

Living from a position of Gratitude Eph 4:1-16

Proposition: one we learn to sit and see who we are in chapters 1-3 we can live the Christian walk comfortably.

I have observed from my many years of being a Christian that some Christians seem to be able to live holy lives, guard their tongues, serve joyfully, be unoffendable, whereas other Christians say its all so hard, and too much is expected of us, there are so many things I ought to do and should do but I struggle with. Why is it for one group living the Christian life comes so easily and for the other it is such a struggle.

As we return to the book of Ephesians this morning I think we can see how all of us can get out of the struggling group and into the joy filled, overcomers group.

If you recall my first sermon on Ephesians the book of Ephesians is broken into two sections. The first three; theology, who we are in Christ Jesus and where we are sitting and what we have been given.

The second three chapters are the therefore. Or as a consequence of the revelations of what we have been given and what authority we now have we can consequently walk the Christian life victoriously.

Point number one in your outline

1. WE NEED TO LEARN TO SIT; BEFORE WE CAN WALK

So many Christians don't sit in the revelations of chapters 1-3, just give us the practical stuff, how then are we meant to live, they say, and they go straight for the second half of the book.

Ephesians 4:24 (CEV)

²⁴ and make you into a new person. You were created to be like God, and so you must please him and be truly holy.

Truly Holy, like God? Are you serious?

Ephesians 4:29

²⁹ Stop all your dirty talk. Say the right thing at the right time and help others by what you say.

You mean everything I say should help the person who hears me? Everything?

Ephesians 4:32

³² Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.

Forgive everyone. But don't you know what she or he did to me? It was unforgiveable.

Ephesians 5:3

³ *You are God's people, so don't let it be said that any of you are immoral or indecent or greedy.*

In marriage we are told to submit to or put our spouses first. How hard is that?

Ephesians 5:21

²¹ **Honor Christ and put others first.**

Ephesians 5:25-28

²⁵ **A husband should love his wife as much as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it.** ²⁶ **He made the church holy by the power of his word, and he made it pure by washing it with water.** ²⁷ **Christ did this, so that he would have a glorious and holy church, without faults or spots or wrinkles or any other flaws.**

²⁸ **In the same way, a husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself. A husband who loves his wife shows that he loves himself.**

Jesus gave Himself totally for the church, his bride. How can a husband do that?

Ephesians 6:1-2

6 Children, you belong to the Lord, and you do the right thing when you obey your parents. The first commandment with a promise says, ² "Obey your father and your mother,

If you look at these last three chapters on how to walk by faith practically and you first haven't sat in the revelations of 1-3 its too hard. But if you read 1-3 and you know that you a sinner, have been chosen before the foundations of the world, loved, adopted, destined to be pure and holy, then all the how too's become a natural worshipful response to God's goodness. God has been so good to me, I just want to, honour him with my words and actions, I just want to, serve him by serving my spouse, by honouring my parents.

Juliette and I have run a few parenting courses over the years and one of the things we do is help families write their family mottos and sayings, like in our family hands are for helping not hurting. In our family we treat our visitors as special etc.

You could say "in our Christian family, what we do is love on people and Ephesians 4-6 describes how we do it.

Some people encounter demons or witness a deliverance and get scared. Jesus I know you said we can all cast out demons, yeh na ..too freaky. But if that Christian knew that they had been seated with Christ in heavenly places, that they had real significant authority already. Demons wouldn't be any more of a concern than weeds in the garden at home.

You have to sit and see who you are and what Christ has done for you before you live the walk or it becomes too hard.

But if you sit and see then living the life just becomes a natural worshipful response and it's not hard.

I quick overview our verses today

EPHESIANS 4-6 THE FOUR STEP PROGRAM

- a) 4:1-16 How to walk in Unity.
- b) 4:17-5:18 How to walk in Purity.
- c) 5:19-6:9 How to walk in Harmony.
- d) 6:10- end How to walk in Victory.

Family the first three chapters teach us that the work is done, you are seated with Christ, the banquet is set. You and I are secure. There is nothing more we can do to earn His love. It has all been accomplished by Jesus.

