

Ephesians - Lesson 6

Ephesians 4:1-16

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Review

- We went over Eph. 3:1-21
- We saw how Ephesians 3 connects to previous material in the letter:
 - Make known, mystery, stewardship (1:9-10)
 - “Fellow hears...of the promise” (3:6) follows up on the language of “inheritance” and “promise” (1:13-14)
 - “Together with/fellow” found in 3:6 repeat and sum up the argument and vocabulary of chapter 2
 - “Grace” in the pericope ties it together with 1:3-14 and chapter 2.
- With the first reference we discussed the idea of suffering on behalf of the faith.
- Christ dwells in our hearts through faith
 - Isn’t a mystical understanding of Christ.
 - Through Faith comes by hearing and hearing through the word of God.
- The goal of this indwelling is that they might be further enable to comprehend ...

Chapter 4

Verses 1-16: Creedal Unity in the Spirit

- **READ VERSES 1-16**
- Verse 1:
 - *So I encourage you...*
 - It is asserted that Ephesians is neatly divided at this point into doctrinal (Chp. 1-3) and ethical (Chp. 4-6).
 - This is because verse 1 is often translated as “Therefore, I exhort” - exhortation language (urge, advise, caution)
 - Yet, vocab doesn’t indicate this exhortation language.
 - This word (παρακαλεω) is only one other time (6:22) and conveys the understanding of comfort and encouragement.
 - In Christian terms παρακαλεω doesn’t indicate a shift from Gospel to Law.
 - Paul roots his words in the Gospel he has so thoroughly proclaimed in Chapters 1-3 as encouragement.
 - Verse 1 isn’t motivation but rather showing the gracious effects that the Gospel itself works.
 - *...I, a prisoner in the Lord...*
 - We have discussed this before.
 - Further internal evidence as Paul as the author.
 - *...walk in a manner...*
 - Mention this understanding of walking back in chapter 2 (v.10)

- Paul’s use of this verb is closer to actual OT language “to walk,” which was a metaphor for the believer’s lifelong relationship with God.
 - Pagan walks in darkness, counsels of the wicked, away from God
 - Child of God walks in His Word (teaching), in the way, with God.
 - To walk is to believe and trust and to follow
 - To walk shouldn’t indicate the understanding of “behave”
 - ...*appropriate to the calling by which you were called*...
 - Somewhat a redundant phrase.
 - Yet, God is the one who calls
 - Eph. 1:18 - the hope to which he has called you.
 - This is a call to faith in Christ, which Paul connects to Baptism
 - Luther’s idea of vocation (God calls everyone to God-pleasing jobs and roles in life), is not expressed normally with this Greek word.
 - The Christian calling is not a call to do something but to be someone.
 - Who are you in Christ on account of your baptism.
- Verse 2
 - Here we see how one is to walk:
 - Humility:
 - Is a gift of God
 - Can only be given by him since pursuing it by one’s own strength leads to arrogance.
 - Ultimately defines Christ himself - he himself is humble.
 - Given to you through faith.
 - Meek:
 - Near synonyms - gentleness, considerate
 - Again, characterizes Christ
 - Matt 5 - blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.
 - This is given to you through baptism.
 - Bear on another’s burdens:
 - Again, characterizes Christ
 - In the face of suffering it stands with endurance and faith.
 - Like “encourage” in verse 1, it isn’t a moral exhortation, but encouraging one to walk in the manner that is brought by the Gospel proclamation.
- Verse 3
 - ...*unity*...
 - A noun that only occurs here and in 4:13
 - Oneness is one of the themes of Ephesians
 - Spiritual oneness we share as baptized Christians.
 - ...*bonds of peace*...
 - Peace is given to us through Christ. A peace we have on account of being released from the punishment of sins through Christ.
 - Ironically peace is a loosing of bonds. Releases us from the bonds of sin, death, and the devil.
 - This peace is what binds us together.
- Verses 4-6
 - Stands out as poetry on account of its: rhythmic lines, parallelism, organized into three groups.
 - Baptismal creed - we have a Trinitarian pattern

