

Ephesians: What's God Saying to You? What are You Going to Do About It?

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I. Introduction

Do you go to church every Sunday? If you do, what's your role? Do you know that Jesus has given you a role to play within His Church, that you're supposed to help the church grow? Do you know what Jesus' ultimate goal is concerning you and what He wants to protect you from? Jesus has provided you a very important role and everything you need to fulfill it.

II. Ephesians: What is God Saying to You and What are You Going to Do About It?

In chapters 1-3 God tells us that we now have a brand new life: our sins have been wiped clean, God's adopted us into His family, joined us to His Son, His power works on our behalf, we've been set free from Satan's grip and the air that the culture breathes. We used to be dead in sin but now we're alive in Christ and His Spirit dwells in us. Therefore, God wants us to live our new selves, who've been freed from Satan's evil grip and given a gift.

Chapter 4

4:11-12, the Lord gives a list of some of the gifts He gave: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. This is not a complete list of the Spirit's gifts; there are other lists but none is complete (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:11). Some of the gifts like the ones in 4:11 are designed to equip the rest of the church members to do a job. Do you know that going to church, smiling and making small talk is not what God intended when He made you part of His Church? Each of us is to help the church grow.

4:13, what is the Lord's ultimate goal with us? He wants us to be exactly like His Son Jesus Christ. As we look into the mirror of the Bible and gaze upon the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 24:25-27—the entire Bible is about Jesus), the Lord wants us to be transformed into the same image (2 Corinthians 3:18—but notice, we must come with “unveiled face,” i.e., openly and honestly instead of with a mask that hides our true broken self). Our goal is to be more and more like Christ, are we? Are we more like Him this year than last year? God wants us to truly “know” His Son but what's this mean? It means to be completely one with Christ (John 17:21), to think, speak and act like Jesus, to be filled with His fullness (3:19).

4:14, when we're one mind with Jesus, we see the world around us the way He did. We won't be like children who are easily deceived, like a boat at sea which is easily carried away by every wind of teaching. The warning here is not just regarding bad Bible teaching (as happens later in Ephesus, 1 Timothy 1:3-7) but also the bad teaching of the culture around us (Acts 19:19—Ephesus' culture was steeped in idolatry and witchcraft). The culture around us has something bad to teach us about everything, love, sex, money, retirement, politics, etc., etc. People *go with the flow* of the culture every day, including Christians. For example, the culture has something to teach us about love: many think the film *The Notebook* is a beautiful love story. They see the love between Noah and Allie as something to be emulated. However, the story includes Allie fornicating with another man as she's planning her wedding. The culture

replies, “Allie wasn’t fornicating; she was simply going back to her true love, Noah. They belong together no matter what!” How does God define love? Love would NEVER treat a fiancé like that, ever. Love as God defines it is never driven by its wants and desires. Instead, it always sacrifices itself for the one it loves (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

The culture also has something to say about retirement and health insurance: the culture tells us that Social Security is a great, compassionate idea that looks out for the elderly. It even had a reason for creating it: it started in 1935 during the Great Depression when people were in desperate need of a safety net. Makes sense right? What does God think? It may sound compassionate, but Social Security takes individual responsibility and puts it on the general public. It also takes your money and gives it to someone else, which God calls stealing. What about health insurance? Part of Obama Care says that parents can keep their children up to 26 years of age on their health insurance. This too sounds like a great idea, i.e., parents get to help their struggling 20-somethings by providing them health insurance. What could be wrong with this? A 26 year old is not a child, that’s an adult who’s supposed to be responsible for themselves. Doing such things keep 20-somethings relying on their parents instead of themselves. Now, if you’re a parent in this dilemma, it doesn’t mean you kick your child out of the house and cut them off financially. It means you start showing them how to stand on their own two feet, how to be a strong, independent, wise, and godly individual.

4:15, how can we escape bad Bible teaching and the bad teaching by the culture around us? We need the truth and there’s only one source for truth: Jesus, He is the Truth (John 14:6) and the only source of true wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). Thus, we must speak the truth to one another so that we can “grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ,” i.e., so we can think like Christ and not be taken in by the culture around us.

4:16, the church has two sources of growth: the main source is Christ. He is our Head and the one who provides us all our sustenance and guidance. But every one of us also plays a key role in our growth. That is, God has given each one of us a role to play within the church. Do you know your role? If you don’t, why not? Our job as Christians is not simply to show up on Sunday, sing, pray, listen to sermons and make chitchat with our fellow Christians. No, we’re supposed to help each other be more and more like Christ. Finally, all of it must be done “in love.” At the end of chapter three God wanted us fully know Christ’s love (3:17-18) because without it, all our doing will be useless (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). We must be a close knit family who can sense what’s wrong with our siblings so that we can weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice (Romans 12:15).

III. Conclusion

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.