The Healthy Body of Christ

Ephesians 4:1-16

**Introduction**

There is one thing that all humans long for, a healthy body. Drive down the street and you will find new gyms popping up here and there with people seeking a healthy body at all hours of the day and night. What our country and, individually, what we pay for health care is astronomical. There are countless hours of videos and even video games that instruct us on how to get a healthier body. How much time, energy and money do you spend thinking or worrying about the status of your body?

The question that Paul asks is: How much time, energy and money do you spend thinking or worrying about the status of the body of Christ? Do we know what makes the body of Christ healthy? Do we know how it works? This is what Paul describes to us here: the healthy body of Christ is unified, diverse, and maturing.

**The Body is Unified 1-6**

1. Unified in our call 1
   1. Chapters 1-3 have laid out a great theology for us to learn and base our doctrine on. The rest of the letter is about how this great theology plays out in the life of a believer.
   2. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said that Paul, “is beseeching them and exhorting them always to give equal weight in their lives to doctrine and practice. They must not put all the weight on doctrine and none on practice; nor all the weight on practice and just a little, if any at all, on doctrine. To do so produces imbalance and lopsidedness. The Ephesians must take great pains to see that the scales are perfectly balanced.”
   3. The English word “calling” here captures the original intent of the word. The church is a group of the “called out ones”. This we have seen vividly in chapter 1. The call involves:
      1. 1 Peter 2:9 “out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
      2. Ephesians 2:10 “For good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
2. Unified in our walk 2-3
   1. Humility – Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others
   2. Gentleness
      1. This is not to be confused with weakness.
      2. Jesus was our example of gentle strength. He said to those that need to hear in Matthew 11:29, “Take my yoke upon you…for I am gentle and lowly in heart.” And yet to those that had hard hearts, he said in Matthew chapter 23, “Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.”
   3. Patient – not leaving our fellow brothers and sisters behind but willing to walk alongside them.
   4. Bearing with one another – willing to suffer even at the hands of our brothers and sisters.
   5. Maintaining unity – This is the unity which the Holy Spirit has given to all those that are in Christ, a unity which we dare not diminish.
3. Unified in our confession 4-6
   1. One body
   2. One Spirit
   3. One hope
   4. One Lord
   5. One faith
   6. One baptism
   7. One Father God of all

**The Body is Diverse 7-12**

1. Diverse in our gifts 7-10
   1. The kind of gift - Grace, like Paul’s grace of being a steward of God, is given to each one of us according to Christ’s gift.
   2. The one who gives gifts – Paul says that Jesus is the gift giver. He is the ascended God from Psalm 68 who sits on the throne who gives and then receives the gifts from men.
2. Diverse in our roles 11-12
   1. He gave as gifts the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and the shepherds and teachers to equip.
   2. The saints for the work of ministry.
   3. Both to build up the body of Christ.

**The Body is Maturing 13-16**

1. Maturity in our grasp of doctrine 13-14
   1. Verse 13 says that the gifts are there until we attain unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the stature of the fullness of Christ. In other words, the gifts, the equipping, the ministry, the building up of the body continues until we all become like Christ.
   2. This is the opposite of verse 14.
      1. Children
      2. A ship – tossed by the waves, directed by the winds of every human doctrine, cunning and craftiness by deceitful schemes.
2. Maturity in our love 15-16
   1. We are to be “truthing” in love
   2. Growing into Christ our head
   3. We are dependent on Christ and our fellow Christians
   4. Each part must work and work properly
   5. This is what makes the body grow and build itself up in love.

**Conclusion**

Pastor Archibald Brown made the following observations about the diverse unity of the church body. “First, that unity is no mere absence of quarreling… So it is with many churches. There are no particular discords — no angry meetings — no violent quarrels — and yet there is no unity. They are too frozen up by their respectability to show temper. Politeness, not godliness, keeps them from contentions. Besides which, as no one knows anybody else, it is rather difficult to have a difference. The church consists of so many distinct and frozen people — where one pewful knows nothing of those before or behind, and does not wish to increase its knowledge…

Secondly, unity is not dwelling apart in order to have peace... The chemist has in his possession two explosive compounds: kept apart, they are comparatively harmless; brought together they would annihilate the premises. How carefully they are secured in different receptacles. The plan answers the danger, and for years their destructive powers lie dormant. But you cannot say, concerning them, "how good it is to see them thus dwelling together in unity." The peace and safety arises from the fact that they are not together..

Unity…is something more than being members of the same church, or being engaged in the same work. A better illustration of this cannot be found than that which suggested itself, or rather was suggested, to the mind of Paul. The human body composed of many members — yet constituting but one man. One soul in many members — one life, the life of all. Every muscle obeying one will. The hand — the foot — the eye — all living by the same life current — all giving willing obedience to the same soul. This is dwelling together in unity.”