

080121 Ephesians 4:1-6 **Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace**

Many of Jesus's followers thought of Jesus as someone like John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. But when the Lord asked his disciples who they thought He was, Simon Peter answered "You are Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus said that He would build His church on the rock, and the rock signifies the faith of Peter that brought on such a confession. Jesus said that the church built on this faith would defeat the power of the grave. In other words, eternal life or salvation.

If so, here's something we can think about. Only by living with the right confession of faith can we overcome the powers of the grave. Just because you have been to church for a long time, of course, you do not live a life that overcomes the powers of the grave or the powers of darkness.

Spiritual victory is possible only if we have true faith and confession.

Although invisible to our eyes, there is definitely a spiritual battle in our lives. With what confession of faith do you live today?

Jesus also said that He will not build just any church, but His church, the church of the Lord on the rock. The Lord is master of the church, and all the churches on earth belong to Him. That is why the Church is a group of people who are saved by faith in the Savior Jesus Christ, who worship Him as the master of their life, and plant Jesus' love and his words on this earth.

The church is called Ecclesia in a Greek word, which means "the people called." Today, verse one also says, "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." Let me ask you a question. What motivated you to come to church? There may be various reasons. But even though you may think that you came because

you wanted to come, the Bible reminds us that it is because God called us that we are being made a member of the Body of Christ. So you are called by God! And this call has a purpose. Verse 1 says, "lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called." We often occupy ourselves in trying to get what we want rather than listening to our calling. Don't we all too often think of God as the granter of our wishes? Rather than trying to live a life worthy of the calling we have received?

There is a saying that 'godliness is not in judgment but in obedience.' Nowhere in the Bible does it mention that those who judge are blessed. Instead, those obedient to the Word of God are blessed. The first generation of the Exodus failed in reaching Canaan, but Joshua and Caleb occupied the promised land through obedience. One time, Jesus said to the Pharisees, 'You judge according to the flesh, but I judge no one.' Sometimes we try to make holiness as a measure of judgment. But please remember! Holiness is in obedience, not in judgment!

Miriam, Korah, and Dathan, who opposed Moses, were godly people. They communicated before God and God was with them. But when they judged for themselves, God no longer recognized their faith. When piety is used as a measure of judgment, piety is no longer godliness. Remember that the fruit of godliness is obedience.

With this obedience and high calling in mind, let's look at the words of the Bible today. Ephesians is the letter that Paul the Apostle wrote to the church of Ephesus. The church of Ephesus was in a thriving city bordering the Mediterranean Sea in western Turkey. Paul spent three years there, and it was the longest staying ministry on Paul's evangelistic journey. So the church of Ephesus had a special place in his heart.

Ephesus was a port city with advanced commerce and industry and there were also temples that worshiped the goddess Diana. There were many large and luxurious buildings, where people lived in abundance, degeneracy, and pleasure. Ephesus church, on the other hand, did not have a fancy building, nor did it always have a reliable pastor. New believers formed the church, and those who believed earlier led the church in care. Ephesus was always in conflict and in danger of division because Jews and Gentiles coexisted.

Paul wrote the Book of Ephesians to explain the nature of the church, and to emphasize the unity of believers in the church, the organic community headed by Jesus. May we, as we read Ephesians, not only restore our personal faith, but also discover the true purpose and meaning of the church, and renew our love and hope for the church.

Today, in Ephesians chapter 4, Paul told us to live worthy of the calling: to be humble and meek, and tolerate each other in love. God called us together in unity in hope of salvation. The church must be one because that is the nature of God. Christians believe in one God and are baptized in that name and become members of the Church. But the unity of the church does not deny the various forms of service and role. God has given various gifts and grace in the church, thereby achieving the organic unity of the Church. Blessed are those who make peace, and they shall be called the children of God.

Think about it! There were fishermen like Peter around Jesus, and there were tax collectors and prostitutes. But there was also a centurion Roman officer and a Sanhedrin congressman like Nicodemus. There was also

Joseph, who was a very rich man in Arimathea. How did these people become one?

It is said, "thus Jesus, who was not only born the Son of man in the lowly manger, but also was the Son of the Most High God, can sympathize and help both the low and the high. Here is the reason why we can fit together in Jesus Christ: the low and the high, the poor and the rich, the talented and the meek, all of whom are brothers and sisters."

Verse 3 says, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

How can we pursue unity when we are so different? Being one does not mean we think the same and feel the same.

Peace is to bond. Peace is 'Shalom' in Hebrew and "Aerene" in Greek, both of which mean to unite. Threadlike branches become stronger when joined together. Ecclesiastes 4 says the triplets are not easily broken. Do not think that Christians must have the same idea in the same way in all things. Many branches in a bundle have different lengths and strengths. But when they are united, they are made stronger than anything else, even stronger than the thickest and the strongest branch.

Ezekiel 11:19-20 says, "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God."

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, I pray that Fairfield Grace will also try to keep unity in the Holy Spirit while living in true faith! As we saw in today's scripture, we are here for the purpose of this call! The church exists for the gospel, not vice versa. If we continue to learn the word of

God and follow it, then we are God's people and God is with us! May God's grace and peace be with you in your family, in your business, in your studies, and in the lives of your children. Amen.