

# EPHESIANS PART 11

UNITED, YET DIFFERENT – Ephesians 4:1-16

Please turn in your bibles to Ephesians 4.

As we have established, Paul's main theme in this book is that of unity in the church. In the original context this dealt with a unity between Jewish and Gentile believers. There was a bit of a cultural difference to say the least – a difference which led to a disdain or hatred which Paul says was caused by the Torah, or at least the unwise and unintended use of it. The Gentiles have gone from being imprisoned by the powers to being free from the powers having been freed by Jesus and brought into the fold. Ironically, but skillfully, Paul has gone from being free, as a Roman citizen, to being imprisoned FOR Jesus in order to demonstrate and reach others regarding the freedom that awaits all who believe in Jesus.

Paul has shown how God's plan from the beginning was to unite all mankind into one family through the work of Jesus on the cross and through His resurrection. Paul has given us this theology in the first three chapters of Ephesians. Now, as we begin chapter four we will see a shift from theology into the application of this theology as Israel and the temple have now been redefined – Israel as one large family and no longer an ethnic identity and the temple as each and every believer, who together house the Spirit and form one large cosmic temple which is growing as we speak.

***Eph. 4:1 I therefore, <sup>m</sup>a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to <sup>n</sup>walk in a manner worthy of <sup>o</sup>the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all <sup>p</sup>humility and <sup>q</sup>gentleness, with <sup>r</sup>patience, <sup>s</sup>bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in <sup>t</sup>the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is <sup>u</sup>one body and <sup>v</sup>one Spirit—just as you were called to the one <sup>w</sup>hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup><sup>x</sup>one Lord, <sup>y</sup>one faith, <sup>z</sup>one baptism, <sup>6</sup> <sup>a</sup>one God and Father of all, <sup>b</sup>who is over all and through all and in all. <sup>7</sup> But <sup>c</sup>grace was given <sup>d</sup>to each one of us <sup>e</sup>according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore it says,***  
*<sup>f</sup>"When he ascended on high <sup>g</sup>he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."<sup>1</sup>*

***Eph. 4:9 (<sup>h</sup>In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into <sup>i</sup>the lower regions, the earth?<sup>2</sup> <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the one who also <sup>j</sup>ascended <sup>k</sup>far above all the heavens, that he might <sup>l</sup>fill all things.) <sup>11</sup> And <sup>m</sup>he gave the <sup>n</sup>apostles, the prophets, the <sup>o</sup>evangelists, the <sup>p</sup>shepherds<sup>3</sup> and teachers,<sup>4</sup> <sup>12</sup> <sup>q</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for <sup>r</sup>building up <sup>s</sup>the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to <sup>t</sup>the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, <sup>u</sup>to mature manhood,<sup>5</sup> to the measure of the stature of <sup>v</sup>the***

*fullness of Christ,<sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, <sup>w</sup>tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in <sup>x</sup>deceitful schemes.<sup>15</sup> Rather, <sup>y</sup>speaking the truth in love, we are to <sup>z</sup>grow up in every way into him who is <sup>a</sup>the head, into Christ,<sup>16</sup> <sup>b</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, <sup>c</sup>when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

- The verbal cue: I, THEREFORE... Due to all that's been said, generally, but more specifically due to the last lines of chapter 3.

*Eph. 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,<sup>15</sup> from whom <sup>w</sup>every family<sup>3</sup> in heaven and on earth is named,<sup>16</sup> that according to <sup>x</sup>the riches of his glory <sup>y</sup>he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit <sup>z</sup>in your inner being,<sup>17</sup> <sup>a</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being <sup>b</sup>rooted and <sup>c</sup>grounded in love,<sup>18</sup> may have strength to <sup>d</sup>comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and <sup>e</sup>height and depth,<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ <sup>f</sup>that surpasses knowledge, that <sup>g</sup>you may be filled with all <sup>h</sup>the fullness of God.*

*Eph. 3:20 <sup>i</sup>Now to <sup>j</sup>him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, <sup>k</sup>according to the power at work within us,<sup>21</sup> <sup>l</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

Because of the power, strength and riches God has given all of us, Paul urges/ encourages and pushes his audience to live according to the theology he has been espousing throughout the book thus far. Chapters 4-6 are about imagining the new creation/ the kingdom in the concrete setting of our everyday lives. The last half of the book speaks about what things would look like if only we/ all believers were to live as if this were our reality. And he surely believes it is. Therefore, we need to see it as our reality and view things through this lens. Look at the theme of unity once again.