- Though this pattern is reversed.
 - In our creeds we confess - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - in this order
 - Here, we see that the Christian is led by the Holy Spirit to the Son and by the Son to the Father.
 - This reversal reveals exactly how the Christian is led to call God “Father.”
- Terms for the Holy Spirit
 - One body - One Spirit
 - Again, a major theme in Ephesians
 - Unity of Christians through Christ - The church!
 - Body and spirit should be considered together. Man himself is composed of body and spirit
 - One hope
 - Has unbelievers we are lost - ones without hope.
 - This hope which the spirit gives has it’s foundation in Christ
- Terms for Christ
 - One Lord
 - This refers to the second person of the trinity
 - The Holy Spirit moves us to confess that Jesus is Lord.
 - 1 Cor. 12:3 - No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.
 - One Faith - One Baptism
 - Faith is expressed by this creed. This is what clings to the promise given in baptism.
 - Baptism is mentioned for the first time.
 - Early in the church’s history there was a controversy over John’s Baptism and the Water and Spirit Baptism (Acts 19:1-7)
 - Paul clearly expresses there is only one Baptism.
 - One Faith - One Baptism stands in opposition to false teachings and false beliefs.
- Terms for the Father
 - One God - not three Gods
 - Father of all those who have been baptized into Christ.
 - As He is “over all” indicates God’s transcendence and his authority over all things.
- Ephesians 4:4-6 in the Book of Concord
 - **Read: AC VII - Church (pg. 37)**
 - Here we see the definition of the church:
 - One holy church that remains forever
 - Congregation of the Saints
 - Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered.
 - Foundation for the unity
 - The hidden/visible church:
 - There is a danger that Christians can fall away from the church when they forsake the faith or lead others to do so through false teaching.
 - Christians can cease to be members by grave sins of schism and heresy.
 - Yet, true unity of the church is always a perfect, holy thing because it is of God.

- Unity of the church isn't of human making or preserving, it can't be destroyed.
 - The church is established by the true Gospel and the True sacraments
 - These things aren't established or broken by human works.
- Verses 8-10
 - We see the language of descending and ascending.
 - Refers to Christ state of humiliation and exultation
 - Humiliation - taking on the form of a servant
 - Exultation - Christ triumph over sin, death, and the devil, and His ascension to the right hand of the Father.
 - Christ descending and ascending has set us free from our captives of the devil and death.
 - Luther says "Sin, death, devil, and hell had taken us captive; but Christ has in turn taken them captive...He takes my captivity captive, intercepts my hangman, interdicts (forbids) my sins, exterminates my death, damns my hell..." (First Sermon for the Day of Christ's Ascension)
- Verse 11
 - As the one who has ascended He now fulfills His promise to shower heavenly gifts on His church through the Holy Spirit.
 - With the ascension, Christ gives the office of holy ministry to administer His gifts that deliver the forgiveness of sins.
 - All four gospels conclude with the sending of the apostles to preach the forgiveness of sins.
 - Need to do further research on this, but from my research this should be taken as:
 - Doesn't refer to spiritual gifts
 - But concrete gifts from Christ
 - Apostles (not the gift of apostleship) are men whom the Lord himself chose, mandates, and sent to the church
 - Prophets - Those who received direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit in the early apostolic age
 - Evangelist - could be considered the four Gospel writers
 - Shepherd - pastor - those who care for Christ's people.
 - Teacher - shouldn't simply be identified with pastors. The church identified certain figures as teachers (ie Paul himself was a preacher, apostle, and teacher - 1 Tim2:7; 2 Tim 1:11). Ultimately, Jesus is the only true Teacher.
- Overview of Verse 8-11
 - **Read: Power and Primacy of the Pope (Pg. 438, Para. 67)**
 - We see that God has given His church the authority to administer the Gospel.
 - This includes the authority to call and ordain minister for the proclamation of the word and the sacraments.
 - Build up the body of Christ.
- Verses 12-16
 - These ministers of Christ are to serve in Christlike meekness.
 - They serve for the sake of the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God - through the proclaiming the true Gospel
 - To administer Christ's gifts of His Word and His sacraments.
 - This is done so the saints, holy ones maybe equipped - armored to defend themselves from the devils assaults.
 - This we will speak of more in chapter 6.

Questions?

Thoughts/Questions

Any other items you would like to discuss?

Closing Prayers

O God, source of all abiding knowledge, through Word and Spirit You both enlighten the minds and sanctify the lives of those whom You draw to Your service. Bless those here who teach and those who learn, that all the baptized may apply themselves with ready diligence to their tasks and faithfully fulfill their service according to Your will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have safely brought us to this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power, and grant that this day we fall into no sin neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.