2. UNITY IS A GIFT TO BE GUARDED NOT A GOAL TO BE STRIVED FOR

Ephesians 4:1-6 (CEV)

Unity with Christ

4 As a prisoner of the Lord, I beg you to live in a way that is worthy of the people God has chosen to be his own. ² Always be humble and gentle. Patiently put up with each other and love each other. ³ Try your best to let God's Spirit keep your hearts united. Do this by living at peace. ⁴ All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope when you were chosen to be God's people. ⁵ We have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. ⁶ There is one God who is the Father of all people. Not only is God above all others, but he works by using all of us, and he lives in all of us.

Parents, I think if you want your teenagers to make wise and moral choices through those years of pressure and physiological change. Don't say do this and don't do that. More importantly say this is who you are as a Christian, as a child of God, hasn't God been good. You are chosen. Adopted. Royal. You have a great destiny in God. And they will 'want to' do what is right out of the natural response to His goodness.

The work is done, as you have sat and seen, now walk in an attitude of worship and gratitude as one of the Kings kids. Notice the word keep in vs 3. We don't have to strive for unity within the body, just love every other Christian that you are related too, but work to 'keep' the unity we have been given.

When you realize that the blessings of God are not earned through your piety or your self-discipline but come to you because of His goodness and what Christ

has done you want to live a holy life and preserve good relations with all Christians and all denominations.

Song option “the churches one foundation” (Hymn) or “I believe in the name of Jesus”

3. GOD GAVE GIFTS TO PEOPLE

⁷ *Christ has generously divided out his gifts to us. ⁸ As the Scriptures say,*

*“When he went up
to the highest place,
he led away many prisoners
and gave gifts to people.”*

⁹ *When it says, “he went up,” it means that Christ had been deep in the earth. ¹⁰ This also means that the one who went deep into the earth is the same one who went into the highest heaven, so that he would fill the whole universe.*

After saying to the church at Ephesus we are one, now Pauls says we are one but there is incredible diversity of gifting and talents within the body of Christ. We are one people but we are not all the same. In fact during that time when Christ’s body was in the grave His spirit descended into the depths of hell and Jesus preached the gospel to those on one side of the chasm who did not believe in God and were not waiting for Messiah, and then to those on the other side who did believe in God and were waiting for Messiah. When Christ ascended back to heaven, he took with him those who believed from that temporary place in the afterlife often called Abraham’s bosom or Paradise. Now those OT believers and the thief on the cross have had their sins paid for and the gospel preached to them, they can go to heaven and Paradise exists no longer. Just as forgiveness and healing and adoption became possible while Jesus was on the cross, quoting Psalm 68:18 spiritual gifts became available to the church from the moment Christ ascended.

Well if all OT believers are in heaven now and good gifts have been made available to the church, what about the other side, hell, where are those unbelievers who weren’t looking forward to the Messiah.

Scripture says that they are still there and will remain there until after the millennial rule of Christ on earth, where they will be resurrected to stand before the Lord at the great white throne judgement. Books will be opened. Every evil thought and action read out. Whoever does not have their names written in the book of life will then be thrown out into the lake of fire, outer

darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Lost, doomed forever and ever.

When Christ ascended back into heaven emptying paradise leaving only the dark side, He gave gifts to the church. What gifts?

You will be aware of the gifts mentioned in Mark 16:15-18 that Jesus says we all have.

The public ministry gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 which some have
This morning I will simply read to you another list of gifts mentioned in

Romans 12

⁶ God has also given each of us different gifts to use. If we can prophesy, we should do it according to the amount of faith we have. ⁷ If we can serve others, we should serve. If we can teach, we should teach. ⁸ If we can encourage others, we should encourage them. If we can give, we should be generous. If we are leaders, we should do our best. If we are good to others, we should do it cheerfully.

We are one body, but diverse in our functions and gifting's.

