

"THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS" (12A)

Walking Together In Unity (4:1-16)

INTRODUCTION:

- A. For three chapters, Paul has discussed our spiritual "possessions" (1) and spiritual "position" in Christ (2,3)
- B. In remaining three chapters, Paul talks about "duty", i.e., responsibilities that are ours because of our blessings
- C. Of blessings described, one upon which Paul elaborates is the "unity" that we have in Christ
 - 1. Reconciled Jew and Gentile in "one body" - Eph 2:14-16
 - 2. Now, Gentiles fellow heirs, of the "same body" - Eph 3:6
- D. Not surprising, then, that first duty Paul exhorts us to fulfill is "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" Eph 4:3
- E. Beginning with charge "walk worthy (appropriately or as becometh) of their calling Eph 4:1 Paul describes how to have a "worthy walk" (Vocation = calling, i.e. their life's work)

DISCUSSION:

I. "ATTITUDES" FOR MAINTAINING UNITY (1-3)

- A. Lowliness = having a humble opinion of one's self; a deep sense of one's (moral) littleness
 - 1. This virtue is necessary in order to properly value others around you Phil 2:3-4
 - 2. Without this virtue, members begin trying to be the "head" a role reserved only for Christ
- B. Gentleness = can be translated as gentleness, mildness, meekness; not weakness, but of power under control
 - 1. Moses was a meek man (Num 12:3), but capable of great strength and boldness
 - 2. Jesus was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt 11:29), but He drove the money changers out of the temple
 - 3. Thus it is being gentle, even when there is potential for being harsh, but gentleness is more conducive for maintaining unity. (Ex. handling a delicate rose so as to preserve its beauty, yet having power to crush it)
- C. Long-suffering = patience, forbearance, long-suffering, not inflicting speedy punishment - (Comment: sometimes punishment must be speedy, other times not. Those in authority must have wisdom to know when. As Christians, we have no "real" inherent authority over each other. Ours is a voluntary submission to each other. Christ's authority over all of us and all are subject to the same temptations. With parents to children, government, etc. it is different, there is "real" inherent authority and sometimes punishment must be speedy.)
- D. Forbearing (NKJV bearing with) one another in love = similar to long-suffering, "bearing" means to sustain, to bear, to endure
 - 1. When body consists of members not perfect, and often sin against each other, unity is not possible unless willing to endure each other's imperfections
 - 2. What makes such "long-suffering" and "forbearance" possible is another virtue: "love"

- 3. "Love suffers long...is not provoked" 1Cor 13:4-5
- 4. Love the "tie" binding virtues together Col 3:12-14
- E. Endeavor = "to exert one's self, endeavor, give diligence"
 - 1. These virtues do not come naturally or easy, nor does maintaining unity
 - 2. Only by working hard to display virtues, can we hope to "keep (maintain) the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3).

II. "BASIS" OF UNITY (4-6)

- A. One body - the body of Christ, the church Eph 1:22-23
 - 1. Church in the "universal" sense: "body" of all saved believers, Christ is "head", and "savior" Eph 5:23
 - 2. Many "local" churches (congregations), yet only ONE "universal" church, with ONE "head" - Jesus Christ!
- B. One Spirit = Holy Spirit: described in this epistle as...
 - 1. "the Holy Spirit of promise" Eph 1:13
 - 2. "the guarantee of our inheritance" Eph 1:14
 - 3. By Whom Jew and Gentile have access Eph 2:18
 - 4. By Whom the "mystery of Christ" was revealed to the apostles and prophets Eph 3:5
 - 5. Through Whom God strengthens with might the inner man Eph 3:16
- C. One hope of your calling
 - 1. "The resurrection of the dead" Acts 23:6; 24:15; Rom 8:24; Phil 3:10-11,20
 - 2. Helment of salvation 1Thess 5:8 (note: Tit 1:2)
- D. One Lord = Jesus 1Cor 8:5-6; Whom God has made "both Lord and Christ" Acts 2:36
- E. One faith = the body of truth, "the faith", which was "once for all delivered to the saints" Jude 3
 - 1. That "pattern of sound words" 2Tim 1:13, which he was to commit to faithful men 2Tim 2:2
 - 2. This "pattern of sound words" in N. T.
- F. One baptism - commanded by Jesus - Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Preached by apostles Acts 2:38; 10:48
 - 1. Those who submit added to church Acts 2:41,47
 - 2. Immersion in water for remission of sins Acts 2:38
- G. One God and Father: the Father, Who together with the Son and Holy Spirit, makes up the "Godhead"
 - 1. Paul emphasizes God's personality ("Father of all")
 - 2. Also God's transcendence and omnipresence ("who is above all, and through all, and in you all")
- H. These "seven ones" constitute "the unity of the Spirit" that as Christians we must be diligent to keep "in the bond of peace". Not one of these is "non-essential"!

(continued next week)

