

Sermon Series: The Christian Reason for the Season

Sermon Title: The Gift That Keeps On Giving From the Church

Sermon Text: Ephesians 4:11-16

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer into active participation of growing and maturing a healthy Church.

Sermon Proposition: There are four vital truths of an active healthy church.

Introduction: (John 17:20-23; Ephesians 1:3-14; Hebrews 12:1-4; 13:7, 17)

“The boy who held his little boat and said, “It’s mine, I made it,” suffered a keen disappointment. One day, with exuberant anticipation, he carried his boat to the shore of the lake and sailed it on the clear, blue water. The little boat skimmed along as the gentle breeze blew its sails across the rippling waves. Then suddenly, a gust of wind caught the little boat and snapped the string the boy was holding. Out farther and farther the little boat sailed until at last it vanished from sight. Sadly the boy made his way home – without his prized possession. It was lost.

The weeks and months went by. Then one day as the boy passed a toy shop, something caught his attention. Could it be? Was it really? He looked closer. It was. Yes, there in the display window was his own little boat. Overjoyed, the boy bolted into the store and told the owner about the boat on display. It really belonged to him. He had made it, hadn’t he? ‘I’m sorry,’ the shopkeeper said, ‘but it’s my boat now. If you want it, you’ll have to pay the price for it.’

Sad at heart, the boy left the store. But he was determined to get his boat back, even though it meant working and saving until he had enough money to pay for it.

At last the day came. Clutching his money in his fist, he walked into the shop and spread his hard-earned money on the counter top. ‘I’ve come back to buy my boat,’ the boy said. The clerk counted the money. It was enough. Reaching into the showcase, the store keeper took the boat and handed it to the eager boy. The lad’s face lit up with a smile of satisfaction as he held the little boat in his arms. “You’re mine,” he said, “twice mine. Mine because I made you, and now, mine because I bought you.”

[Dale E. Galloway, *Rebuild Your Life; Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotations*, p.500]

- I. The **priority** of the gift of unity through the church. Vv.1-3
- II. The **pedestal** of the gift of unity through the church. Vv.4-6
- III. The **pedigree** of the gift of unity through the church. Vv.7-11
- IV. The **purpose** of the gift of unity through the church. Vv.12-16

I. The **priority** of the gift of unity through the church. Vv.1-3

A. The general admonition of unity. V.1

B. The grace attitudes of unity. Vv.2-3

- 1. The attitude of **lowliness** must be practiced. V.2a
- 2. The attitude of **gentleness** must be practiced. V.2b
- 3. The attitude of **longsuffering** must be practiced. V.2c
- 4. The attitude of loving **forbearance** must be practiced. V.2d

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Philippians 1:27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous;

II. The pedestal of the gift of unity through the church. Vv.4-6

- A. The affirmative of being connected by one Spirit. v.4a
Ephesians 1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
- B. The affirmative of being controlled by one Spirit. v.4b
Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.
Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.
- C. The affirmative of being commanded by one Lord. V.5a (**Philippians 2:9-11**)
- D. The affirmative of being consumed by one faith. V.5b (**Ephesians 1:9-10**)
Colossians 1:23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.
Jude 3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.
- E. The affirmative of being consummated by one baptism. V.5c
(**Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 5:24-25**)
- F. The affirmative of being chosen by one God. V.6a
- G. The affirmative of being conceived by one Father. V.6b
1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.

III. The pedigree of the gift of unity through the church. Vv.7-11

- A. The giver of the gifts is Christ. V.7
- B. The gemstones of the gifts is the captured. Vv.8-9 (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 12-31)
Numbers 18:6 "Behold, I Myself have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; *they are* a gift to you, given by the LORD, to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting.
- C. The guardians of the gifts is the Church. V.10
John 20:17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"
Acts 1:9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.
Application Point: "Christ accomplishes the goal of filling all things by supplying His people with everything necessary to foster growth and the maturity of the people."

- D. The gift of gifted **leaders**. V.11
“Specifies the nature of the gifts, source of the gifts, terms of the gifts who are involved in some form of ministry and proclamation of the Word.”
(1 Timothy 3; Titus 1)
Colossians 1:28-29 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. **29** To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.
Hebrews 13:7 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct.
Hebrews 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

IV. The **purpose** of the gift of unity through the church. Vv.12-16

- A. The growth of gifted **members**. V.12
(Philippians 2:30; Matthew 4:19; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 1 Thessalonians 1:3)
- B. The goal of oriented focus. V.13
Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.
Application Point: “Significantly, the Christian’s growth or progress does not occur in isolation, for Paul’s instruction here envisions God’s people collectively (we all) as a route to this vital destination.”
1. The **unity** of the body produces maturity. Vv.14-16a
 2. The **diversity** of the body produces maturity. V.16b
 3. The **functioning** of the body produces maturity. V.16c
Application Point: “By means of both the gifted leaders and the common services of the gifted members, the body of Christ may be built and matured.”