

**Pastor Dave – Sunday Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> June**

**A study in Ephesians – Chapter 4**

**Where The Rubber Meets the Road.**

**Diversity Is Our Strength.**

**Ephesians 4:7-16**

Diversity is our strength – used by Trudeau in 2015.

- Psychology Today article – mentions this and say - why diversity is truly our greatest strength.

Reality – learned already – a call – expectation.

- In the unity of the today.
- We are called to maintain it.

There is diversity in the unity of the church body.

- We know that the Lord is our strength and not diversity.

**Ephesians 4:7-16 Christian Standard Bible**

<sup>7</sup> Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup> For it says:

**When he ascended on high,  
he took the captives captive;  
he gave gifts to people.<sup>[a]</sup>**

<sup>9</sup> But what does "he ascended" mean except that he<sup>[b]</sup> also descended to the lower parts of the earth?<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>10</sup> The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, to fill all things. <sup>11</sup> And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and

blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. <sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ. <sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part.

Looking at 3 things.

### **Point # 1 – Christ took the captives captive – diversity in the body**

#### **Ephesians 4:8-10 Christian Standard Bible**

**When he ascended on high,  
he took the captives captive;**

**he gave gifts to people.<sup>[a]</sup>**

<sup>9</sup> But what does “he ascended” mean except that he<sup>[b]</sup> also descended to the lower parts of the earth?<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>10</sup> The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, to fill all things.

**Question** – what exactly does he mean?

#### **Ephesians 4:7 Christian Standard Bible**

<sup>7</sup> Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

Church made up of a diverse body of believers.

- Paul refers to Psalm 68 – a victory hymn.

Idea – Jesus first had to come to earth

- Born of a virgin.
- Living a sinless life.
- Coming to save people from their sin.
- Death upon a cross – taking our place.
- On the 3<sup>rd</sup> He rose again – victorious.
- Then He ascended into heaven.

Connected to Psalm 68 – Took the Captives captive.

- Took the captives of war.
- The king wins the victory.
- He takes the spoils of war – the prisoners of war.
- He frees them.
- Freeing them to serve the king.

When we put our faith and trust in Jesus – we become captives – then free people to serve the king.

- Captives of Christ.
- Free to serve our king.

Diversity – made up of every ethne – tribe and tongue.

- Different people – from different backgrounds.

We are a diverse body at Truelife Church and across the planet.

- Free to love Jesus.
- Free to live for Him.
- Part of the body of Christ

He gives gifts like from the spoils of war.

**Point # 2 – Christ gave gifts to all believers – diverse gifting.**

The Holy Spirit is a gift – we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- This told to us through scripture.

#### **Ephesians 4:7 Christian Standard Bible**

<sup>7</sup> Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

- We also have a diversity of gifts.

#### **Romans 12:4-8 Christian Standard Bible**

<sup>4</sup> Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup> in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. <sup>6</sup> According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one's<sup>[a]</sup> faith; <sup>7</sup> if service, use it in service; if teaching, in teaching; <sup>8</sup> if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

#### **Corinthians Ch 12 and 14**

The Holy Spirit gives gifts as he sees fit – not what we desire.

- Gifts given with an expectation of serving God and building up the body of Christ.

**Question** – Do you know what your spiritual gift is and are you using it?

When we serve in the body our gifts are revealed to us.

- Mature believers also come alongside us and encourage us – saying “you really serve well in this.”

PROBLEM! – some have been given gifts to build up the body and are not using them.

- This is not right or obedient before the Lord – or how the body is to work.

Some have served faithfully and then at a certain age...

- I have used my gifts, now it is time for someone else.

We are to use our gifts until the Lord takes us home.

We really have no excuse to use the gifts that God has given us.

**Point # 3 – God gives gifts to help the church body as a whole – diverse roles.**

**Ephesians 4:11 Christian Standard Bible**

<sup>11</sup>And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,

**Question** – have you ever thought about these roles being given as gifts to the church?

- Diverse roles given by God to the church.

**Apostles.**

Used in general terms – meaning – messengers.

