

October 22 - Ephesians 4:1-16

Opening

What is one low that happened to you this past week? What is one high? If you're meeting with a group, take turns sharing them with one another, or write them down.

Where have you seen the Holy Spirit at work in your life over the past week?

Recall a time when someone made allowance for your faults because of their love for you.

Prepare

Spend a minute in silence to center yourself and prepare to hear God's Word.

Read

Read Ephesians 4:1-16 twice. If you are in a group, have two people read it, one after the other, with a brief silence in between. As you read and/or listen, look for a word or a phrase that catches your eye or moves your heart. Circle it or jot it down. Linger over it and give it your attention. If you are in a group, take turns sharing your word or phrase and what it means to you, or what you think God might be saying to you through it.

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all. However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Reflect

To what do you understand yourself to be called to by God?

What is the most meaningful of the “ones” (body, Spirit, hope, etc.) to you, and why?

What is a special gift you have been given through the generosity of Christ?

Have you ever been tricked by a spiritual lie?

Pray

Spend time in prayer for yourself and others. If you are meeting in a group, share prayer requests and pray for one another.

Practice

We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ...

Each day this week, find a small way to conform your life to this. Here are some ideas to try:

Find a true and affirming word to speak to a loved one.

Pick a fruit of the Spirit, and focus on nurturing it for the day.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

Write a note of encouragement to someone, speaking truth and love to them. Consider writing it to a teacher, bus driver, colleague, neighbor, friend or family member.

Closing blessing

May you all come to such unity in your faith and knowledge of God's Son that you will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.