

## “Why We Need Others” - Ephesians 4:7-16 – April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018

- The title I chose for today's teaching is “Why We Need Others.”
- Here in our text, the Apostle Paul explains how important every one of us is to the body of Christ functioning in a healthy way.
- Just as with our bodies physically functioning in a healthy way, so too do we all play a part in the body of Christ being healthy.

- All of this presupposes we have an understanding of how we as Christians are all different parts of the same body of Christ.
- In other words, while we are all diverse in our function, we are all the same in our unity and importance as the body of Christ.
- Enter our text today, where the Apostle Paul will detail for us, how much we really need each other to function in a healthy way.

### 1. We all have a gift (Verses 7-10)

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” 9 (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

- Paul begins by writing that each one of us has been given gifts, as Christ apportioned it, when He descended and ascended.
- This is actually a reference to the fulfillment of a prophecy found in Psalm 68:18 about how Jesus first descended into Hades.
- It also fulfilled Mathew 16:4, where Jesus said the only sign for a wicked generation is that of Jonah 3-days in the belly of a fish.

### 2. We all are equipped (Verses 11-13)

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 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.

- After establishing that we're all given a gift, Paul then goes on to list some of those gifts, all of which are to equip God's people.
- It's interesting to note how that the purpose is for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be both built up and grow up.
- As such, He gave the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and the pastors and teachers in order to attain both unity and wholeness.

I like how one commentator delineated this, “The prophetic ministry is a guiding ministry and refers to those who speak the Word of the Lord in the Spirit. The evangelistic ministry is a gathering ministry and refers to those who bring people to the kingdom. The pastoral ministry is a guarding ministry and refers to those who protect the flock from the wolves who seek to destroy them. The teaching ministry is a grounding ministry and refers to those who ground God's people in the truths of His Word.

### 3. We all are joined together (Verses 14-16)

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. 15 Instead, 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. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

- Here, Paul describes what a healthy and whole body that's joined and held together will actually look like and even function like.
- Specifically, that of no longer being immature, such that we are not back and forth when it comes to crafty and cunning people.
- Instead, we're speaking truth in love because of our maturity and unity; joined together, and built up, as each part does its work.

1 Corinthians 12:12–27 - 12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don't need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don't need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

- Sadly, many a Christian has resigned themselves to this notion that they're insignificant and unimportant within the body of Christ.
- We do err greatly, when we mitigate the magnificence of those faithfully serving and ministering in obscurity and anonymity.
- Those unknown servants aren't perceived as having as much value in the body of Christ as those who are very well known.

- The bottom line is, while some think more highly of themselves than they ought others think less of themselves than they ought.
- I think the question we all need to ask ourselves is that of what is my part in the body of Christ, and what am I doing about it.