



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians

## Chapter 4

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# Introduction

- Having described earlier how the Lord attained unity between the Jews and the Gentiles through His death on the cross, St. Paul now pleads with them to "walk in unity"
- He also reminded them with the gifts of the Spirit that God has granted to His church in order to grow to maturity
- Then he addressed the need to walk in purity not as our former lives before we got to know the Lord

# Preserving the Unity of the Spirit (4:1-6)



- “Therefore” refers to the previous chapters teaching
- St. Paul accepts his imprisonment as part of God’s plan for his life
- He is not blaming anyone for his problems, least of all God
- What kind of lifestyle is worthy of the calling?
- A lifestyle which reflects that of Jesus Christ’s

# Preserving the Unity of the Spirit (4:1-6)



- With the proper attitudes (2-3)
  - ❖ Lowliness and gentleness
  - ❖ Longsuffering, bearing with one another in love
  - ❖ Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace
- Lowliness, gentleness, longsuffering, forbearance, love, and making peace are essential elements in keep the unity of Spirit

# Preserving the Unity of the Spirit (4:1-6)



- Reasons of conflict are: ego, aggression, impatience, intolerance, hatred, and unforgiving spirit
- "Endeavoring": to hasten; to be zealous; to be diligent
- Keeping the unity requires diligence, it does not happen by chance or accident
- This unity of which St. Paul wrote is not one which the Christian needs to create, but one which already exists and must be diligently preserved

# Preserving the Unity of the Spirit (4:1-6)



- This unity is based upon our sharing life in:
  - ❖ One body (the Body of Christ, the Church, although different members)
  - ❖ One Spirit (we all received the H.S., the same and one spirit, in Chrismation)
  - ❖ One hope of your calling (we are called to live in unity - to be saved and be one with Him eternally)

# Preserving the Unity of the Spirit (4:1-6)



- ❖ One Lord (the family of God has one head, the Lord our Bridegroom)
- ❖ One faith (it is the faith that has been revealed by God to us, not our interpretation of it)
- ❖ One baptism (the baptism that is based on the TRUE faith – cannot be repeated)
- ❖ One God and Father of all (in Christ all of us become children to God, the one Father of all)

# Preserving the Unity of the Spirit (4:1-6)



- “Above all”: His authority. Through all: His omnipresence. “In you all” : God dwells in the believers
- To be saved, we need to accept to be children of the Father through our union with the Son, by the work of the Spirit in the Sacraments of the Church



# Unity in Diversity (4:7-16)

- Unity does not imply uniformity
- It does not mean that all Christians will think alike or perform identical ministries
- It does imply a common purpose and interdependence within the body of Christ
- Spiritual gifts are given to every Christian
- Spiritual gifts are gifts of grace



# Unity in Diversity (4:7-16)

- The Lord Jesus Christ was the greatest gift that could be given, and He was given without measure to any person who believes in Him, who calls on Him
- In the same degree, without measure, grace is provided in the plan of God to supply the needs and provide all the assets required for functional unity and the maturity of the Christians



# Unity in Diversity (4:7-16)

- St. Paul supports his teaching regarding the spiritual gifts by Psalm 68:18
- Ascension here refers to both His ascension in the spirit to open the paradise (led captivity captive); and to His bodily ascension (gave gifts to men)
- Those who were captives in Hades were led by Him in His triumphant ascent to the paradise



# Unity in Diversity (4:7-16)

- After He bodily ascension, He sent us the Holy Spirit who distributed to us the spiritual gifts
- Lower parts of the earth is the Hades
- He ascended into the heavens in order to send us the Paraclete to fill us with His Spirit, gifts, presence, and operation “all things”, that is the whole church



# Unity in Diversity (4:7-16)

- V. 11 is certainly not a comprehensive list of spiritual gifts but it lists the gifts of ministry positions
- Apostles: those who were sent to establish churches
- Prophets: those who speak out the Word of God
- Evangelists: those who preach the Gospel to the non believers
- Pastors: those who are taking care of the flock



# Unity in Diversity (4:7-16)

- Teachers: those who rightly interprets and handles the word of God
- The purpose of gifts is to prepare the saints (the sanctified believers) for the work of ministry
- The ultimate goal is the edification of the Church of God, the Body of Christ
- Maturity is the goal, Unity is an effect as are Works of Ministry, and the Diversity of Spiritual Gifts are the means



# Unity in Diversity (4:7-16)

- Characteristics of the Body of Christ:
  - ❖ Unity of faith
  - ❖ Knowledge of the Son of God
  - ❖ Perfect man (not men): the likeness of Christ
  - ❖ Maturity and stability: confident of our faith and not deceived by the deceit of those men who are very well trained in deceiving others
  - ❖ Loving truthfulness: love without truth is hypocrisy and truth without love is cruelty



# Unity in Diversity (4:7-16)

- This is the tool of growing unto Christ
- Functional Unity: From Christ the whole Body of the Church is joined and knit together (fundamental Unity) by what every joint supplies (functional unity)
- This functional unity depends on the effective work of every member in love
- The ultimate goal is growth and edification into maturity



# Walk in Purity (4:17-32)

- For all these reasons, we should not walk as the gentiles do
- They walk in the futility of their mind (devoid of truth and appropriateness)
- The way you think affects how you live - your world view affects your decisions (Rom 12)
  - ❖ With understanding darkened (wise in their own eyes)
  - ❖ Being alienated from the life of God (the Truth)



# Walk in Purity (4:17-32)

- ❖ With ignorance “How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity?” (Pro 1:22)
- ❖ Hardening of their heart (loved sin, hatred, materialism, and love of pleasures)
- ❖ Being past feeling: Having silenced their conscience.
- The result of the futility of mind is giving themselves over to lewdness (self indulgence)



# Walk in Purity (4:17-32)

- We are different because of our faith in Christ when we heard Him and taught the Truth by Him (though the Church and the Scriptures)
- We need to put off the old man (the former conduct) which grows corrupt and is led by the deceitful lusts
- The transformation starts from the renewing of mind (v.23)



# Walk in Purity (4:17-32)

- We need to put on the new man who is created by God in the Baptism walking in true righteousness (outside) and holiness (inside)
- We need to put away lying and speak truthfully together since we are one body
- When we are hurt, we may express our anger, but without sinning (allowing the anger destroys our relationship)



# Walk in Purity (4:17-32)

- We should reconcile our relationships soon, otherwise we are giving a place to the devil
- We should not steal or cheat. Instead, we should labor and work to be generous in our giving
- We should not curse or negatively criticize one another; but rather edify one another so that your hearers may profit with regard to going forward in godliness and love



# Walk in Purity (4:17-32)

- Such sins, as those described above, grieve the Holy Spirit (He will not continue to work effectively in those addicted to them)
- The sealing of the Holy Spirit is an earnest proof, an assurance of the final redemption
- If we grieve him, the assurance will disappear



# Walk in Purity (4:17-32)

- We should put away bitterness (the suppressed anger), wrath (the explosive anger), anger (unexpressed anger), screaming (the wrongly expressed anger), evil speaking (the gossiping anger), malice (the plotting anger)
- But instead we should be kind, tenderhearted (feeling for one another), and forgiving as the Lord was with us



# Conclusion

- What are the six essential elements of preserving the unity of spirit?
- What are the six reasons of conflict?
- What are the seven elements of fundamental unity?
- What is the goal, the effect, the means of the church?
- What are the characteristics of the church?
- What are the reasons of the futility of the mind?
- How does the transformation start?