Tread: **A Study in Ephesians – wk 6 – Growing up Together**

**He sits in his cell looking out the window and wonders… Do they remember our time? Are they still walking in what I planted? Are they still running the race they started? I’ll write to them! This is that letter**

**Ch 1-2 How to stand - Ch 3-4 How to walk - Ch 5-6 How to run!**

**Paul saw them grow up and mature. Growing up Together.**

**How many of you have friends from childhood? The longest?**

**Where we stand In Christ! Last week, first steps…**

**Now things start to get more intense - Ephesians 4:1** **As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.**

**Mentioned weeks ago. Getting along is not an option but a requirement. (Jo 13:34-35, 17:20-23, Pr 6:16-19) We must do everything we can to keep it! (Gal 5:19-21, Acts 15:36-41, Ro 12:1)**

**Why is getting along so hard? (1** **Co 11:17-19, 1 Co 12, Phil 2:3-5, Ro 14:1-4)**

**Pride, gift projection (you need to be like me), selfishness, impatience.**

**That is why Paul’s says - 4:2 walk humble, walk gentle, walk patient**

**Walk this way – talk this way. Humility, gentleness, endurance**

**A large part of how the world sees Jesus depends on this!**

**Eph 4:4 There is one body (no other) and one Spirit, (no other) just as you were called to one hope when you were called; (no other) 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; (no other) 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (7X - ONE – ONE – ONE – ONE – there is no other!)**

**Seven unifying factors of true Followers of Christ**

**1. One Body - Members of the body of Christ, at salvation we are equal!**

**2. One Spirit - The same Holy Spirit indwells each believer at salvation.**

**3. One Hope - The only hope of eternal life – Jesus.**

**4. One Lord – The only king - who died, rose and is returning – Jesus!**

**5. One Faith – The truth given that leads to Salvation through faith.**

**6. One Baptism - That identifies us as belonging to Christ and family.**

**7. One God and Father - The only one true and sovereign over all.**

**The Bible claims Jesus as the exclusive, absolute, there is no other truth! No other religion, no other, faith, no other hope, no other salvation – Jesus – the one and only.**

**Paul says – we need to be on the same page about this – do whatever it takes to maintain this – to keep this unity!**

1. **We are one in Christ, but uniquely different**

**Not just by our ethnicity, backgrounds, or styles… You are shaped by God – you are unique – wonderfully complex. Different – but together.**

**V4 compares our unity to a physical body. Think about your hand – you don’t have to create unity for your hand. You are born together. It just grew together. (It’s not sown together, unless your Frankenstein). Your mom growing up did not tell you that’s you need to keep your hand together (it was natural) - But she might have said to watch your fingers – keep the unity… or it might get shut in a door or sawed off – In the same way we are born into this body, growing together, it should be natural. And seek to keep that unity!**

**Jesus is the head - Think about this - your elbow itches. So, it sends a little message to your brain: “I itch!” What does your brain do? Sends down a message to your fingers, “go scratch.” What scratched you, the brain or the finger? Brain thru the finger. How does God do His work in our life? Thru His body – thru you.**

**This one true God of all creation gives us something special to help us keep unity – 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.**

**Grace is a refence to spiritual gifts given to each one of you!**

**Different Gifts by the same Spirit**

* **Mastery & Personality gifts – what you born with, personality, abilities, and gift leanings. Things you’re good at.**
* **Motivational gifts / Spiritual gifts – what you are reborn with, new gifts highlight shape (Ro 12:6-8, Eph 4:7) Mentioned here.**
* **Ministry gifts – functional gifts given to leadership –**

**(Eph 4:11-12, 1 Tim 4:14, 2 Tim 1:6-7) Paul talks about this next**

* **Manifestational Gifts - Supernatural / Miraculous gifts – what God uses to accomplish his purposes. (1 Cor 12-14)**

