

The Church
Design
Ephesians 4:11-16

- Read Ephesians 4:1-16 and then answer the following questions:
 - If you are wondering about verses 7-10, see a brief explanation in the Scripture section in the study notes.
 - Verses 4-6 repeat what was likely an early church creed. How do these verses relate to verses 11-16?
 - Identify the Trinity in verses 4-10 and discuss why everything we need to hear from God is in Scripture. You might want to reference Ephesians 2:19-22 for this question.
 - The offices of apostle and prophet (verse 11) ended with the completion of the writing of the NT books, although evangelists and pastor-teachers are still active today. If everything we need is given to us by God in his Word, why do we need teachers in the church?
 - Go through verses 11-16 (deliberately, not quickly), making observations as a group.

- Work through the ministries found at <https://www.gracecnc.org/serve>, praying for the teams that lead these ministries and asking God to provide servers that will allow our body to function with all parts working together.

- The memory verses for October are Hebrews 10:24-25: “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”
 - Why are church attendance and home group attendance so important?
 - Pray for all our members to understand the importance of living in community while we live as aliens and pilgrims in a land where many reject the gospel.

- Pray for your missionary and pray for the Mission Fair next Sunday evening.

Study Notes

Thoughts and Quotes from the Sermon

The book of Ephesians is a perfect example of how NT epistles often work. The Greek verbs in the **first three chapters of Ephesians** are mostly written in the **indicative mood** while **chapters 4-6** are mostly written in the **imperative mood**. **The indicative mood in the Greek is giving you information – it is indicating something**. When the Apostle Paul wrote to the churches around the Roman Empire, he would first tell them of all the blessings that were theirs in Christ, and then he would use **imperative verbs, giving orders and commands** for how to live.

The dangers of the New Apostolic Reformation:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/seven-mountain-mandate/>

Justin Holcomb (on White Horse Inn – excellent podcast): The New Apostolic Reformation is a movement that promises power, healing, and dominion, but ultimately leads people away from the sufficiency of the scriptures and the centrality of Christ. Apostolic authority today is not found in self-appointed prophets, but in the Word of God. And while the New Apostolic Reformation may claim new revelation and angelic encounters, the Gospel tells us that God has already spoken fully and finally in His Son (Hebrews 1:1-4).

When we think about spiritual gifts, we think about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are mentioned in Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12, and 1 Peter 4. The Holy Spirit gives the gifts in 1 Corinthians, Jesus gives the gifts in Ephesians 4, and God the Father gives the gifts in Romans 12. All members of the Trinity are active in the church.

Spiritual gifts are given to us to be used in the service of the body of Christ. Spiritual gifts are not given to us to impress others (or ourselves), but to build up the church – Jesus' bride, his body, the temple of God – you get the idea.

Prayer of Confession from Richard Baxter: O most great, most just and gracious God, you are of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. You condemn the ungodly, unrepentant, and unbelievers, but you have promised mercy through Jesus Christ to all who repent and believe in him. Therefore, we confess that we are sinful by nature and that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We have neglected and abused your holy worship and your holy name. We have not sought first your kingdom and righteousness. We have not been content with our daily bread. You have

revealed your wonderful love to us in Christ and offered us pardon and salvation in him, but we have turned away. We have run into temptation, and the sin that we should have hated, we have committed. Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father. We confess you alone are our hope. Make us your children and give us the Spirit of your Son, our only Savior. Amen

Questions to be answered during our series on The Church (with a new one this week):

1. What is the biblical foundation for the church?
2. What is the difference between the universal church and the local church? If I am a member of the universal church, why do I need to be a member of a local church?
3. Speaking of membership, is church membership biblical? Why is membership encouraged at Grace?
4. What is the biblical structure for church leadership? How do our elders and deacons function?
5. Why do we require members to attend for at least a year before:
 - being considered as a deacon?
 - leading a ministry?
 - serving on a leadership team?
 - leading a home group?
6. Why do we require membership for two years before being considered as an elder?
7. If one of our core values is “every member a minister,” what can I do at Grace during my first year? What if the Holy Spirit has given me leadership giftings?
8. Why is home group attendance expected before being considered for leadership on any ministry team?
9. Why do we observe the Lord’s Supper twice a month? Do we consider the Table and baptism to be sacraments or ordinances?
10. Why the increased emphasis on giving this year?
11. Why do we recite creeds on occasion? Isn’t that somewhat Catholic?
12. Why do we not have an invitation at the end of the sermon?
13. Should I ask the elders to pray for me if I have a chronic illness or a major need in my life?
14. Why are only men allowed to serve as elders and deacons at Grace?
15. If we offer services online, is it okay for me to watch at home rather than attend?

16. What about missions? How many missionaries do we support? How does a missionary receive support from Grace? What about short-term trips? Does membership play a role?

Scripture Associated with the Message

Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Hebrews 1:1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but **in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Psalms 68:18 You ascended on high,
leading a host of captives in your train
and receiving gifts among men,
even among the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell there.

Note on Ephesians 4:8 and Psalm 68:18: In Ephesians 4:8, Paul is referencing Psalm 68:18, but he is flipping the verse to indicate Christ's victory. In Psalm 68, Yahweh receives gifts from his conquered enemies. In Ephesians 4, the conquering Jesus (clearly implied to be Yahweh) gives gifts to the church. One extra note: what does it mean in Ephesians 4:9 that Jesus descended into the lower regions? Some people think this means Jesus descended to hell after his death and led OT saints out of hades (or Abraham's bosom in Luke 16:19-31), but almost all conservative NT scholars would agree that this means Jesus came to earth in the Incarnation, and having fulfilled his purpose, he ascended back to heaven. He left the church to carry on his work on earth, and the gifts that he gave to the church is in the form of apostles and prophets (for the formation of the church), and evangelists and pastor-teachers

(probably one gift instead of two). The leaders are called to equip the church for the work of the ministry.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.