

# EPHESIANS

## Chapter 4

### What a Body!

**I**n chs. 1-3 Paul lists what Jesus Christ has done for believers: we were chosen by Christ, adopted as God's son, accepted in His presence, forever forgiven and have eternal life (Psalm 103:2)! Not bad!

Paul's readers have come to Christ from legalistic Judaism and Gentile paganism. They and we *cannot* live the Christian life. Only Jesus can live His life *in, through* and *as* us. Paul was told this by the ascended Christ! Let's read Ephesians 4:1-32 (p 1175, NIV).

### **"1 is the Loveliest # That You'll Ever Do!"**

#### **4:1-6**

Paul challenges us to embrace our oneness with these attributes:

- (1) Humility puts Christ first and me last (Philippians 2:5-8).
- (2) Meekness is power under control (Philippians 3:20-21).
- (3) Long-suffering is patiently trusting God (James 5:10,11).
- (4) Forbearance is love-induced restraint (Galatians 5:13-16).
- (5) Peace with God and with other people (Colossians 3:15)

Formerly enemies but now "born again" as equal members of "The Church, the Body of Christ," Jews and Gentiles have the same Savior and can at last live in harmony, stressing our common beliefs (Romans 5:1,2; Philippians 1:9-11). "*In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity,*" wrote Rupertus Meldenius in 1627. Paul cites these essentials:

- We are part of the one Body of Christ, united by His Holy Spirit in us with Jesus as Head (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

- We have one *Spirit*. In this Age of Grace we are baptized *by* the Spirit *into* the Body of Christ at salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13).

- We have one *faith*, i.e., the Gospel given to Paul (Galatians 1:6-9; not Acts 3:19-21). The Ten Commandments are good but humanly impossible to obey (Romans 3:19,20). Only a sinless Sacrifice (Christ) could fully pardon our sin (Ephesians 2:8,9).

- We have one hope. God's Spirit in us is our guarantee of heaven (Romans 10:1-4; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9; Colossians 3:1-4).

- We have one Lord, Jesus, who will return to take His followers to be with Him always (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

- We have one baptism. On being saved, God declares your *old nature* to have died with Christ, and your *new nature* to be risen with Him (2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 2:9-12). *This baptism by the Spirit puts you into the Body of Christ.* This is *not* what happened at Pentecost when Jewish converts to Christ were *filled with* or *baptized in* the Spirit (Acts 1:5,8, 2:4). With and in are different from *by*. Why? Jesus *predicted* the filling *with* and *baptized in prior to* the existence of The Body (into which we're baptized by the Spirit). Pentecost had been *predicted*, but The Body had been *hidden* until Paul wrote 1 Corinthians twenty years *later*. *Water baptism is a voluntary sacrament, not required for salvation in this Age of Grace.*

- We have one God and Father who exists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Romans 16:25-27).

**DISCUSS: What's it like with the Spirit living His life *as* you (1 John 4:17)?**

### **All For One, One For All 4:7-13**

Christ *ascended* to heaven *twice*. With His body in a tomb, His Spirit *descended* to Hades (Sheol) where dead souls awaited final judgment in either Paradise or torment (Luke 16:19-31, 23:39-43). Christ took the "saved" dead from Paradise (Abraham's Bosom) to heaven and returned to earth to be resurrected in His *glorified* body on the third day. Forty days later He *ascended* to heaven again.

Christ gives us spiritual gifts for the Body to function as one (Romans 12:3-16). Furthermore, He has given offices to the Body to enable us to express God's love to the world (2 Corinthians 5:17-21):

(1) *Apostles* are "sent" by God and had to have seen the *resurrected* Christ in person (Acts 1:21,22; 1 Corinthians 9:1,2).

(2) *Prophets* spoke for God since the Bible had not yet been completed (Acts 11:28; 1 Corinthians 14:3; Ephesians 3:4-6).

(3) *Evangelists* point the lost to Christ, but all believers are to tell others about Jesus (Acts 2:36-41, 11:19-21).

(4) *Pastors* and *teachers* serve local churches (Acts 20:28).

**DISCUSS: Why is the body a fitting metaphor for the Church?**

### **From Here to Maturity**

**4:14-28**

*Bitterness* never leads to good ends, grieves God's Spirit and steals joy. Anger should be resolved quickly lest it evolve into sin.

Your old man died with Christ (Romans 5:17-6:14). Graham Cooke explains: *"You can't make your old life better. It was hopeless and had to be crucified" (Galatians 2:20). God is not dealing with your sin. He already did! The old you is dead, and God has made you a new creature in Christ. He's now causing you to be 'the real you.'"*

If your flash drive were loaded with all of your sins, you wouldn't post it on Facebook! Jesus gave His all to delete your sin archives, so when God plugs in your flash drive, He sees only Jesus "in you!"

Mark Batterson sums it up: *"All of our sin is transferred to Christ's account, and all of His righteousness is transferred to our account. God cancels our debt, writes us into His will, and calls it even"* (2 Corinthians 5:21)!

**DISCUSS: At this season of your life what is God showing you about Himself and yourself?**

### **Forgive *BECAUSE* You're Forgiven**

**4:29-32**

In the Age of Law God's forgiveness was conditional, based on our forgiving others (Matthew 6:14,15). BUT in today's Age of Grace we forgive because God has forgiven us (Colossians 3:12-14)!

God forgave *all* your past, present and future sin when Jesus and your sins were nailed to the cross. Are you willing, by faith, to stake your life on that? Have you told God so? Please, make sure you have. As Michelin says, "There's a lot riding on it!"

His Deal

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