



CALLED TO THIS

Week 2 | *Unity in Diversity* | Teacher: Steve Frissell
Sermon Questions for 9.06.2026

OPENER

After celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness, Bent Tree is looking ahead to the kind of church we hope to become, shaped by four phrases we call "How We Live." Steve took up the second one, Unity in Diversity, in Ephesians 4, where Paul tells the church to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit. That one word, keep, changes everything, because Jesus already created our unity and we are called to live like it is true.

READ

Ephesians 4:2-6; Ephesians 2:11-22; John 17:21

MAIN POINTS

1. Keep the Unity, Do Not Manufacture It

Paul says keep the unity, not create it, which is remarkable when you remember who was in that room. Jews and Gentiles carried centuries of religious, cultural, ethnic, and political hostility, not simply different worship preferences. They did not naturally belong together, and now they sat side by side in church.

2. Remember Where You Came From

Paul tells the Gentile believers to remember that they were once without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world. Unity in diversity begins with remembering the grace we were given. We all tend to assume our culture and our convictions are the right ones, and that "better than" thinking is what makes diversity hard. Grace is the equalizer, because all of us needed it – and will always need it.

3. Remember What Jesus Has Done

The Gentiles did not work their way near, they were brought near by the blood of Christ. Jesus does not merely teach peace, he is our peace. He tore down the dividing wall of hostility and created one new humanity from the two. If our unity depended on agreement or similarity, every differences would threaten it, but our deepest belonging rests on the One we have in common.

4. Citizens, Family, and Temple

Paul gives three escalating images of belonging: (1) Citizens share an identity under the same King. (2) Family shares a life, so if God is our Father, you are my brother and my sister. (3) A temple shares a purpose, as God builds us together into the place where his Spirit dwells. Diversity asks who is in the room; unity asks whether we live like we belong to one another.

5. From "I'm Glad You're Here" to "I Need You"

A church can be diverse and still never share life. Steve pushed us past appreciation to dependence: I need older believers who have walked with Jesus longer, younger believers who ask questions I stopped asking, and people from other cultures who show me where I have confused my culture with Christianity. God is using different people to build you – to build us.

ENGAGE WITH GOD IN A GROUP

- As Bent Tree steps into its next chapter, what kind of faith family do you hope we become?
- What is your story of grace, and how does remembering it shape the way you see people unlike you?
- Where do you notice "better than" thinking in yourself, assuming your way is simply the right way?
- If Jesus himself is our peace, how does that change the way you handle disagreement in the church?
- Which best describes your experience of church right now: shared identity, shared life, or shared purpose?
- Who have you been content to sit beside that Jesus may be inviting you to actually belong to?
- This week, who will you make room for in your daily life, and what is your first move?

BOTTOM LINE

Because we belong to Jesus, we belong with one another.