

INTRODUCTION

This is a yearly sermon designed to set the tone and course for our year as a church. These are our **ASPIRATIONS**.

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

- Paul writes his letter of Ephesians while in jail.
- The letter can be divided into two halves: Chapters 1-3, the Story of the Gospel and Chapters 4-6, Our Gospel Story.
- Ephesians was written to the church.
- Jesus sent His disciples out to make disciples who then gathered into small churches.
- The church is Jesus' idea. It's plan A, and there is no plan B.
- The church together reaches, teaches, strengthens, corrects, and brings glory to Jesus.

1. GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS CHURCH

JESUS IS THE _____ OF ALL _____ FOR THE CHURCH!

Ephesians 3:10-11 ¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2:19-21 ¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

A CHURCH THAT HAS JESUS AT THE CENTER OF IT SHOULD BE:

- One built on the foundation of the Apostles' teaching with Jesus at the center of it.
- One made of believers, with one faith, who are sons and daughter of the King.
- One that unites Christians to be God's church with the same faith, beliefs, behaviors, and purposes.

2. THE JOB OF THE CHURCH IS TO REVEAL GOD FOR WHO HE TRULY IS, AND WHAT HE IS CAPABLE OF DOING, TO THE WORLD.

Ephesians 3:8-10 ⁸Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

ONE FAITH—WHAT IS IT?

Ephesians 4:1-6 ¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

What is our faith? It's our doctrines, right thinking, what we believe.

- One Lord (the Kingdom) and one faith (the gospel).
- The faith has two components: beliefs and actions/behaviors.

Jude 1:3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.

WE ARE TO BE CHARACTERIZED BY UNITY

A. Proper Beliefs

- What does God expect from us?

B. Proper Behaviors

John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Are we fighting the right fight?
- Are we living out what God called do?
- Are we protecting the reputation of our God with our beliefs and behaviors?
- Are we put our God on display with our Faith and our actions?
- If you are not connected into relational environments, your faith cannot grow and mature!

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

Passages to consider: Ephesians 4:1-6 & 4:17-5:2

1. What from the sermon caught your attention?
2. Take a look at Ephesians 4:1-6. What does the use of “one” and “all” indicate? A) What are the different “one’s” listed?
3. What does it mean for God to be Lord of all? A) How has He become Lord in your life?
4. Do your best to describe the faith that you hold—the set of beliefs that guide you, maybe the top ones. A) How has following Jesus impacted your beliefs? (What has changed or solidified?)
5. How does the faith you hold—the beliefs you have—impact your attitude and actions in your daily life?
6. Think of an issue that you deal with where you work, live, or play. What does the set of faith/beliefs that Jesus gave to us, His followers, guide you with that issue? A) Talk with a fellow Christ-follower about it.

Passages to prepare for next week: Ephesians 2:11-21; 1 John 3