

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes November 21, 2007

Ephesians 4:4-6

- 4: There is one body
 and one Spirit, just as you were called to
 the one hope that belongs to your call,
- 5: one Lord,
 one faith,
 one baptism,
- 6: one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Introduction:

- In the Gospel of John, chapter 17, we hear Jesus praying to the Father, “Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.” Scripture also teaches in James 5:6 that “The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.” Well, who is more righteous than our Lord Jesus who was not only without sin but the Son of God, second person of the Trinity. So, where then is this unity for which Jesus prayed? Everywhere we turn, on every corner, we see Christian churches divided even at times in battle with one another. This is part of what we will discuss today on Deep In Scripture.

Discussion: Welcome....website ... Phone numbers ... special:

REVIEW:

- In our study of Ephesians, we have been approaching this epistle from the assumption that it was written by St. Paul while in prison as a homily to be read by the leaders he had earlier converted and appointed in Ephesus, in the Easter liturgy to the newly baptized Gentile believers, whose faith and love St. Paul had heard about from messengers.
- In essence, we believe that the primary underlying context of Ephesians is Christian baptism; or more specifically a call to actualize or live out the graces recently received in baptism. Most biblical commentators point to the Church as the key theme of Ephesians, and we agree wholeheartedly: these newly baptized Gentile Christians are now members of the Church;
 - However, we believe that the context of a sermon to the newly baptized makes the most sense of the “who, what, when, where, why, and how’s of this letter, particularly as we move on into chapters 4-6.
- In Chapters 1-3, St. Paul explains the three changes that happen in our lives by grace once we have heard, believed, and then been sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism.
 - Through baptism believers are changed by grace in three ways: “up, beside, and within”...
 - These changes have already happened, whether they are felt or not, BUT this is only the beginning! Though these changes are given freely by grace, the baptized must now live in them, also by grace.
- In Chapters 4-6, St. Paul gives instructions on how the newly baptized are now to live, and in verses 1-6, he makes the transition.
 - As we discussed two weeks ago, verses 1-3 stand both as a transition as well as a summary of all that will now follow:
 - 1: *I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you*
 to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,
 - 2: *with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love,*
 - 3: *eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

- In the rest of Ephesians, St. Paul elaborates on what he means by “a life worthy of the calling to which [they had] been called. Almost all the themes mentioned in these opening verses will be revisited later in this letter.
- Once St. Paul mentions that a part if not the primary trajectory of their baptismal calling is to eagerly “maintain the unity of the Spirit,” he then enumerates in detail key aspects of this unity:

4: *There is one body
and one Spirit, just as you were called to
the one hope that belongs to your call,*

5: *one Lord,
one faith,
one baptism,*

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

We’re going to shape our study today around four questions:

- *[When we say that we are trying to be “deep in Scripture” we aren’t implying that we are covering every nuance of every passage, reviewing every commentator’s theory or angle. This hardly be accomplished in one hour long program, let alone a sermon on this passage or even a single book. In fact, these three verses can only best be understood within the entire context of chapter 4 and the rest of the letter. Rather, we are focusing on those aspects of the text that we believe were most important to St. Paul’s purpose as well as what are most meaningful for us today in the twenty-first century.]*
- **1st: The raw data of the text:**
 - **Is there anything unique about the Greek?**
 - No verb in these verses! “There is…” added for smooth translation.
 - Seven acclamations of oneness, moving from Paul’s key theme of the Church then on to the Church’s Lord then to God the Father Himself; In essence, like traditional Churches were designed, to draw our attention upwards.
 - Notice the Trinitarian reference;
 - vs 5 sounds like a baptismal formula (One Lord, one faith, one baptism).
 - **Any significant parallels?**
 - Deuteronomy 6:4-5
“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”
 - 2 Baruch 85:14
“Therefore, there is one law by One, one world and one end for all who exist.”
 - Colossians 3:12-15
“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.”
 - 1 Corinthians 12:1-13
*1: Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed.
2: You know that when you were heathen, you were led astray to dumb idols, however you may have been moved.
3: Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.
4: Now there are varieties of gifts, but **the same Spirit**;
5: and there are varieties of service, but **the same Lord**;
6: and there are varieties of working, but it is **the same God** who inspires them all in every one.
7: To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
8: To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,
9: to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,*

10: to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

11: All these are inspired by **one and the same Spirit**, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

12: For just as **the body is one** and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are **one body**, so it is with Christ.

13: For by **one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body** -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

- 1 Corinthians 8:5-6

*"For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth -- as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords" -- yet for us there is **one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.**"*

- Romans 11:36

"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen.

- **Why at this place in his LTR?**

- **Was Paul just being cautionary, given conflicts at other churches (Gal or Cor) or was he specifically addressing a context in conflict, clarifying correct doctrine and praxis?** (i.e., Was the context similar to the formation of the later creeds, as at Nicea)?

- Eph 4:13-14

*"...until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; **so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.**"*

- Possibly struggles between:

- Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians;
 - Libertines and legalists;
 - Leaders and laity.

- **2nd: How can a person's presuppositions—what they bring to the text— shape how they interpret & apply this text?** (i.e., what did we do with text as Protestants, Lutherans, Methodists, Congregationalists, and independents?)

- **3rd: How has this text been used by the Fathers & Doctors of the Church?**

- How was it used in Vat II and by JP II?

- **4th: Where is the unity of which St. Paul speaks and for which Jesus prayed?**