
 - God is in all things
 - God is omnipresent in His church
 - God is everywhere and resides in His universal church
 - He has not abandoned His people to figure out church living on our own
 - His promise of being with us to the end of the age still stands
 - Our efforts to preserve and maintain unity are possible because God is with us to help us
 - “One God, the Father, is supreme over all, operative through all, and resides in all.”²
- As the church, we are called to preserve and maintain the unity of the Spirit
- Our efforts at maintaining and preserving this unity is a reflection of God Himself
- May we renew our commitment to walking worthy as Ephesians 4:1-3 has described so that we represent the unity of our God

² Harold W. Hoehner, Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 520–521.