*Eph. 4:1 I therefore, <sup>m</sup>a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to <sup>n</sup>walk in a manner worthy of <sup>o</sup>the calling to which you have been called,<sup>2</sup> with all <sup>p</sup>humility and <sup>q</sup>gentleness, with <sup>r</sup>patience, <sup>s</sup>bearing with one another in love,<sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in <sup>t</sup>the bond of peace.<sup>4</sup> There is <sup>u</sup>one body and <sup>v</sup>one Spirit—just as you were called to the one <sup>w</sup>hope that belongs to your call—<sup>5</sup> <sup>x</sup>one Lord, <sup>y</sup>one faith, <sup>z</sup>one baptism,<sup>6</sup> <sup>a</sup>one God and Father of all, <sup>b</sup>who is over all and through all and in all.*

Notice the character traits espoused by Paul. They are the fruit of the Spirit that Paul lists in Galatians 5. In Galatians, Paul speaks, generally regarding our fruit as we live among the unbeliever. And that is the way many take what he says here in Ephesians, but we have to remember who the audience was at the time of the letter's writing. It was the Gentile believers. It was to the church, speaking specifically of how they and the Jewish believers have been placed into one large family. Therefore, we need to read this as something "in-house." We must

exercise these traits/ fruits of the Spirit in order that we are/ can be urgent in maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond (linkage) of peace! There must be unity and peace within the church. Yes, that is hard when we come from different places, peoples and cultures, but the culture of Christianity should be peace and all that is listed here as well as other places as the fruit of the Spirit. Paul then goes on to make his case as to why this should be.

**<sup>4</sup> There is <sup>u</sup>one body and <sup>v</sup>one Spirit—just as you were called to the one <sup>w</sup>hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup><sup>x</sup>one Lord, <sup>y</sup>one faith, <sup>z</sup>one baptism, <sup>6</sup><sup>a</sup>one God and Father of all, <sup>b</sup>who is over all and through all and in all.**

What word keeps popping up here? One! Anyone care to count how many there are in these verses (7)? Yes, “one” is used one more time in verse 7, but it is used in a different sense there, as we shall see, but the paragraph actually breaks at the end of verse six.

- Dt. 6:4 – hear, O Israel, the LORD thy God is one. The Shema.
- These verses in Ephesians are a 7- fold Shema of sorts.
- The theme once again is unity in how we are all now linked in one family – one people of God.
- Note the communal nature of the usage. They all have to do with dealing with others.
- Now look at how Paul uses the word, “one” in the next verse as he makes his larger point, addressing our differences.

**. <sup>7</sup> But <sup>c</sup>grace was given <sup>d</sup>to each one of us <sup>e</sup>according to the measure of Christ’s gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore it says,**

**<sup>f</sup>“When he ascended on high <sup>g</sup>he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”<sup>1</sup>**

- “But” – another verbal cue. This connotes something of a comparison.
- We, as believers, have been given grace gifts/ giftings. They are diverse.
- This is highlighting our differences as we are united in the same mission.
- Paul then quote from Psalm 68, specifically verse 18, but the entire psalm is on his mind.

