

## GREAT CHAPTERS IN THE BIBLE: EPHESIANS 4

(1 Thess. 2:13-20)

### Introduction:

1. So many great chapters in the Bible. I thought it would be good to periodically examine some favorites in their full context in order to truly appreciate them and let God's word have its effective work.
2. Ephesians four is the chapter I chose to begin with, as it is truly a great chapter. Its main focus is the unity of the assembly of God.
3. Let us consider this chapter by looking at what it teaches about the facts of unity, the means of unity, and the fruit of unity.

### Discussion:

#### I. The Facts of Unity (vv 1-6).

- A. Chapter 1 detailed the multitude of spiritual blessings that God's people enjoy "in Christ". That is, there is one place where all the spiritual blessings can be enjoyed = unity.
- B. Chapter 2 described how God, through Jesus (IN Jesus), brought together Jew and Gentile = unity.
- C. Chapter 3 explained how this unification (or reunification if you like) was the mystery of God now fully revealed.
- D. Chapter 4 emphasizes that great unity that we have IN Christ.
  1. VV 1, 2 = the attitude of loving thankfulness produces the attitudes necessary for unity.
  2. V3 = We must strive for unity, for the sake of the Spirit and according to the things revealed by the Spirit.
  3. V3 = Unity = peace with God and one another = reunion with God and united with His people.
  4. VV 4-6 = The great seven 1's = The 1 God who sent forth the 1 Lord who gave us the 1 Spirit who revealed the 1 faith which teaches the necessity of the 1 baptism which puts us into the 1 body wherein lies mankind's 1 (and only) hope.

#### II. The Means of Unity (vv 7-16).

- A. We have already mentioned that a loving thankful attitude leads to unity, but that attitude has a source; our Lord Jesus Christ (vv 7-10; cp. v6 and v 10 with 1:15-23 and John 17:20-26).
- B. How has our Lord provided (filled) us for this unity?
  1. He gave us teachers and leaders to equip us (vv 11, 12; cp. Acts 8:1-5ff).
  2. And, now that we have the Bible (that which is complete), we still have teachers and leaders to equip us for the work of ministry (vv 13-15; cp. 1 Cor. 13:9-12).
- C. What is the result of our being filled/provided for? V16 = We are whole (united), able to operate effectively (united), and growing in love (united).

#### III. The Fruit of Unity (vv 17-32).

- A. We just mentioned the result (fruit) of being filled via the gifts of Christ, but let us consider the fullness of the fruit (vv 17-24).
  1. We are a new creation (vv 17-24; cp. 2 Cor. 5:17), created according to God (v24); and by the renewing of our mind (v23; cp. Phil. 2:5; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 2:16; Eph. 3).
  2. Compare v24 and Rom. 6:17-22.
- B. This fruit is to be life giving and free from spoilage (vv 25-32).
  1. It is to be free from the spoilage of lying, sin, allowing Satan a place in our lives, stealing, corrupt words, grieving of the Holy Spirit, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and an unforgiving heart. In other words, do not be like the world.
  2. It is to be "life giving" via speaking truth to our neighbor, being angry but not sinning, working in order to share with others, speaking words of edification to impart grace, remaining sealed by the Holy Spirit, being kind to one another, being tenderhearted, and forgiving one another. In other words, be like God.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Truly the message of Ephesians four is that we be brethren with and in our older brother, Jesus.
2. Consider Eph. 5:1ff and savor the wonderful words of life that Paul has so richly fed us with.
3. Invitation.

### **MORE ON "GREAT CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE: EPHESIANS FOUR"**

1. The Facts of Unity. The big picture makes this easy to understand.
  - A. To be with God one must be like God (that is unity). Oil and water do not mix, nor does God and sin (that which is not of/from God).
  - B. Conforming our self to the image of Christ is the requirement for salvation (Rom. 8:29). What does that mean? It means being united in likeness with Christ, who was the perfect likeness of God the Father (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15; John 14:9). That is, to be saved we must be like Christ who was exactly like God. United in likeness.
  - C. When we pursue this we will begin to be united in likeness to others who are pursuing the same likeness of being = brotherhood (1 Pet. 4:12, 13; 5:9; Phil. 3:8-16) = family members of God (Eph. 2:19) = the assembly of those who are being saved (Acts 2:47).
2. The Means of Unity. Simplicity itself.
  - A. Computers programmed the same way with function the same way. Excel is Excel no matter where it is run.
  - B. People possessed of the mind of Christ function the same way. The mind of Christ produces the life (works/fruit) of Christ (Phil. 2:1-16). And all have been given the mind of Christ to incorporate it into themselves (1 Cor. 2:16). Unity is available, possible, and encouraged. Free will asks and does not force.
  - C. It is not easy; it requires diligence (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:10; 3:14-18; cp. Luke 15:4, 5, 8).
3. The Fruit of Unity. Truly heaven on earth.
  - A. Peace with God, joy inexpressible (Phil. 4:4-9; 1 Pet. 1:3ff).
  - B. Brethren in Christ (Rom. 9:22-26 = Hos. 2:23 = 1 Pet. 2:9, 10).
  - C. Life and life abundantly (John 10:10).