

MODULE 8 THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

Describe a time when you were on a team or a part of a project where everyone had the exact same goal. Did you achieve it?

Today, we are going to look at a passage that points to how God has called us to one team with one goal and what that looks like.

EXAMINING THE PIECES

Read 4:1-3

Paul has just described all that God has done for us in chapters 1-3. According to v. 1-3, how does he exhort us to live in response to what He has done?

In v. 3, why do you think Paul starts by addressing unity in our relationships with one another? What does this suggest about biblical community?

In verses 4-16, Paul is about to launch into a description of the body (the church). Of all the subjects he could have addressed related to how to lead a life worthy of the Lord, why do you think he talked about the church first?

Read 4:4-6

According to these verses, what is the foundation to biblical community?

How does understanding the “oneness” of God and our faith build unity in the body?

What's the point?

What is the point...of the church? For many of us, we don't really know why we go to church. For some of us, we go because we know we're supposed to. For others of us, we go because we get something out of it. But few of go with a vision for why God has called the church into existence.

In only a relatively small number of verses, Ephesians 4:1-16 gives a grand vision for the church - why it exists; what (or who) it is founded upon; our role in it; and what its ultimate purpose is.

What's the problem?

By nature, we are people who are desperately needy for community. But even in our pursuit of community, we find ourselves looking for far less than what God intended community to be. Ultimately, we are broken and easily swayed into error...error that not only damages us, but destroys the body and harms the cause and character of Christ.

EXAMINING THE PIECES CON'T

Read 4:7-16

Even though the goal is unity and oneness, there is purposeful diversity within the body. According to verses 7-11, what did Christ "gift" each member of the body with?

According to v. 12-14, list all the reasons why did Christ give these gifts to the body?

In your own words, explain why you need the church and the church needs you.

Instead of the members of the body dying under the doubts and temptations of life, according to verses 15-16, what does love look like in the church?

SO WHAT?

According to these verses, you were never meant to live the Christian life on your own. How do you find yourself, though, resisting the kind of biblical community that this passage is talking about?

Why do you desperately need the church?

God has graciously and supernaturally gifted you. But that doesn't mean that you don't need others. In what ways do you need others to minister grace to you?

How has God gifted you to minister grace to others?

Spend some time thanking God for the unity, yet complexity of His body and for how He has gifted you to minister to that body.

What's the solution?

Like the complexity, yet unity, of the triune God, He has ordained His body to relate to one another in a way that moves us into the beauty of interdependent relationships. God has designed it that we need others to speak and minister grace and truth into our lives. And he has gifted each of us to minister grace and truth to others - with the ultimate end being the body's growth into the character of Christ.

What's our response?

As we see how God has caused the church to function as a body of interdependent relationships for the strengthening of each individual part, we can move toward others in truly biblical community...to help meet the needs of others in a way that helps the body look like Christ.