

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

1 Kings 19:4-8

Psalm 34:1-8

Taste & see that the Lord is good. (v8)

Ephesians 4:1-16

John 6:35, 41-51

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Gracious God, your blessed Son came down from heaven to be the true bread that gives life to the world. Give us this bread always, that he may live in us & we in him, & that, strengthened by this food, we may live as his body in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- Ephesians 4:1-16

¹I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility & gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body & one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God & Father of all, who is above all & through all & in all. ⁷But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." ⁹(When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) ¹¹The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors & teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until all of us come to the unity of the faith & of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. ¹⁴We must no longer be children, tossed to & fro & blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined & knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. Accord to v12; what is the purpose of ministers? How does the Augsburg Confession affirm this? *Note: the AC is our foundational Reformation document.) See AC: IV, V; Titus 1:9, 2:1 AC, Small Catechism* available bookofconcord.org*
2. From where does Christian unity come? Is something we accomplish? Is it something Jesus establishes? What is the Holy Spirit's role? Can we damage, corrupt, or break it? Are we able to act in accordance with (or contrary to) it? *See Ephesians 1:10, 2:15, 4:4; Philippians 2:1-5, 4:1-7*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. It's increasingly common in our culture to either cut off people with whom we disagree (often calling them "toxic") or to treat them vindictively at any chance. This behavior happens even between fellow Christians. How do St. Paul's words above encourage us to act? *See Proverbs 27:17, Matthew 11:29; 21:5; Romans 12:9-21; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Philippians 2:5-8*
4. Sometimes gospel things are at stake (cf. vv4-12, 5:25-30. Other times we draw (jump to?) "gospel conclusions" from certain actions which are neither commanded nor forbidden, e.g. voting. How do the 10 Commandments, Creeds, & Lord's Prayer help you sort between the stakes of the Gospel & things further downstream from it (and things in between)? *See *Small Catechism; 1 Corinthians 2:2*

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. How does this passage speak against the ideas of church as something we shop for until it fits us & our desires? How does it speak against "getting our way" at church, even if we "donated money"?
6. *V15* says to speak the truth in love. St. Paul is not contrasting the ideas, but uniting them. With a contentious national election about 100 days away, how will love & truth together make a difference as you are drawn into partisan conversations?

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12th Sunday after Pentecost

08.11.24

Series: CHRIST for EveryBODY

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

We glorify God with our bodies as he instructs us

Unity of the Body

*Jesus is the source & the object of our one, unifying faith
across time & space*

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: There is one body & one Spirit,
just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, (v4)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

I am the living bread that came down from heaven.
Whoever eats this bread will live forever. (*John 6:51*)

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