

10/27/26

Well, you may not have noticed, but Tim preached using Advil to keep his fever down on Sunday. Yesterday was day 4 of a fever. I'm praying today he wakes up feeling better. I hope you and your family are all healthy!

Blessings,
Jonna

Ephesians 4:11-24

Yesterday, we looked at the first part of Ephesians 4. We saw that a holy pursuit of the Lord always brings with it a holy pursuit of unity with the body of Christ… believers. Today, we pick up at vs. 11 to see more of what this holy pursuit looks like, and how God provides for us and equips us for this purpose He calls us to… to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

Vs. 11-14 ~ "And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ…"

God gave us ~

- *Apostles… the 12 disciples and Paul… followers of Christ who God gave more authority than He gave anyone else after them. They taught us who Jesus is, and they gave Spirit led direction for how to follow Him. Some will say that there are more apostles who came after them. Scripture does not support that.*
- *Prophets… those who were led by the Spirit to write and speak the word of God*
- *Evangelists… those who explain the gospel of Jesus Christ with Spirit infused power in order to lead others to salvation*
- *Shepherds… those who oversee and care for the needs of the church*
- *Teachers… those who help us understand the meaning of the Bible better*

All of these are gifts from the Lord to the church. God intends 2 things for these people He gives as gifts. First, He intends for them to serve as HIS ambassadors and not serve

themselves. Their job is always to point to Jesus. This is something they have to be intentional about, or they will begin to think it's about prestige and position.

The second intention God has for them is to EQUIP all believers for the work of ministry and building up the body of Christ MORE. God never intended the people listed in vs. 11 to do ALL the work of the church. He gives us ALL spiritual gifts to help build the church as we glorify Him. No one is meant to be a spectator.

What is the end goal? When has the church arrived at this "building up of the body"? Paul goes on to say, "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…" Here is the word unity AGAIN! Do I understand how huge unity is to the Lord? In vs. 3, Paul called this "the unity of the Spirit." Here he calls it, "the unity of the faith" and "the unity of knowing Jesus, the Son of God the Father."

Spirit, faith, personal and intimate knowledge of Jesus all bring us to a unity that doesn't fight for position but sees how each of us are important, how we matter to God, how we are called to matter to each other.

This kind of unity matures us to the point that we look like Jesus, not just a little… not just sometimes… all the time. Why does God want us to have such a unity of the Spirit and faith and knowing Jesus so intimately??? "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." When I am not like Jesus, I am like a child who can be easily deceived. I am thrown around like a wave of the sea. I am drawn to all kinds of false doctrines that distract me from the gospel in the name of the gospel. I am caught by people who manipulate me to get something from me. I am deceived by the schemes of the liars of this world who follow the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2).

Yikes!!! So… by being close to the Lord, giving full access to the Holy Spirit and standing firm in my faith along with others who love Jesus, I am protected. We are protected. We become wise. Immovable. Firmly planted in God's word. Not pulled into the lies or deceit of men or evil spirits. O Lord, please help me not to be deceived or lulled into thinking that I can stand alone on my own two feet. I need You. And I need the people You have placed in my life, that we could "exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of us may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13).

Vs. 15-16 ~ "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 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."

So… instead of disunity and isolation from each other, the way we pursue the unity of the Spirit, and the unity of the faith, and the unity of our relationship with Jesus… we are to speak

the truth in love. Speak reality with each other according to what God says is true… in love… sacrificial, unconditional, tender affectionate love. Speaking truth without God's love is NOT speaking truth!

I was going to say that speaking the truth without love can be spiritual abuse. And it is. But I realized that words spoken without God's love, even if they come from the Bible, are twisted and crooked. Satan uses the word of God to crush the soul. We are called to speak truth. God's word is truth. And we are called to speak it in love. God is love. That FOSTERS unity and humble relationship.

By speaking the truth in love, we are able to become more and more like Jesus. We are the body OF CHRIST. He is the HEAD of the body. He is the brains. He's in charge. His will, His way, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else. That is the ONLY way we can truly have unity.

As the head of our body, He fits us together and holds us together as He equips us with everything we need to have this unity. Colossians 2:19 clearly says this growth comes from Him. We are nothing without the Head.

When we cooperate with the Lord and pursue the unity He calls us to, He makes the body of believers grow more and more so that we're built up IN LOVE. Yikes… this says, "when each part is working properly." How much more love and unity and beauty of Christ would we experience if we ALL made it our aim to please God and love each other??? O Lord, please help me to be on YOUR plan! YOU'RE in charge!!!

Vs. 17-19 ~ "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity."

As someone who is seeking to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and help in the building up of the body of Christ in His love, I need to understand what NOT to do. Don't walk as the Gentiles walk. How do they walk? They walk in futility, emptiness. Their minds are set on the temporary. They are blind to the things of God. What matters to God is not important to them. They have chosen ignorance by hardening their hearts. That is pretty much the antithesis of what God wants for His kids. And as it goes on to say, "That's not the way I learned Christ."

Vs. 20-24 ~ "But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."

What does Jesus teach? What do I learn from Him who is the truth? I learn that I need to put off my old self. My old self is everything that aligns with what was just said about the

Gentiles. Ephesians 2:1-3 describes my old self as the walking dead, following the way of the world and of its leader, the devil himself… living in the passions of my flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and of the mind. And here in Ephesians 4 I'm told that my old self was corrupt through my own deceitful desires. That sounds terrible! How do I put that off???

First, I have to be renewed in the spirit of my mind. In Romans 12:2, Paul says that I'm transformed by the renewal of my mind. 2 Corinthians 3:18 tells me who does that… it's the Holy Spirit. I put off my old self by giving full access of my heart and mind to the Holy Spirit who changes the way I think so that I no longer choose the corrupt mindset I once had.

But He won't just remove what's broken. You can never remove without replacing. So the Holy Spirit helps me put off the old and replace it with the new. The new self is created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

It is created… I don't create the new self. God does. Because God IS truth, He creates me in truth. Because God IS righteous, He makes me righteous. Because God IS holy, He makes me holy. This is what I put on… a beautiful royal robe that makes me like Jesus. This is where true and lasting joy is found. That is the way I learned Christ.

O Lord, in my own strength I don't have the power to put off the old self that seeks to tear down Your body, not be part of building it up. In my own strength, I don't even have the desire to put off my old self. But by Your strength, I can take off the old and put on the new. As I do that, I will walk worthy, with gentleness and humility, in patience. I will pursue unity. I will use what You give me to build Your church, and not my ego. O Lord, please help me to be on Your plan, Your holy pursuit.