



# Ephesians

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**There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;**  
Ephesians 4:4

This verse enters with an abruptness not realized in most English translations. The words "There is" are inserted by the translators. If left off, it would read –

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 ... one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;"

Here Paul is demonstrating why we are to "walk worthy of the calling with which" we were called, something which included all of the points which he then followed up with. It is because the church is one united body. From an earthly standpoint, nothing could seem further from the truth. There are fingers pointed in every direction at every minor disagreement in even the finest points of doctrine. Further, there are those "churches" which are not even a part of the true church. The problem with this is that many cannot discern which denominations are heretical and which are not.

Added on top of that is the fact that there are many individuals in the church who are unsaved wolves who are simply there to further destroy harmony within the church. And possibly worse than those, there are some who are truly saved and yet they have the spiritual maturity of a baby, having never developed in their theology. And yet, they strut about dividing the people over issues they have no understanding in.

It would seem that “one body” is the most laughable statement possible, but Paul is correct. All true believers were brought into the body by faith in the work of Christ, and in that alone. When they believed, they were sealed with the Spirit which brought them into this mystical body. And to ensure that we understand this, he next says, “and one Spirit.” As there is one Spirit, (meaning the Holy Spirit), and as the work of the Spirit includes the sealing of those who have truly believed, then there logically can be only “one body.” He is the One to determine who is in and who is out.

In man, there is error in thinking, there is error in judgment, and there is error in doctrine. But in the Spirit, there is no such thing. The church has been selected in a perfect manner by God who cannot err. Though we may not know who is saved and who is not, the Spirit does because we each “were called in one hope” of our calling. In this statement, hope is not the object which is being described. Rather it is the principle.

We have a hope in us because we have believed in Christ, trusted in His work, and been sealed with His Spirit. It is the surety we possess, either in great measure or in an un-grounded and weak measure, or in whatever measure we possess that hope. The presence of the Spirit, which unites the true church, is to this body just as the spirit is to our natural bodies. It is the life of the church for growth and continuance. This is why Paul says elsewhere that we should be “filled with the Spirit.”

We have the Spirit, in full measure, the moment we receive Christ. We will never get “more” of the Spirit. But the Spirit can get more of us as we yield ourselves to God.

Life application: How do we yield ourselves to the Spirit? Through prayer, praise, petition, study of the word, and fellowship with other believers. The filling of the Spirit is not an active action, it is a passive one. As we yield to God, we will be filled more and more. Let us take these actions and become vibrant, useful members of this marvelous body to which we belong.

**...one Lord, one faith, one baptism;** Ephesians 4:5

Paul continues the thought of the previous verse. There, it noted the “unity of the Spirit.” Now the second member of the Trinity is named; “one Lord.” Further the idea moves from the calling (what we are expected to do in verses 1 thru 4), to the One who calls and how that position is realized.

The church is established on Christ and it is built up in Christ. He is the Foundation and the Capstone of the church, and He is its Lord. We are brought into the church through faith in Him and what He has done. But the “one faith” mentioned here is not that which is believed (meaning the tenets of doctrine), rather it is the principle of faith. There is one faith for all who

are members of the household of God. We place our faith in the work of Christ, and we are brought into “the faith.” And this leads to “one baptism.”

Despite the general belief by most that this is speaking of the external rite of baptism, this is not at all what is being spoken of. Rather, it is the “baptism of the Spirit” which comes by faith in Christ. Paul said in chapter 1 –

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13, 14

This sealing is the baptism which is being referred to. This is confirmed by the words of Jesus in Mark 16:16 –

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

The formula here shows what the conditions are. If one believes, he is baptized and thus saved; He has received the baptism of the Spirit. If one does not believe, he has not received the baptism and will be condemned. Salvation is conditioned on belief and baptism; condemnation is conditioned on not believing. Therefore, Jesus cannot be speaking of an external rite. The “belief” and the “baptism,” though not synonymous, are equated as one occurrence. This is confirmed then in Paul’s words of Ephesians 1:13, 14.

He shows this elsewhere as well. In Galatians 3:27, he says, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” This is not speaking of water baptism, but of the baptism of the Spirit. One is clothed in Christ through faith in His work. In Acts, the household of Cornelius first received the Spirit by hearing the word and believing. Only then did they later submit to water baptism as an external sign of the inward baptism already realized. This same thing is referred to by Paul in Colossians 2:12 and Romans 6:3-5. In each instance, he is speaking of the work of the Spirit and equating it with “baptism.”

Finally, faith is placed first at some times (Mark 16:16), and at other times “baptism” is placed first (Colossians 2:12). Thus, these are one occurrence with two separate parts. The rite of water baptism is not what is being spoken of here. Rather, that is an ordinance for the church; it is an outward demonstration of the inward change which has already taken place.

