

INTRODUCTION

- This is a yearly sermon series designed to set the tone for our year as a church. It is **our aspirations**.

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

- Written to the church. (Yes there are personal applications, but it's written to the church started by Jesus' disciples.)
- Jesus sent them out to make disciples who then gathered into 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.

Behold, the fool saith, "Put not all thine eggs in the one basket"—which is but a manner of saying, "Scatter your money and your attention"; but a wise man saith, "Put all your eggs in the one basket—and watch that basket!"

- Mark Twain, *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson*, 1894

Matthew 16:17–20 ¹⁷Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." ²⁰Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Ephesians 2:15–20 ¹⁵by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in **himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace**, ¹⁶and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access to the Father by **one** Spirit. 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.

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,

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS GIVES US SEVERAL DESCRIPTIVE NAMES FOR GOD'S CHURCH.

- Aspects of the church are revealed by the names God gives it.
 - "Kingdom" : God is Lord
 - "Body" : Faith and Family (household)
 - "One" : a key word

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; ⁵**one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism; ⁶**one** God and Father of all, **who** is over all and through all and in all.

1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

THIS WEEK, WE'RE FOCUSING ON "THE FAITH."

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

Jude 3–4 ³Dear 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. ⁴For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Ephesians 2:1–10 ¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus **to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

1. NOTICE THE BELIEFS ARE HERE: THE GOSPEL, SALVATION ISSUES, AND BELIEFS.

Mark 1:14–15 ¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

2. NOTICE BEHAVIORS BEFORE CHRIST VERSUS BEHAVIORS AFTER.

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.

- We are called on to be a community within a larger world that believes different things and acts in different ways—a Kingdom within a kingdom.
 - We are called on to a mission together—to spread the faith which includes both beliefs and behaviors.
 - We are called on to be one and to hold to the faith which leads to discernment.
 - “In essentials, unity [fellowship]; in non-essentials, liberty [freedom]; in all things, charity [love].”¹
 - The devil loves to downplay essentials and to lift up non-essentials, and he loves us to fight like the devil for the things of God.
 - This is why we do 101 and 301 classes.
 - This year, we are asking you to become one with us and help us be a light to the whole world. That is what this church is all about. Join us!
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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

²Quote often attributed to Augustine, but may have been written by Rupertus Meldenius.