

Unity In The Faith – Ephesians 4.11-16 Pt. 3

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love (Ephesians 4.11-16, ESV).¹

Memory Verse – Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ – Ephesians 4.15

Yesterday we ended with this thought; Thom Rainer conducted a study for a book he was writing entitled *High Expectations*, where they interview hundreds of church members who had joined their churches five years earlier. According to his research they found “those church members who became involved in some type of group in the churches were *five times* more likely to be active in the church five years later compared to the worship-only attenders.

Let us contemplate the ramifications of this statement; for every ten (10) people who join the church and were involved in a group of some kind; five years later approximately eight (8) of them will still be fully engaged in godly service within the church. But only two (2) out of ten (10) were still engaged with the church five years later when they only attended worship services.

We must come together in smaller groups to study the Word of God; it helps us to equip one another and build up the body of Christ. But there are five other reasons when we must work together, study together, and serve together. Paul gives them to us in the passage:

1. Unity of the Faith
2. Knowledge of the Son of God
3. Mature manhood—Mature as believers in Christ
4. No longer Children
5. Speaking the Truth in Love

‘Unity of the Faith’ when we look around the world it is hard to see how we have any unity in the faith of our Lord. There are so many different religions in the world today, and many of them do not follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. We need to understand that to have ‘Unity in the Faith’ we must find those who have a like-mindedness as us. Those who hold to the same standard of teaching and beliefs.

For example, we are Baptist, why one might ask, because Baptist believe a certain way. They believe in the virgin birth of Christ (Luke 1.26-ff), they believe He is the very Son of God (Mark 1.1, 3.11, 5.7, 15.39), He came down from heaven leaving behind His deity taking on human form so He could die on the cross for the sins of the world (Philippians 2.5-11).

They believe in His death, burial and resurrection on the third day, that He was seen by many and then ascended into heaven and now sits at the right hand of the Father (Acts 1.1-11, I Corinthians 15.1-11). That this same Jesus will one day return to gather His church to Himself, to live with Him forever (John 14.1-4). This is but a small list of the things Baptist believes, but if one believes the same things, then they can and should have unity in the faith with them.

Now here is the thing we all should really pay attention to when it comes to unity in the faith,

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Eph 4:11–16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

we can have the same ideologies and all talk the same way and read the same stuff. But if it does not line up with the Word of God, if it is not doctrinal sound then what foundation are we building it on, and is it really faith in Christ?

Yes, we can call it faith in Christ, but we can call the sky green when it really is blue and it does not make it green. Doctrine is still doctrine, the Word of God is still the Word of God, and the only true foundation is Christ Jesus. We must make sure we are only building on that foundation and none other (I Corinthians 3.10-17).

None of us are perfect and we will build things on this foundation that are not right, it will cause the structure of Christ to tilt and sway, not as He intended, but nevertheless it will. Paul reminds us in I Corinthians that Jesus Christ is the Foundation we are to be building on. We will have times when we build upon this foundation with good things, gold, silver, costly stones and there will be times when what we do is useless, wood, hay, and straw.

What we all need to understand is our salvation in Christ Jesus is what gets us into His holy presence, it is not what we do here. What we do here is a reflection of our love and devotion to His glory and honor, showing the world how much we care about what He did for us, His sacrifice for us, so we could have this opportunity to come into the throne room of the Heavenly Father with boldness (Hebrews 10.19).

So, we could be witnesses for Him when we “receive power, when the Holy Spirit has come upon us; and we shall be His witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1.8, NASB95, emphasis added).²

This is what it means to have ‘Unity in the Faith,’ when we are all working together for a common goal, to see the world come to know the One True God, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man can come unto the Father but by Him (John 14.6). This is the message we must be taking to a lost and dying world, one Satan wants to keep in the dark but that Christ came to bring the Light into, a Light shining into the darkness (John 1.4-5).

Application

1. What does your faith look like? In other words, describe your faith, not your parent’s faith or your church’s faith, but your faith.
2. Are you an agent of ‘Unity in the Faith’ or someone who is always causing confusion and disruption?
3. Deeper Thinking: Read Acts 1.8 – How can this verse help you create ‘Unity in the Faith’ and understand the importance of small groups? You can use scripture or other illustrations to back up your discussion.
4. Commit to learning Ephesians 4.15 and Witnessing to someone about what God has done for you.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father I thank You for such a wonderful day. You have created all things and even when things might seem out of control or chaotic, I can rely on the fact You are still very much in control. Lord help me to be an agent of Unity within my church and small group, help me to promote good understanding of who You are, and why it is important to know more about You. Lord help me to be bold, to always put You first in my life, and give me wisdom in the things I do that they will bring glory and honor to You. Give me an opportunity to share Your gospel and the confidence and fearless heart to be a leader so others will hear and know who You are. This I pray in Jesus Christ’s Name, Amen.

² [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Ac 1:8). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.