#### **Psalm 68:18**

<sup>18</sup> **<sup>i</sup>You ascended on high,  
<sup>j</sup>leading a host of captives in your train  
and <sup>k</sup>receiving gifts among men,  
even among <sup>l</sup>the rebellious, <sup>m</sup>that the LORD God may dwell there.**

***Eph. 4:9 (<sup>n</sup>In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into <sup>i</sup>the lower regions, the earth?<sup>2</sup> <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the one who also <sup>j</sup>ascended <sup>k</sup>far above all the heavens, that he might <sup>l</sup>fill all things.)***

Does anyone notice a difference between what Paul says and what the psalm actually says?

- Psalm – gifts received. Ephesians – gifts given.

- Background of the psalm. Victorious king returning from battle and having a parade thrown for him. The king is God.
- Notice the references to the Exodus and the retelling of the story.
- Captives being led in a train.
- Jesus descended to let the captives, (powers) know that there is a new sheriff in town.
- If we look at the psalm as a whole, the entire book of Ephesians follows it. Take a look some time.

Now, as Jesus ascended and the church, this new family was created, He gave gifts. What gifts? Paul lists some of them here. He lists other gifts in other letters, but he lists these in order to make his point of unity and diversity – unity and not uniformity.

***<sup>11</sup> And <sup>m</sup>he gave the <sup>n</sup>apostles, the prophets, the <sup>o</sup>evangelists, the <sup>p</sup>shepherds<sup>3</sup> and teachers,<sup>4</sup>  
<sup>12</sup> <sup>q</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for <sup>r</sup>building up <sup>s</sup>the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we  
all attain to <sup>t</sup>the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, <sup>u</sup>to mature  
manhood,<sup>5</sup> to the measure of the stature of <sup>v</sup>the fullness of Christ,***

- Ministerial gifts for building up the body of Christ.
- Paul will now really lean into this metaphor of one body with many different/ diverse parts. We see this in the different gifts.
- What is the purpose of the gifts listed here?

***<sup>u</sup>to mature manhood,<sup>5</sup> to the measure of the stature of <sup>v</sup>the fullness of Christ,  
<sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, <sup>w</sup>tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about  
by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in <sup>x</sup>deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather,  
<sup>y</sup>speaking the truth in love, we are to <sup>z</sup>grow up in every way into him who is <sup>a</sup>the head, into  
Christ, <sup>16</sup> <sup>b</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is  
equipped, <sup>c</sup>when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up  
in love.***

Paul uses the metaphor of the/ a body. To follow the metaphor, a body is supposed to grow not only in size, as the kingdom will, but also in maturity. These different giftings are to help the body mature so that it isn't blown around like an infant, (immature body) in a boat in a storm, which Paul likens to the confusion sown by deceitful, crafty people. We are to grow into our head, which is Jesus.

- Head – where the nerve center of the body.
- Babies have to “grow into” their heads. For us, this maturity results in the proper imaging of God. (every way – all aspects)
- All of these gifts should eventually lead us to speak the truth in love.

<sup>16</sup> *<sup>b</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, <sup>c</sup>when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

But what happens when the various parts of the body don't work properly, in unison. It is then said to be spastic. Let's look at the other ways Paul uses this metaphor in order to get the bigger picture.

### Romans 12:1-13

Rom. 12:1 <sup>1</sup>I appeal to you therefore, brothers,<sup>1</sup> by the mercies of God, <sup>a</sup>to present your bodies <sup>b</sup>as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.<sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>c</sup>Do not be conformed to this world,<sup>3</sup> but be transformed by <sup>d</sup>the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may <sup>e</sup>discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.<sup>4</sup>

Rom. 12:3 For <sup>f</sup>by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you <sup>g</sup>not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, <sup>h</sup>each according to <sup>i</sup>the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup> For <sup>j</sup>as in one body we have many members,<sup>5</sup> and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, <sup>k</sup>though many, <sup>l</sup>are one body in Christ, and individually <sup>m</sup>members one of another. <sup>6</sup> <sup>n</sup>Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if <sup>o</sup>prophecy, <sup>p</sup>in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> if <sup>q</sup>service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; <sup>r</sup>the one who leads,<sup>6</sup> with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with <sup>s</sup>cheerfulness.

