

TOGETHER
THE ONE-ANOTHERS OF SCRIPTURE
EPHESIANS 4:1-6

INTRO

-People want to belong; they want to be apart of something. As we just saw in that music clip from Shinedown, their song Unity is all about people coming together and standing as one. “We will not fall, cuz we have each other. We will not fall, cuz we are brothers. We will not fall, cuz we have love. We will not fall, cuz we will rise above.” They get it, they need each other to be able to make it through this life. We can all relate to that right? We want to feel included; a part of something bigger then ourselves.

-When I was a teenager, I went to a lot of youth group retreats, concerts and now as an adult, I like to attend conferences and it’s awesome how you can so easily feel connected with total strangers..

-surprisingly though, in a world that has become so connected through social media, research is showing that more and more people especially younger kids, feel isolated and alone and are experiencing more anxiety and depression then ever before

*So where do we fit into all of this; and what is our role, what can we do? How does living out these one-another principals help improve our lives and the lives of people around us, not just to improve our live and the relationships in the church, but ultimately to bring glory to God.

-Before we dive in...Let’s open in prayer, asking the Lord to open our hearts and minds to HIS WORD and TRUTH

-who I am, brief background, talk about my Board experience

-how can your life, my life, positively impact a world around us and draw others to the one and only Savior Jesus Christ?

-2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our afflictions, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any

affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

-I love this passage and feel it helps us understand part of our role and how we can impact others and specifically within the body of Christ.

-In the context of these one another passages, we can see that God works in our lives to transform us into HIS likeness so that we can turn around and help others grow and mature

-a lot of this growing and maturing happens in the body of Christ as we interact and rub shoulders with each other, so it's vital that we are truly seeking to follow Christ and please HIM in everything that we do

-My goal and objective is that you walk, or maybe crawl away from this message thinking "Oh man, I need to make some changes in the way that I've been living, the way I've been talking to my spouse, or kids, or coworkers." Or maybe you need to pull someone aside (gently) and apologize for the way you've been treating them or the way you've been speaking to them

-there's been many many times that the Lord has used a speakers message to convict me and show me an area that I need to change in; and sometimes that means I need to humble myself and apologize to someone for the way I acted towards them, or for something I said

-As we heard 4 weeks ago when Tim kicked off this new series, LOVE is the foundation of all the "one-another" statements that we see in scripture. Love for the Lord and others is the greatest commandment. Without love, we cannot genuinely live out these one-another's in our lives.

-Our love for the Lord has to be our main motivation behind everything we do. If not, we will be only looking out for what makes us feel good and happy. Without God's love compelling us, (2 Corinthians 5:14) we would not have the desire nor the motivation to pursue these one-another characteristics in our lives.

-If Christ's love was not working in us, through the power of His Holy Spirit, we could not possibly expect to be growing and maturing in these areas. It's not what comes naturally to our flesh.

-So today, we will continue with looking at another passage that illustrates these one-another principles. Our main text for today is Ephesians 4:1-3 and we're gonna be honing in on v.2, and we're gonna spend the majority of the time on the 3rd characteristic; PATIENCE.

-What does almost everyone do these days before making a purchase, or choosing a contractor to do some remodeling in their home, or picking a venue to host a wedding... READ REVIEWS!!!

-in our pre-marital counseling sessions, as many of you yourselves probably experienced, we had to give ourselves a rating on how well we did in certain areas ie. kindness, patience, honesty, things like that

-then we had to rate our partner and compare answers

-How do you think your ratings would compare to those

*A question to be thinking about as we go through these passages

1.If people, strangers, were to rate their experience with us, how do you think you would do?

-Do you think they would be drawn to you and what you have to say, or not want to give you the time of day based on your behavior and attitude?

**Now it's important to understand and know that we ALL fail at some point and none of us have mastered any of this. God knows we need a lot of help, and that's why we need each other. Sometimes we're blind to our own sin and we need someone to GENTLY come alongside us and point it out, not in a rude judgmental way, but with humility, gentleness and patience

Ephesians 4:1-3 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

-this passage speaks specifically about humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another. Matthew spoke on what it means to bear with one another two weeks ago, so today, we're gonna be looking at these

other 3 characteristics mentioned in this passage and how they all are qualities we need to possess as a follower of Christ

-These 3 characteristics will help us with unity and oneness in the body of Christ. Why is this so vital to our Christian life and the church? B/c God wants/intends to use the church to display His character to a lost world Ephesians 3:10

Romans 15:5-7 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Jesus Christ, so that with one heart and one mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Mark 3:25 A house divided cannot stand.

