

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

October 20, 2024

Called: Living as Children of the Light

### 6. The Power of Unity

#### Ephesians 4:1–16 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. <sup>2</sup> Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. <sup>4</sup> For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.

<sup>5</sup> There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,  
<sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all,  
who is over all, in all, and living through all.

<sup>7</sup> However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. <sup>8</sup> That is why the Scriptures say,

"When he ascended to the heights,  
he led a crowd of captives  
and gave gifts to his people."

<sup>9</sup> Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. <sup>10</sup> And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

<sup>11</sup> Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. <sup>12</sup> Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. <sup>13</sup> This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.

<sup>15</sup> Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. <sup>16</sup> He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

#### 1. One calling.

*I beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God... humble and gentle... patient ... making allowance for each other... make every effort... united in the Spirit ... binding yourselves together with peace.*

- "you all"    ▪ "each other"

#### 2. One body.

*For there is one body and one Spirit, one glorious hope... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.*

It can take practice to find God in the midst of our differences and not just bemoan the more wearing parts of the adjustment. We may say we want to be part of a vigorously multiethnic congregation and that we want it to be economically mixed, but this can make church more complicated. It means adjusting our expectations. --Mark Labberton, Called: The Crisis and Promise of Following Jesus Today. (<https://globe.christianitytoday.com/our-body-groans-for-unity/>)

#### 3. One person's gifts.

*He has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ... to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church.*

- S.H.A.P.E. ([www.solanabeach.church/shape](http://www.solanabeach.church/shape))    ▪ Tithes, Offerings and Legacy Gifts

#### 4. The power of unity.

*growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body... fit together perfectly... healthy and growing and full of love.*

- "Our members, friends, and neighbors live as fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ in growing community."

**Next Steps:** In your time alone with God this week practice the rhythm of "reflect and write." Each day, reflect on Ephesians 4:1-16 and reflect on these prompts of gratitude:

**Day 1: Calling.** Do you remember when you began to understand your calling to follow Jesus? Who were the people who showed you the love of God through Jesus? Give thanks for your calling as a disciple.

**Day 2: Your gifts.** Give thanks to God for your own "special gifts" – the way you have been shaped by God to serve others generously. (If you have not updated your SHAPE assessment, go to [www.solanabeach.church/SHAPE](http://www.solanabeach.church/SHAPE))

**Day 3: Your church's gifts.** Give thanks for the gifts of the body of Christ at SBPC. What gifts do you see in the pastors and staff? In your small group? As we worship, serve and gather together? Where do you see uncommon generosity?

**Day 4: Unity.** Give thanks for the unity you see in our church. Where do you long to see unity grow in the church? In your family? In your friendships?

**Day 5: Growth.** How have you grown in humility, gentleness, patience, or making allowance for others because you are motivated by love? Give thanks to God for your growth and pray to look more like Christ.

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at [solanabeach.church](http://solanabeach.church) for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

### CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Check in with one another about your daily alone time with God or with an icebreaker question.

**CONNECT WITH GOD** (Use one of the below practices or choose a practice from a previous week.)

- **Practice of Generosity:** The spiritual discipline of generosity is not simply a practice of financial giving, but it is a way of life. A practice that centers around generosity offers intentional space to cultivate generosity as a way of life. Today, we will engage in intentional reflection of our own habits of generosity. Remember: generosity goes well beyond financial and material giving. How we think about and turn towards others is a practice of generosity as well.
  - Pray: Begin your time by praying that the Spirit open up to you the things you don't see about your own habits of generosity.
  - Journal: Reflect on the following questions about generosity.
    - When it comes to generous living, where are your blind spots?
    - How might you cultivate generosity in your daily life?
  - Pray: Close in slow and expectant prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to cultivate a new impulse toward generosity in you, that encompasses every area of life—not only financial or material giving (though that is vital as well).

### CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Pray:** Before digging into the scripture and message more, pray together. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate and enlighten, and to speak to each one of you through the passage.
- **Together:** Read Ephesians 4:1-16 as a group.
- **Alone:** Read Ephesians 4:1-16 again. Spend a few minutes journaling and reflecting on the following prompt:
  - How has (or hasn't) *calling* played a role in your own life?
  - Has the calling to peace and unity in the Church been difficult for you in your life right now? Why or why not?
- **Together:** In pairs or as a whole group, share with one another your reflections from the prompts above. If there is time, consider the following prompt together:
  - What questions or uncertainties do you have about the passage?

### CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

Select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- Reflecting on the main points of the message, what has been most impactful or challenging for you?
- How can we "make allowance for each other's faults" because of our love (v.2)?
- Applying Paul's words to our own lives now: what threatens unity in the Church today?
- What seem to be the obstacles to Paul's readers' faith in Jesus?
- What's the answer to maintaining unity? How are we held together?
- Where does the Church need to grow towards maturity?
- What might it look like to "speak the truth in love"?

### ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: Reflect on the original song that Derren Raser sang in worship on Sunday, October 20th. Listen or watch again together, if possible. How do we put into practice the call of Paul to "speak the truth in love" today, amid a time of divisiveness in our communities, country, and world?

"Speak In Love" by Derren Raser

Speak truth  
Speak hope  
Speak love"

### PRAYER

Continue to pray for one another. Pray for our church and the Church universal. Pray that the bond of Peace holds us together in times of uncertainty and disunity. Pray with Paul that "as each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love." May the Spirit of God help us to live in generosity, peace, and unity through the love of Jesus our Savior. Amen.