

# A UNIFIED CHURCH IN DIVIDED DAYS

EPHESIANS 4:1-6 · JUNE 6, 2021 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

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## SERMON OUTLINE

*"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3)*

### A Prisoner for the Lord (Ephesians 4:1)

The situation and calling of Paul the Apostle

The calling of every Christian

It's all about Jesus

### Learning to Uphold Unity in Love (Ephesians 4:2-3)

Putting on the character of Christ

Learning love

Making every effort for unity

### Keeping First Things First (Ephesians 4:4-6)

The oneness of the Triune God in the life of the church

*"In necessary things unity; in uncertain things liberty; in all things charity."*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is one of the best images of unity you have seen or experiences of unity you have lived?
2. This week we take a pause in our series, "The Messiah's Mission," to talk about living as a unified church in divided days. We will focus primarily on Ephesians 4:1-6. Take some time to simply be still before opening in prayer and then reading that passage aloud.
3. This passage comes at a pivot point in Ephesians, moving from theological truths (chapters 1-3) and application of that truth to life (chapters 4-6). What do you notice about Paul's situation according to verse 1 (see also Ephesians 3:1)?
4. While Paul is literally a prisoner because of his faith, what do you think that speaks to for our lives as followers of Jesus?
5. Verses 2-3 outline some basics of Christian behavior related to unity. What are the characteristics mentioned here and why do you think they are important?
6. Which of these characteristics do you find most easy or difficult to live out?
7. What do you think it looks like to "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3)?
8. In verses 4-6, Paul outlines fundamental aspects of our unity in Christ. How would you define each "one" term—one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all—in these verses?
9. How do you think the following statement speaks to our current trend toward cultural divisions that intrude into the church? "In necessary things unity; in uncertain things liberty; in all things charity."
10. Read John 17:20-21. Because Jesus prayed for unity, how might we need to pray more for unity of the church?
11. What is one thing God is speaking to you through this study? If you're on your own, write that down and pray over that this week. If you are with a small group, share your answers with one another before closing in prayer.

## DIG DEEPER:

This week dig deeper into unity as the church in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize part or all of Ephesians 4:1-6
- In your daily time with God, ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and reveal any ways that you have gotten off track with God during this season. If there is anger, frustration, fear, or anything else, lay it down before Jesus and ask Him to renew your heart.
- Have an extended season of intercessory prayer for the unity of the church, using John 17 as a model for what you pray for.
- Re-engage with our series from November 2020, "One: The Being of God in the Life of the Church"