- Go forth and preach – example – Barnabas.

The English translation - apostle – Apostles of Jesus Christ.

- Apostles of the church.
- Not often used.
- Use messengers.

The meaning the in strict sense – the Twelve Apostles and the Apostle Paul.

We read the criteria for being an apostle from Peter in the book of Acts.

- To be an eyewitness of Christ and His teachings.
- To be an eyewitness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Specific individuals for a specific time.

- For the founding of the church.

### **Prophets.**

Not just forthtellers – more so foretellers – future prophecies.

- Far more frequency declaring the word of the Lord.

Example – Jeremiah – proclaiming God's word to the people.

- We don't have prophets for today.

The bible does speak of future prophets.

We have the Word of God right here – we don't need a new revelation.

**Problem** – We don't recognize the word of God.

We need to recognize and live by the word of God.

- In Order that God can mold and shape us into who He wants us to be.

### **Evangelist.**

Every Christian is called to be an evangelist.

- At the same time, God has also gifted certain people to be evangelists.

### **Pastors and Teachers.**

**Question** – Have we ever thought about these to be a gift from God?

Pastor – Elder – Shepherd – Overseers.

Scripture references.

1 Peter 5 - Acts 20 - 1 Tim 3 - Titus

This is important to remember.

All pastors teach, but not all teachers are pastors.

- As pastors it is our responsibility to teach the Word of God.

If that is something that is not being done, then should approach us.

We have bible teachers in our ministry that God has gifted to teach the Word of God.

**Question** – Are you being obedient in using that gift of God?

Pastors – Shepherds – mature in the word of God – they are to defend it – protect it and know it well.

That is an expectation you can have for your pastors and an expectation from your pastors.

Second – Believers will be equipped for the ministry.

**Question** – What is the impact of this diversity?

1. So that believers will be equipped for the ministry.
2. It is the pastor's responsibility to you to do the work of the ministry.
3. It is not a pastor's job to do the work of the ministry.

- Pastor's do have their tasks to work on.

4. It is important to use the gifts that God has given you to build up the body of Christ.

## **2. Believers will grow in spiritual maturity.**

Psychology Today – makes mention of Little Prince and Little Princess Syndrome in the world today.

Adults who still behave like a child.

- Self-centered.
- Narcissistic – self-absorbed.
- Temper Tantrums.

As parents this doesn't surprise us with kids.

But – If an adult did this – Throwing a tantrum in a grocery store because they weren't able to have their favorite chocolate cookie – we would have serious concerns!

**Question** - Spiritual maturity – do we think about this as we ought?

## **Ephesians 4:13 Christian Standard Bible**

<sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.

Believers are to grow and experience spiritual maturity.

### **Ephesians 4:14-15 Christian Standard Bible**

<sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. <sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ.

“Without spiritual maturity we will not have spiritual stability”.

We would be surprised how many believers fall for false teaching.

Example...

- You are a good person – so God doesn't send good people to hell.

If we are mature and have spiritual maturity, we can identify the fake.

- We are to examine – memorise and study the scriptures.
- We are able to catch the false by the knowing the authentic.

<sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching,

We will be mature Christians – not a child lured away by this and that.

### **Ephesians 4:16 Christian Standard Bible**

<sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part.

We are told are to be speaking the word in truth and in love.

- We can speak it

But...

- We need to be living the truth in love.

Story told of a young man at water-ski camp – playing basketball – injured his ankle (dislocated) – to the point it was facing the wrong way – screaming in agony.

- It impacted him and everyone around.
- It looked awful.
- It took weeks and weeks to recover.

A picture painted of when we as the body are not working together – we are out of joint – causing pain – not connected by every joint and ligament working together.

God wants us to be a unified healthy body.

- We don't want to be bringing pain to the body.

**Question** – Are you availing yourself to the leadership of the church?

- To be equipped.
- Spiritually Mature.
- Stable.
- Growing.

Are you more spiritually mature than you were 5, 10, 15, 20 years ago?

Would you want your body to be anything less than – equipped – mature – stable and growing?

God wants a unified – healthy and effective body.