God gave good gifts to people and

4. GOD GAVE GIFTED PEOPLE TO THE CHURCH

Ephesians 4:11-16

¹¹ Christ chose some of us to be apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors, and teachers, ¹² so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong. ¹³ This will continue until we are united by our faith and by our understanding of the Son of God. Then we will be mature, just as Christ is, and we will be completely like him.^[a]

¹⁴ We must stop acting like children. We must not let deceitful people trick us by their false teachings, which are like winds that toss us around from place to place. ¹⁵ Love should always make us tell the truth. Then we will grow in every way and be more like Christ, the head ¹⁶ of the body. Christ holds it together and makes all of its parts work perfectly, as it grows and becomes strong because of love.

You have heard me say it before, but a church is not a church in my view unless it has the influence of the fivefold ministries building it up and equipping it.

As a movement we have all five offices in action however I have been deeply concerned for some time that we have only a few genuine prophets and we have even less genuine evangelists who are equipping the church to reach lost people.

Lots of folk will tell you that they are a prophet or an apostle. Be careful with such folk. In the bible if someone had been using their spiritual gifts faithfully

for some time and they had proven character the elders or apostles or the church leaders would lay hands on them and set them aside for these leadership functions. In Ranui Pastor Tai and I and the elders laid hands on a lady called Trish and set her aside, recognised her ministry as a prophet. If someone comes to you and says “I am a prophet” or “I am an apostle” meaning I have authority to speak over your church or your city. Be careful. Ask them first, which eldership recognised your ministry or which denomination stands behind your claims? If they are a self-proclaimed lone wolf that no church has recognised or stands behind, walk away quickly. Why are 5 fold offices established by God and recognised by churches? To equip the body of Christ to grow and mature in the Love and ministry of Christ.

Lets look at them quickly in closing.

a) APOSTLES – HAVE A GOVERNING MINISTRY

They are the ‘sent out’ ones. They establish and oversee churches. They move in all the giftings. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit appointed apostles like Timothy or Titus and Paul and a host of others. And God is still appointing people to this office today. People like Murray Cottle. Spiritual statemen and women. It’s a governing ministry.

b) PROPHETS – HAVE A GUIDING MINISTRY

Unlike the jo Blocks Christian who can prophesy comfort, encouragement or edification. A prophet can bring a correcting word or a directive word re the future of a church or a city or movement or a nation.

c) EVANGELISTS – HAVE A GATHERING MINISTRY

They equip the local church to be effective in reaching their local community. They help the church gather people into the kingdom and have insights into the whole process of making disciples.

d) PASTORS – HAVE A GUARDING MINISTRY

They keep the church safe from false teachers or ‘wolves’ as the bible calls them. They help people interpret their suffering and protect people from the enemy’s schemes and distractions. Pastors are like under shepherds who know the flock personally. Real pastors are becoming rare in our generation.

e) TEACHERS – HAVE A GROUNDING MINISTRY

They help the church understand God’s Word and how to live the Christian life. We have several genuine teachers in our fellowship.

Family, if you and I have a revelation of who we are and what God has already given us, walking the walk, is not hard and stressful or works orientated. It becomes an act of worship and totally do-able.

We can protect the unity that we have already been given, we can recognise that in our unity is such diversity and that's a good thing. We can recognise that every person, and every gift in the church is important. And if we as a people allow ourselves to be directed and equipped by those recognised and mature in their gifting's, the fivefold officers, we can expect to grow up to full maturity in Christ Jesus.

If you are not yet following Christ and a part of His family, so many of us would love to spend time with you this week helping you gain revelation and understanding.

If you are a Christian, then you have been given good gifts, vital gifts. You have been called and adopted and fitted into Christs body. You are a part of the most dynamic and powerful family on planet earth. You are destined to become like Christ Jesus and to live with God for eternity. God just wants you to use the gifts that He has given you and let the leaders of His kingdom help you grow and mature.

We have been sitting in the book of Ephesians and now it is time to walk.

Go out this week and honour your parents, serve your spouse, speak only words that encourage and build people up. Love on this community. Kick enemy butt. And let Northland see that you are the body of Christ.