

Session 5 – A calling worth living, building, pursuing – we have grace to achieve.

Chapter 4:1-16

Imagine that the Queen came up to you and asked you to be her main representative in your city. Your responsibility would be to uphold the majesty, splendour and standard of the royal family and the authority of the crown where you live. That would be a great and daunting honour. Essentially where Paul takes us in the next few chapters has this very flavour about it, but rather than being the representatives of the monarch of a country, we are God's people, the representatives on earth of a different ruler, of a greater king and of a better way. This, of course, makes sense of the power of the

This is important, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and now we see that we are the body of Christ. But we are called to flow and not just to collect the blessing. Called to be united but also those who are hands and feet and the mouth of Jesus together in the world.

God is raising up a people to be his representative in the earth and that looks like you and me, together as God's people. What beauty, what grace, what power.

We are living in a world where much posturing, protest, pressure and pain and we are in a world-wide pandemic. However, the book of Ephesians invites God's people to look up and see once again the heavenly perspective so that we can take part in God's purpose on the earth. When we see things from the eternal perspective, we can deal with what is in front of us.

Having given us the 3 chapters of revelation and heavenly perspective. We are then being instructed that this needs to be worked out in practical life.

Verse 1 indicates this so well – Paul is making the appeal here as a 'Prisoner for Christ'. This is a phrase that Paul often uses as a description for himself. In fact, the beginning of the letter to the Ephesians he states, 'Paul a prisoner of Christ'. They are remarkably similar, but there is a slight difference.

At the start of the letter, Paul is beginning to take us up higher as an apostle and Prisoner of Christ. Someone who has become captivated by and captive to the purpose of God in Christ. Now at the section of the letter we have come to, Paul is going to say some things about rubber hitting the road matters for the believer. He is saying this as a prisoner For Christ – as one who is currently in chains because he is a prisoner of Christ, because of being a prisoner of Christ.

In other words, his revelation led him into some costly application. He was living it out and proclaiming it and it led him to be a prisoner for Christ – At this point in Paul's life he is under house arrest.

The point He is making for us is simple: - because of the richness of what you have become in Christ, it needs to alter your life on earth.

It is the walking bit, it's the living it out. This revelation looks like something in the life of the believer. This takes us away from the notion that Christianity is merely in the mind (although how we think, is going to be especially important in the way we live for Jesus.) It has to be more than a religious moment in a week. It is something of complete life and obedience – AND JOY.

Paul speaks of us walking in a manner that is worthy of our calling.

We have received a calling – The call is to be like and proclaim Jesus in the world. What does this look like?

It looks like a people who are living out their oneness and holiness in the midst of this world. We were born from above, so we are different and we are one.

In Galatians and Romans, Paul reveals to us that this is possible for those who are full of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:3-8, Galatians 5:16-26). Living full of the Holy Spirit is the key.

All the time, this community representing God's great work in Christ, is one that is holding out the word of life and blessing to the world. We say, what you see us growing into is the likeness of Jesus, come be part of the family. **ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH THE GOSPEL**

As Jesus is the word made flesh and we are now learning that we are the hands, feet, mouthpiece of Jesus. Jesus revealed through His people. In verse Ephesians 4:12 we see that we are called to the works of ministry or service.

So we are called. There is a call upon your personal life but uses the everyday for the kingdom of God.

We must link this to Ephesians 2:10 – God has planned good works in advance for you to walk in. Also to Ephesians 3:20-21 - The good works of God through this community.

It is in the light of this and 'God's glory in the church' that Paul says 'therefore' (Ephesians 4:1).

We have an exciting assignment from heaven, a call that matters, now comes a dose of reality check, not to stop you dreaming big in relation to God's purpose, but for it to live in your everyday.

Challenging stuff, but there is some wonderful news for us.

In this passage we see that there is a reference to the grace that is upon the people of God. In chapter 2 we are told that we have been saved by grace. There is a distinction here. God's grace to save but also God's grace upon the redeemed people of God to achieve.

In verse 7 – Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. This is grace to function as a member in the body of Christ. It is according to the gift of Christ. This means that God's grace upon us is commensurate to the gift of Christ upon us. He gives us his lavish favour to function in the gift of God to us that enables us to play our part in God's big call to live as His kingdom community on earth.

There is favour on each one of us to play our part within the context of God's kingdom community.

In fact, as has already been mentioned, the Holy Spirit is the one who enables us to live this way.

So here are some key things to take out of this part of the letter. – **Majoring on our togetherness.**

1. Unity matters – **CAN'T DO IT ALONE**

- a. Reflects the Godhead – Paul describes how there is one spirit, One lord and One Father.
- b. The body is the body of Christ, made up of sons of God who are empowered by the holy Spirit.
- c. Without this revelation we are missing something –
- d. We have already seen that our identity is one in Christ, and through the gospel of Jesus Christ, there is one new man in Christ. No lesser identity must take precedence over our belonging in Christ.

2. **Love Matters**

- a. There is a fresh call to walk in love. A laying down of life kind of love
- b. NB Romans 5:5 that tells us that the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts
- c. Paul prays that we have a revelation of the love of God and it's vastness (Ephesians 3:14-19)

- d. John 13:34-35 - tells us that by the love that we exhibit for one another that we are to be known as his disciples
- e. 1 Corinthians 13 tells us that the kind of love
- f. This means as Paul says being humble, patient, and gentle
- g. But it also means that we are committed to playing our part in seeing each other mature and grow up
- h. We do still speak the truth to each other – we are rooting for each other. We love each other too much to not bring God's word that will help each other grow to maturity

3. Truth Matters

- a. Speaking the truth – not merely, 'not telling lies', but the word of God that is true – maturity requires that we know the plumb line of God's word and that we go with that. This truth is what we speak to ourselves, and one another.
- b. Receiving from ministries of the ascended Christ – these people are graced as gifts to help the whole body come to maturity – there is unity in the maturity of the people of God who are coming to be more and more like Jesus
- c. We become more Christ-like – He is the truth (John 14:)

4. The ascended Christ is who we are talking about representing (Paul tells us that this Jesus who is now at the right hand of the Father)

- a. We are seeing that this community matters in a bigger way than we thought
- b. We are seeing that this community is a community of the king
- c. As we are walking in this way, we are representing heaven on earth – it looks like Jesus, also it removes the obstacles for the flow of the life and power of God through His people. (Psalm 133)