

BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study

Sermon: “Ministry of All Believers” from the “Core Values” sermon series

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16

Key take-aways from the Scripture

- In this section of Ephesians, we read about the unity within the Body of Christ and what behaviors make for unity.
- Chapter 4 begins with Paul urging us to “...lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called...” In other words, our calling in life should be in harmony with our conduct.
- In vv. 2-3, the unity of the Spirit is maintained through the “bond of peace” This comes through “humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love...”
- In vv. 4-7, Paul lists seven elements of unity that is centered on the three Persons of the Trinity: (1) One Body (the universal church); (2) One Spirit; (3) One Hope (our shared future with God); (4) One Lord (Christ); (5) One Faith; (6) One Baptism; and (7) One God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. Each of us, then, is “given grace according to the measure
- In vv. 11-13, we read about some of the gifts that Christ has bestowed upon the church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) in order to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, until all of us come to the unity of the faith...”
- In vv. 14-16, we see that spiritual maturity (“we must no longer be like children...blown about by every wind of doctrine and deceitful scheming...”) prevents us from falling into the hands of false doctrine and deceit. We mature by “...speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...”
- According to the NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible Commentary, “Ancient thinkers sometimes contrasted novices (here described as “children”) with the mature (vv. 13, 15), those who are wise.” In regard to the illustration of “being tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind...” (v. 14), it was common to use illustrations of seafarers navigating through storms in antiquity.
- Verse 16 concludes with us needing to grow more like Christ “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

Key take-aways from the Sermon

- “Core values” is the internal belief system or principles in an organization that determines its goals and objectives. They are the “guard-rails” that guide us in our decision making and direction as a body. Conduct must align with our values: Behavior must coincide with our values.
- BUMC Core Values: (1) Christ-Centered; (2) Ministry of all believers; (3) Teachable; (4) Risk-takers; (5) Centrality of Grace/Primacy of Scripture. Today, we are focusing on #2, the Ministry of all believers.
- The Ministry of all believers is the notion that everybody and anybody that professes Jesus as Lord and Savior is called of God and gifted to ministry (not solely ordained ministry, but mission and service to the church.)
- Spiritual Gifts: (1) *Romans 12*: Encouragement, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Prophecy, Service, Teaching; (2) *1 Corinthians 12*: Administration, Discernment, Healing, Interpretation of Languages, Prophecy, Wisdom, Apostle, Faith, Knowledge, Miracles, Teaching; (3) *Ephesians 4*: Apostle, Pastor, Teaching, Evangelism, Prophecy; and (4) *1 Peter 4*: Serving and Teaching.
- As important as it is to know our gifts, we must know the purpose of our gifts and that is to serve others. It is also important to know the *way* that we use our gifts. In Ephesians 4, Paul highlights humility, gentleness, and patience, to always maintain peace.
- Of the three virtues listed above, *patience* is the most needed and the most absent in our age. It’s the ability to remain calm and see things through, even if we don’t know where it is going! Patience is a fruit of the Spirit and a key attribute of God.
- Author Alan Kreider said that the primary virtue that enabled the Church, in its early formation, to gain the attention and respect of the culture at the time, was *patience*. All this in spite of being tortured, outcasted and martyred!
- Each of us has a ministry! Whatever our gift is, our purpose is the same: to build others up; to create spiritual unity; to increase the understanding of Jesus; and to enable us to grow up and mature in Christ! When we do this with humility and patience, there is unity and peace. Core values incarnate become core practice...God is honored, the community is blessed and your purpose is fulfilled!

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- How does the Gospel bring diverse people together in unity, and what does this look like?
- What are some of the gifts given to the church? Which do you possess and how do you use them for the good of the church?
- Research the core values of various organizations, in various contexts (private, public sectors, non-profit, churches, etc.). How do these values align with their goals? Do you notice any themes from these?
- What was the significance of the virtue of patience in the early church? How is it relevant to us, as a church body, today?
- What does it mean to “...lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called”? What call do you sense God has for you at this time?