-Our board is away this weekend on their annual retreat, and I can tell you from personal experience that one of the main focuses is on unity. And I can assure you these 3 characteristics are lived out in everyone of these men, not always perfect, but definitely present and increasing. (one of my first sub-committee meetings with Bob Briggs & Scott Bennett)

-Unity is spoken about often in the Bible, and if it's important enough to be spoken about so often in God's Word, then it must be something that we see as a critical part of our daily pursuit.

John 17:23 I in them and you and me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

-So the big picture is that God wants/intends to use us; the body of Christ; the church, to show HIS love to the world and to draw people to HIMSELF.
-Paul even says it in the 3 different ways in the chapters leading up to our main text

~~Ephesians 2:10 for we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.

~~v21-22 in Him, the whole building is joined together, in Him you are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives

~~3:10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known

-How well are we doing then? Let's look internally now at how we are doing with this in the church, with one another.

1. Humility -Christ demonstrates this perfectly and we're called to be like Christ

-2 Corinthians 5:20 we are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

-Ephesians 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God

-Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

-Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

-Are we seeing a theme here? These qualities that God is calling us to demonstrate in our lives are qualities that we need to "put on", they just don't come naturally

-Matthew read Philippians 2:4-11 two weeks ago. This is a great passage that illustrates the humility that Christ had; He had every right to be put up on a throne and served by everyone, but yet choose to become the lowest of them all and die a criminals death.

-How apt are we to let injustice happen to us?

- Barry Sanders is a great example of a humble athlete (short explanation)
- We often see these 3 characteristic qualities working together
- A great way to think of humility is this:
- Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.

2. GENTLENESS -Even with infinite strength, Christ shows gentleness and kindness

-Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. V.4 A gentle tongue is a tree of life,

-Titus 3:2 speak evil of no one, avoid quarreling, be gentle, and show perfect courtesy toward all people.

-being gentle is not weakness, it's strength under control

-God's not calling us to be a doormat and get walked all over and pushed around or not to defend ourselves or family, that's not what these passages mean

-we're told to admonish, rebuke, warn, but we're also told not to be apathetic about things God is instructing us to deal with either; we need to have a healthy biblical balance

-most often, it's not necessarily what we're saying that's harsh or rude, but it's the way in which deliver it that leaves people with a bad taste in their mouth

- 1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

- Even though God calls us to be gentle, He's not calling us to be weak by any means. There are many verses that tell us to be strong and courageous Joshua 1:9

3. PATIENCE -an essential characteristic of God, what would it look like if God was impatient with us? This building would probably be empty right? Seriously, think about all the times you've violated a direct command by God, and yet he still show mercy on us.

Makrothumia -comes from 2 Greek words

-MAKROS- long, far distance

-THUMOS- getting heated up, breathing violently, actions emerging out of strong impulses, outbursts of anger

-PATIENCE - holding off sinful expressions of anger for a long period of time

1 Thessalonians 5:14-15 And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

As we're going through this be thinking about your life.

- How patient are you with your spouse?
- How patient are you with your children?
- How patient are you with your coworkers?
- How patient are you with that driver that just pulled a maneuver you don't approve of? That's a real struggle for me, ouch

James 1:19 let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to angry.

-it's hard when you live with someone that is just so impatient... explain

-the great love chapter in 1 Corinthians 13:4... the first characteristic of love is... Patience

-We also see that Patience is a fruit of the Spirit in Galatian 5:22

It's a result of the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts, it's not something that just comes naturally or instinctively

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promises as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Psalms 103:8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

-So we see, God demonstrating great patience with us... on a daily basis God is so patient with us, but yet we often times are so impatient with other

-If we're to be the light to the world, humility, gentleness and patience are characteristics we need to be asking the Lord to increase in our hearts so we can be more effective and influential

-and so often impatience rears it's ugly head in the church, the very place that God is wanting to demonstrate His character of patience to the world

-so are there appropriate times to express anger? Are there times when we should be angry? Well yes, there are definitely times when we need to respond with *appropriate* reactions of anger.

Ephesians 4:26 Be angry... and do not sin

Psalm 7:11 says God is angry with the wicked every

-Our anger, more times then not, is not righteous anger though

-Patience is an essential characteristic of God. Imagine if He didn't have much patience, we'd all be dead

-When are impatient with people, we are robbing God of the glory he deserves; we're taking away a important and influential opportunity to show His character to people who often times don't deserve it.

-Let's face it people, patience is something we all need to work on

-We are the avenues in which Christ wants us to demonstrate His likeness to the world, and it needs to start right here in our family.

Close in prayer