

Ephesians 4:4-6

One Body

Main idea: God calls us to belong to the Body of Christ.

We talked recently about Martin Luther, who started the Protestant Reformation. [\[photo\]](#)

- In addition to starting a movement, he started a schism.¹
- But that's not what he wanted!
- In reality, even with so many churches and denominations today, we're One Body in Christ.

Read Ephesians 4:4-6

A poll of Americans indicates that only about 25% of people feel like they have a clear purpose in life. [\[chart\]](#)²

- Another poll indicates that 73% of people say that pursuing a higher purpose is important. [\[chart\]](#)³
- Fortunately, we don't have to figure it out on our own. As Christians, we have a God-given calling.⁴

We've been talking about how to walk worthy of the calling we've received.⁵

- In every letter in the New Testament, there are basically two parts: theology, and application.
- The first part of Ephesians focused on some hugely important doctrines.⁶
- And now, for the rest of the letter, we're given application that comes straight out of all the theology.⁷

As we saw last week, a huge part of walking worthy of our calling is about having peace with fellow believers.⁸

- So the very first point of application that Paul gives is that we belong to the Church!⁹
- You can certainly be saved without going to church.¹⁰
- But you cannot be saved without being part of the Church.¹¹
- Paul gives 7 reasons why that's the case in our passage today.

First, there's only one body.

- He's not referring to our local expressions of the church, but to the Body of Christ.¹²
- We're all united!¹³
- And as we come together as the Body of Christ, we're strong in Christ.¹⁴
 - How difficult is it to snap a twig? [\[photo\]](#) How difficult is it to snap a bundle of twigs? [\[photo\]](#)
 - How difficult would it be to snap a bundle of bundles of twigs, all bundled together? [\[photo\]](#)
 - Unity in Christ strengthens us and makes us resilient against challenges.
- To not be part of the Body of Christ would mean that you're not connected to Jesus.¹⁵

Second, that's because there's only one Spirit.

- When you come to believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes into your life.¹⁶
- If you have the Spirit, and all other believers have the Spirit, then we should be united.¹⁷
- So it's silly for someone to say they love Jesus but not the Church. The Spirit unites us all together!
- Picture a beehive. [\[photo\]](#)
 - All the bees go out everyday, working, gathering, but then come back to share.
 - God calls us to go, live by the Spirit, and to regularly come back together to worship in unity.¹⁸

Third, it says we were called to one hope at our calling.

- Many people come to faith in Jesus because they want to go to heaven.¹⁹
- But that's not primarily the hope of our calling.
- Our hope ought to be less about us, and more about God.
- God is reconciling all the world to Himself for His glory, restoring all things and destroying all evil.²⁰

- A couple years ago, the teenagers did a craft during VBS to illustrate this. [photo]
- Our hope is about what God is doing: restoring all things so that in the end, all is good!²¹

Fourth, all genuine believers are part of the Church because we all have the same Lord.

- If Jesus is our Lord, we ought to follow Him.²²
- Jesus made it His custom to gather with believers, and so should we.²³
- Jesus is the Head of the Church.²⁴
- When a conductor stands up to lead an orchestra, he's in charge. [photo]
 - He sets the tempo, he controls the volume, and he evokes the mood.
 - In the same way, and even more so, Jesus is in charge of the Church.

Fifth, we all have the same faith.

- We sometimes forget this because there are so many denominations and divisions.²⁵
- But there's truly only one faith among us: faith in Jesus.
- I love being a Southern Baptist because of how we support missions. [photo]
 - But our national Southern Baptist Convention meetings lately have made me sad.²⁶
 - We are to be ONE BODY, so why are we excluding churches that believe the gospel?²⁷
 - If Paul would have seen all our denominations today,²⁸ I'm positive we'd be getting a letter!²⁹
- Far more than denominational loyalty, we need to unite over our common faith in Jesus.³⁰

Sixth, all genuine believers in Jesus share one baptism.

- This is an interesting one, because there's a lot of disagreement about what Paul was talking about.
- Was he talking about water baptism? Was he talking about the method we use to baptize?
- But it doesn't seem like Paul is really talking about any of these things, but simply baptism as referring to the public confession that we make when we come to faith in Jesus.
- One of the earliest non-biblical Christians documents is called the Didache. [photo]
 - Here's what it says about baptism. [quote]³¹
 - This shows that early Christians practiced all sorts of methods for baptism.
 - What matters isn't the method we use, but the fact that we believe in Jesus.

Seventh, and really the one that brings all of these others together, we're united because there's only one God.

- He's the Father of all believers.
- He's above all.
- He's through all.
- He's in all.

Endnotes

1. To be clear, there were other “denominations” apart from Roman Catholicism, even prior to the beginning of the Reformation. But Martin Luther’s act certainly made it more popular.
2. <https://www.eehealth.org/blog/2019/12/life-purpose>
3. <https://research.lifeway.com/2021/04/06/americans-views-of-lifes-meaning-and-purpose-are-changing/>
4. Our calling is to believe in Jesus and tell others about Him. John 17:3, Matthew 28:18-20
5. Ephesians 4:1
6. Ephesians 1-3
7. Ephesians 4-6
8. Ephesians 4:2-3
9. Hebrews 10:24-25
10. Acts 16:31
11. Ephesians 2:19-22, John 15:5
12. Romans 12:4-5
13. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13
14. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
15. Colossians 3:15
16. Romans 8:9
17. Ephesians 1:13-14
18. Hebrews 10:25
19. Matthew 7:21-23
20. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19
21. Revelation 21:1-5
22. Matthew 16:24
23. Luke 4:16
24. Ephesians 5:23
25. 1 Corinthians 1:10
26. Basically, we’ve had a disagreement about the qualifications of a pastor when it comes to gender, and how loosely churches should use the word pastor. Most churches have youth pastors and worship pastors. African-American churches use the word pastor for just about anyone who serves in the church! Regardless of what you believe about the issue, our convention meetings these last couple of years have seemed more like a witch hunt than a cooperation of churches.
27. Why do we think we can only cooperate with churches that believe exactly as we do?
28. And even how we operate within our own denomination.
29. After all, Paul wrote about this issue (unity) a LOT.
30. Philippians 1:27
31. “Baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19), in running water. But if you have no running water, baptize in other water; and if you cannot in cold, then in warm. But if you have neither, pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19).”