

Scripture Text

Ephesians 4.7-16

Context

Paul has finished explaining the cosmic nature of God's plans to save a people through the gospel, and now in chapter 4 begins to spell out what it looks like for God's people to live a life worthy of that calling. He begins chapter 4 by calling us to live in unity with one another, remembering that we are one in Christ.

Observation and Meaning

- What are the gifts that the victorious, ascended risen Christ gives to the church? (v11)
- What are these gifts supposed to do? (v12). Who is to do the work of the ministry? (v12)
- What is the goal of this discipleship (v13, 16)? (See the first sermon point below)
- How do we "grow up in every way into him who is the head" (v15?)
- How does Eph 1.13 help us understand what 'the truth' is that we are to speak to one another?
- How is the body held together? Who are these 'joints'? Who makes the body grow (v16)?

Big Idea

God desires for each of us individually, as well as one corporate body to grow to mature Christlikeness, which happens as every part of the body speaks the truth in love to one another.

Connecting to Bible Storyline

Sin fractures our relationship with God, but through the work of Christ we are made into one body, becoming mature as we speak the truth in love to one another.

Sermon Outline

1. The goal of discipleship – becoming like Jesus
 - a. In knowing God through Jesus (knowledge of Son of God)
 - b. In displaying his character (Measure of stature of the fullness of Christ)
 - c. In living for his purposes (v15-16) (Seeing Christ be Head over all)
2. The way of discipleship – the body building itself up in love
 - a. Jesus conquers and gives gifts to the body
 - b. These gifts equip the body to do the work of ministry
 - c. The saints do discipleship by speaking the truth in love
3. How this works out at RHC

Applications

- How does this passage help you understand how important you are in seeing the body grow and people being disciplined?
- How can you get better equipped for the work of ministry, for building up the body?
- How does the goal of discipleship in this passage help you think about what discipleship is?
- Who are you connected to in the body, and how are you helping others get connected?
- Who are you speaking the truth in love to? Who is speaking the truth in love to? What steps can you take now to help you be better connected to the body and grow as a disciple?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?

What is the situation of the author and of the readers?

Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?

Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.