**“as Christ apportioned it.” - They all come from Jesus thru the Holy Spirit**

**They are determined solely by God’s sovereign gracious will, according to His plan, purpose, & measure. God determines.**

**Examples of the spiritual gifts at work in us mentioned in Ephesians 4**

**Perceiver / server / teacher / encourager / administrator / prayer / Generosity / compassion – mercy (Romans 12)**

**Given at salvation and to be developed. They are the driving motivations in us. We are all different and are all needed.**

**(LT this week will talk about our spiritual gifts)**

**1 Peter 4:10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

**(and then a cool little passage) 4:8 This is why it (Ps 68:18) says: “When he ascended on high (Jesus resurrection & ascension) he took many captives (set free those in Paradise, Sheol - 1 Pet 3:19, 4:6, Is 61:1-2, Lu 4:18) and gave gifts to his people.” (sending of the Holy Spirit) 9 (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? (His death and Sheol) 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, (sits on throne of the most high – a reference to his authority, mission and return)) in order to fill the whole universe.**

**God’s purpose in salvation was not just to save you and bring you to heaven. His purpose was to fill you and the world with Himself!**

**The resurrection brought a new order – his vessel in this life – his body in this life us – the church - we are each gifted with his purpose.**

**We want a Holy Ghost taser – a person struggling w/ alcoholism, lust, fear, or marriage - prays for God to help – expects God to zap him with a HG taser gun… but God’s response is here’s - the church, community, get involved in a Christ-centered ministry at a church… where we can support each other and speak into our lives. But we want the taser – but God says here’s the gift of people to walk with you.**

**For our development and maturity in these gifts God gives us help…**

**11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers…**

1. **Leadership in the body of Christ is given by Jesus and uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28)**

**“Christ himself gave” - Church leadership is not a manmade position. Some will say organized church is bad – well not if it is from Jesus.**

**That is why it’s so important some of our first steps include trust and confidence in godly caring leaders. We are a gift to you – to help you.**

**He gave - “apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers”**

**Apostles / prophets is a reference to the foundation of the apostles & prophets who gave us scripture (see Eph 3)**

**In a Spiritual leadership sense these are still functional gifts from God**

**Apostle = messengers, delegates sent on a mission – church planters**

**Prophet = bold proclamation and exposition of God’s word – preaching**

**Evangelist = bringer of great news – passionate about soul winning!**

**Pastors = shepherds – care, tending, feeding, and maturing of the flock**

**Teachers = instructor – those who teaching clearly God’s Word.**

**A way to remember – The Hand**

**Every believer is given some measure of Spiritual gifting –**

**but the HS uniquely calls and gifts specific individuals for unique purposes to guide and lead the church of Jesus.**

1. **Leadership ministry roles in no way make someone greater – they just make for greater responsibility.**

**The calling to bear this burden is one I carry gladly. A calling that gives me a different life and insight into lives. Motivated by humility / love.**

**Though not everyone is a leader in the church, as Christians we are all called to lead in the world.**

**Eph 4:11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, (to do everything for everyone - no…) 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.**

**Leadership in the body of Christ is uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit to equip the body of Christ. (Acts 20:28) \*\* Equip means to prepare – to mend. The ancients used for - fix nets, set bones.**

**If Livingway is your home church this one is for you…**

1. **You don’t go to this church, you are this church**

**This is not Ted’s church, this is our church.**

**Church is a body, not a pyramid - few on top with the rest on bottom**

**You were created for, reborn for, gifted for & equipped for this**

**Church leadership equips God’s people do the work of the ministry in your realm of influence.**

**My role is not to te**l**l your friends about Jesus at your job, house, family – but to equip you to. Our role is not to plan and do every outreach – but to equip and encourage you to get plugged into your community**

**39 of the 40 miracles in Acts – happen outside of the church gathering**

**Our responsibility is to train, teach, model, and equip you to serve the world. To send you out! To equip you! We each have out part together!**