Rom. 12:9 <sup>t</sup>Let love be genuine. <sup>u</sup>Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> <sup>v</sup>Love one another with brotherly affection. <sup>w</sup>Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not be slothful in zeal, <sup>x</sup>be fervent in spirit,<sup>7</sup> <sup>y</sup>serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> <sup>z</sup>Rejoice in hope, <sup>a</sup>be patient in tribulation, <sup>b</sup>be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup> <sup>c</sup>Contribute to the needs of the saints and <sup>d</sup>seek to show hospitality.

Can we see how Paul is using the same metaphor in a different letter in much the same way? Read the rest of the passage and see how he uses it here in its entirety.

### 1 Cor. 12:4-31

1Cor. 12:4 Now <sup>t</sup>there are varieties of gifts, but <sup>u</sup>the same Spirit;<sup>5</sup> and <sup>v</sup>there are varieties of service, but <sup>u</sup>the same Lord;<sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is <sup>u</sup>the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup> <sup>w</sup>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of <sup>x</sup>wisdom, and to another the utterance of <sup>y</sup>knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another <sup>z</sup>faith by the same Spirit, to another <sup>a</sup>gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another <sup>b</sup>the working of miracles, to another <sup>c</sup>prophecy, to another <sup>d</sup>the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another <sup>e</sup>various kinds of tongues, to another <sup>f</sup>the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, <sup>a</sup>who apportions to each one individually <sup>h</sup>as he wills.

**1Cor. 12:12** For just as <sup>i</sup>the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, <sup>j</sup>so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For <sup>k</sup>in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—<sup>l</sup>Jews or Greeks, slaves<sup>4</sup> or free—and <sup>m</sup>all were made to drink of one Spirit.

**1Cor. 12:14** For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? <sup>18</sup> But as it is, <sup>n</sup>God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, <sup>o</sup>as he chose. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts,<sup>5</sup> yet one body.

**1Cor. 12:21** The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup> which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, <sup>p</sup>all rejoice together.

**1Cor. 12:27** Now <sup>q</sup>you are the body of Christ and individually <sup>r</sup>members of it. <sup>28</sup> And <sup>s</sup>God has appointed in the church first <sup>t</sup>apostles, second <sup>u</sup>prophets, third teachers, then <sup>v</sup>miracles, then <sup>w</sup>gifts of healing, <sup>x</sup>helping, <sup>y</sup>administrating, and <sup>v</sup>various kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> But <sup>z</sup>earnestly desire the higher gifts.

**And I will show you a still more excellent way.**

If nothing else, I hope we can see Paul’s consistency across his letters. He is using the same imagery and metaphor most of the time. But it all comes down to unity – unity despite our differences, which he characterizes here in the gifts God had given the church.

#### Aspen Trees

- Aspen grove – the entire grove is part of the same root system which is linked back to the same original root ball. All of the trees in the grove are genetically the same because they come from the same root source. However, they don’t all look exactly alike, though they you can say they have the same “mission.”

What Paul is emphasizing in all of this, now that he has hopefully made his case regarding the unity between the Jewish and Gentile believers is that while we are now united, there are differences in gifts, or giftings. And just as a human body has many parts that look different, they are all essential for the well-being of the body – whether they are seen as more or less important to some. In the end, the body has to work together in order to get anywhere or get anything done. If it fights itself, it looks spastic and people will wonder what's wrong with it. No one part of the body can work by itself. A leg can be a beautiful thing, but if we see one all by itself, not attached to anything, we know something has gone wrong. And therefore, none of us can pull away from the body and do our own thing. One part of a body can't constantly fight another, or even itself. When that happens, we have an auto-immune issue that can eventually cannibalize the body. All the parts have to work together in harmony, or little is accomplished.

So, where do we fit in with the rest of the body? What is/ are our giftings? Do we see ourselves as more or less important than anyone else? Are we a productive part of the body of Christ? Now that we know the plan, how are we working within that plan? If we answer no to any of these, let's pray to God for the answers and begin imaging.