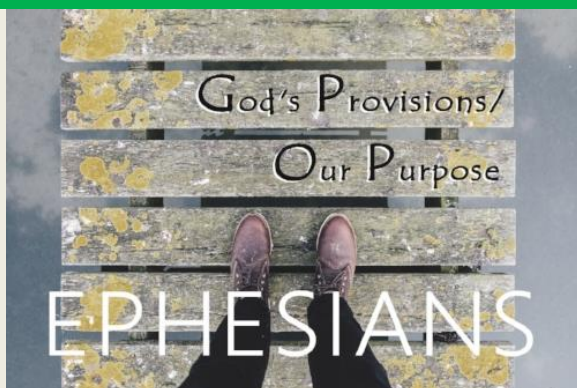


God's Provisions / Our Purpose



Sunday, 8/5 – 8:00 & 10:45 † Monday, 8/6 – 7 PM

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost / Tenth Sunday after Trinity – 2018

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: God is good, so He has *freely* provided us with *all* that we need! Furthermore, *as we continue to live here – between now and our entrance into heaven*, God has a *purpose* for each of our lives!

So far in our study of Ephesians, we have focused on God's extraordinary work to make us His holy children through the sacrificial living, suffering, and dying of His Son.

Today, in *Ephesians 4*, God will ♦ tell us how to maintain unity, ♦ remind us that we are gifted, ♦ explain how we grow up spiritually, and ♦ urge us to speak the truth in love.

1. **Be What We Are:** In chapters 1-3, the Spirit moved Paul to tell us what God has done; now, Paul is telling us how to act: ¹ **I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge** [*caution, advise, encourage*] **you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,** ² **with all humility** [*lowliness of mind*] **and gentleness** [*courtesy*], **with patience**

[forbearance – patient restraint], **bearing** [enduring] **with one another in love,** ³ **[being] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

- a. What are we in Christ? God’s holy children, *having been washed clean through Jesus!*
- b. How should we act? Our calling and our acting should be **comparable**, so we act **worthy** of our calling! Since God has made us **holy** in His sight, *we should show what we are with **holy** living!*
- c. Why should we follow God’s Word? Because, though we WERE on a slippery slope to hell, *we are NOW on the blessed path to heaven!*

2. **The Power of One:** 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 all, who is over all and through all and in all. // We have the word “one” 7 times, but three 3’s:**

- a. Body—Spirit—hope: As believers, we **◆**are members of the one body of Christ, **◆**have the Holy Spirit, and **◆**know God’s promises are true!
- b. Lord—faith—baptism: Jesus is our Lord; we have faith in Him as our Savior; and we were clothed with Him when we were baptized (Gal. 3:27).
- c. Over—through—in: God the Father is “**over**” all; God the Son is the one “**through**” whom we pray to the Father and will go to the Father; and God the Holy Spirit is “**in**” those who believe in Jesus!

3. **We Have Been Gifted:** ⁷ **But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.**

⁸ Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” ⁹ (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

- a. The captives: In the Te Deum, a powerful liturgical hymn (LSB, 223-225), we sing, “When You had overcome the sharpness of death, You opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.” So picture Jesus’ victory over sin, death, and hell; then His leading of those *OT saints* from “Abraham’s side” (Luke 16:22) to paradise!
- b. The gifts: Lenski explained them with these words: “to each single one of you there was given... some [gift] with which to serve the church” (516-517). So far in chapter 4, the topics have been unity and oneness; now we hear of gifts having been given to each member of the body of Christ for the purpose of serving the body of Christ. As my arm, hand, and mouth work together to get food into my stomach, so we are gifted in order to bless the body of Christ!

4. **Get Equipped to Serve:**

- a. Grow to maturity: ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, [and] the prophets, [and] the evangelists, [and] the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry [service], for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the [full/true] knowledge of the Son of God, to

mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,¹⁴ so that we may no longer be [infants or very young] children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

- i. They serve the Word: Regarding **the four positions mentioned above**, they **study**, **live**, **teach**, and **preach God's Word!**
 - ii. The saints eat it up: They **receive it**, **are equipped by it**, and **take action to build up the body of Christ (Gal. 6:9-10)!**
- b. Work together in love:¹⁵ **Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**
- i. What is the truth? Jesus prayed, **“your word is truth” (John 17:17 ESV)**. *So let us grow in knowing God's Word!*
 - ii. Why is speaking the truth an expression of love? God's truth is **beneficial**, so let us love others *by speaking God's truth!*

Let Us Pray: Dear Jesus, as the gifted members of Your one body, *help us to grow up and use our gifts!*

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