**I think a primary reason the kingdom of God is not advancing in many churches is that the body expects the church leaders to do everything. Honestly, most pastors and staff are exhausted and frustrated**

**We as a church (any church) will never truly step into the plan of God until the body of Christ steps up and embraces their role as servants, ministers and world changers.**

**Do you hear the heart of Pastor Jesus today?**

**It’s time to take responsibility of your Holy Spirit gifted and empowered mission – look at why we do this… 4:12b …so that (the result) the body of Christ may be built up. (so that we may grow up - maturity)**

1. **Our gifts and abilities are to be used right now**

**13 …until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**

**When does that happen? At the return of Jesus. So, until then…**

**Each of us has been given gifts – each one – for right now – for the kingdom – in your local church. This is the time.**

**My role as a pastor is not an eternal role – my calling is not my purpose. My calling will stop – my purpose remains forever!**

**I haven’t heard God tell me to do this – I am busy – work, kids, school activities… “I haven’t heard a voice telling me to go.” Jim Elliott, “You don’t need a voice, you have a verse.” *Verses are better than voices*.**

**Paul then gives us 3 tests to see if we are doing church right: Ep 4:13-16**

**Eph 4:14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.**

* **Are we growing in truth?**

**A Spiritually mature person is stabilized in the solid truth.**

**This is not just head knowledge, but heart knowledge lived out**

**Some docu., book, speaker, teaching, movie, trends, fads – won’t sway you. When we grow up together we are less likely to drift from truth.**

**When we are reading, studying, establishing ourselves in truth together – we don’t follow junk. Are you growing in truth?**

**Eph 4:15 Instead, (of getting caught up in the fads, trends, wild teachings - we) speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.**

* **Are we growing in love?**

**A Spiritually mature person is a loving person**

**If you truly understand the gospel, your eager to see peace – you will not love controversy, division, strife, hatred- but motivated truth & love**

**If you love to fight you don’t know the gospel, if you enjoy gossip… if your filled with hate… if you don’t seek connection with other Christ followers… you don’t know the gospel.**

**When we walk (Eph 4:2) humbly, gently, patiently, and lovingly - we have the ability to speak into people’s life truthfully. Are you growing in love?**

**3rd question - Eph 4:16 From him (Jesus) the whole body, (us) joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (say - that’s me!)**

* **Are we growing in service?**

**A Spiritually mature person does their part**

**Serving together is to grow up together. Paul equates it to our maturity**

**Well, I’m mature - I quote verses on Facebook, sometimes go to a Bible Study, help when I have the time – but, I don’t have time to make a commitment. Paul says you’re immature.**

**When you serve, you own the mission – when we partner together, we grow up together.**

**4:16 …the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament,**

**Every supporting ligament. Inner locked fingers - stronger together**

**A lot of churches are like huddles… where they never run the play!**

**I’m like the quarterback… you’re like “what a great play” “no one calls the play like you” “it moved me!” then you go and talk with the cheerleaders (the worship team) I’m like - Run the play!**

**Don’t just show up, grow up and sign up - find a place to serve**

**Greeters are in need, Kidventure, youth, sound, media, band, life Team, small group leaders, outreach – coffee bar coming.**

**Stop sitting on the sidelines - take your baby bib off – get up from you’re your little nap – put your big kid pants on - stop complaining that your needs are not met and be the part that meets the need or fixes it. Let’s grow up together! Use your connection card today.**

**Look at the amazing results - Eph 4:16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, (when we grow up together – we as a church) grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**

**When we knit together and find our place in the body together – when we each do our part - we grow and build each other up!**

**Paul’s is encouraging the church to… grow – up – together!**

**(Josh 22:5, Pro 9:6, Ps 1:1-3)**

**When we walk together and grow up together – We know God better, We love deeper, We look like Christ clearer. AND – we share in the amazing memories and bonds that come with that.**

**\*\*\*Invite cards – at the door on the way out.**