Life application: Why is it important to understand that water baptism is not what is being spoken of here? Because if this is misunderstood, then other nutty ideas immediately result. Two obvious ones which are taught in some churches are-

- 1) Water baptism is a condition for salvation.
- 2) There is a second baptism of the Spirit for some people. Major denominations teach these incorrect doctrines which then lead to supposed superiority of some people over others. But Paul shows in this verse that there is one baptism which places all on a level field before the Lord. Doctrine matters.

**...one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Ephesians 4:6**

Paul has been writing about the idea of unity. He did this concerning the “one body,” meaning the church. He then wrote of there being “one Lord,” who is Christ. Now he says there is “one God.” This is speaking of the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each is a member within this Godhead. This “one God” is thus “Father of all.” This is speaking less of “God the Father” than it is of “the Fatherhood of God.” In other words, Paul’s idea of unity is what is being focused on. The unity of the Godhead is the “Father of all.”

Each part of the Godhead has its role, and combined they form the Godhead. The Father is God, but the Godhead is not merely the Father. Likewise, the same is true with the Son and with the Spirit. Each is God, but the Godhead is not merely any of the three, but all three combined. As a very simple example, Time is one thing, but Time is comprised of Future, Present, and Past. Each is Time, but Time is not merely any of the three. Rather, Time is comprised of all three.

It is the Godhead which is “above all, and through all, and in you all.” Paul is speaking to saved Christians in this verse. God the Father is above all. He is the Sovereign God who directs all things according to His will. God the Son is the One who brings us into the unique Father/son relationship with God. It is through Christ that all are brought into the body of Christ. And finally, God dwells in us. It is the Spirit who seals (and thus is “in”) all.

Again, it needs to be stressed that these words are speaking of unity, and thus they are directed to the saved believers within the church. The words here in no way imply the “universal Fatherhood” of God towards all people in the world. It is speaking of the unique relationship between God and His select and sealed people which is accomplished through believing in the work of Christ.

Life application: We are united in the body of Christ through the work of Christ. The old saying “blood is thicker than water” should apply to all believers in their conduct toward other believers. It is understood that brothers argue, but they are also willing to defend one another. If we argue, let it be over pure doctrine, but let us endeavor to defend our fellow believers just as ardently against the world which comes against us because of our united faith in Christ.

How good You are to us, O God. You have called us to be members of Your body because of the work of Christ. It means we who believe are members of this unique family. Help us to

treat one another in this light. Yes, we may fight, but let it be over proper doctrine. And though we may fight over that, help us to also defend one another against the world system which comes against us. Grant us to be willing to stand up for our fellow family member in Christ just as we would for our own earthly family members. Help us to work for this unity, to Your glory. Amen.

**But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.**

Ephesians 4:7

There is unfortunately an article in the original Greek which is not included in this translation. It says, "But to each one of us the grace was given..." It is a specific grace, not a general one, which Paul refers to. This then is not speaking of things like salvation, eternal life, and so on. Rather, it is speaking of the grace which is bestowed upon a person for conducting their services for the Lord.

An example of this would be Bezalel, the main artificer of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Of him, the Bible reads –

"And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 4 to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, 5 in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship." Exodus 31:3-5

Bezalel was given the grace to accomplish particular tasks which needed to be accomplished in the construction of the tabernacle. In Christ, we are given the same. The Lord is building His temple and each of us is given such grace "according to the measure of Christ's gift."

He is the Lord, it is His temple which is being built, and He is the one to apportion out what is necessary in order to accomplish this marvelous task. This grace is most certainly a part of our makeup as individuals. There is no reason to assume that this is some type of grace which is instilled in us after salvation. Rather, we are each given abilities from the eternal mind of God based on our genetic makeup, our place in time and location, the education we have received, and so on.

It is certainly more sensational to claim that we have been endowed with a special gift of the Spirit after salvation, but this has to be read into the grace we have been given as much as assuming that it is based on who we are as individuals. In fact, in the calling of Jeremiah, his particular office was one which was ordained before his birth –

"Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

5 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;  
Before you were born I sanctified you;  
I ordained you a prophet to the nations.'" Jeremiah 1:4, 5

The Lord knew Jeremiah from His eternal mind, and He selected him from that state. Each person in the church is no different. Some are orators, some are businesspeople who can give, some are janitors. Christ has determined the gift. And as it is a gift, it is unmerited. No person should think more highly of himself than he ought. Whatever we have is what we have received from God.

And so we should rather mourn over not using our gifts to the fullest. The janitor who works out his duties to the highest degree possible is doing a better job than the pastor who whips out a cheesy sermon that took no effort to write, which will merely tickle the people's ears, and which provides no insights in the marvel of Scripture which has been given for the building up of God's people.

**Life application:** Whatever our gifts are, they should be used for the glory of the Lord and to the fullest measure of our ability. Anything else is to squander the gifts we possess.