

## THE CALL OF UNITY

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**SERIES: I LOVE MY CHURCH | WEEK 2 | 8.8.2021**

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What a wonderful morning. Thank you worship team. You guys should clap for our worship team again, they're putting a lot of effort in there, lead us in worship. Welcome to church this morning. I'm Pastor Rob, the executive pastor here, glad you guys are joining in online; glad you guys made it out this morning.

We are in the middle of a short series called I LOVE MY CHURCH where we're going to be studying Ephesians 4. If you remember we started last week, what a powerful Sunday we had. Baptism Sunday, man, can we clap just for anyone out there who got baptized last week? [CHEERING/APPLAUSE] It was a wonderful, wonderful—I see a couple of them down here right now—man, just a wonderful, wonderful Sunday, just hearing how God's at work. God's at work in our church.

Let me have you guys start off and think this question: What are you doing here right now? Let's think big picture as we're starting to talk about the church. This is the big question I want to go after: Why are you here? Why'd you show up this morning anyway? What made you get out of bed, or what makes you log in online? Why are you guys—many of you guys are already involved in small groups—why do you get involved? Why are you serving? Why are you doing all the things that you're doing? Why is it? What is church all about really? That's what we're going to start talking about; we're going to think about that the next few weeks – why church, what's the big deal? A lot of us have so many vast differences in our backgrounds with where we came from, what kind of church experiences we've had. There's all sorts of ways to make that experience go askew. There's all different ways that we can get sidetracked.

The church – potential – there is great potential in the church. God has something very unique that He would want to have in store for us in this community. In a local church community it's meant to be powerful, it's meant to be like nothing else you've ever experienced, that's what the church is supposed to be. Often our experience isn't that though, just to be fair, let's be honest, often our church experience isn't that; that it's this amazing community where God's at work and God's doing things.

I grew up in this little church in Upstate New York, it was a good little church, I loved my pastor, we had a small youth group. It was in this area of Upstate New York where, I don't know, I think I knew maybe one other Gospel Bible-believing church in this entire area, no other youth group. I did not know another guy my age who was a Christian. It was a good church. I went to Sunday school. We had pews, we sat on wooden pews and we sang out of the hymnals; that's how I think I learned how to read was through a hymnal. And I remember sitting there – let me tell you another thing about it, it's very unique, it was just below Woodstock. It was in a part of New York where witches would do séances on the three different mountains and they would claim the triangle as their own. That's where I grew up, and you could feel it spiritually, honestly, very small, very, like, hurting Christian community in general.

But I'm sitting there in one of the few Bible believing churches and I remember around 13-14 years old sitting there on a Sunday, having just gone to Sunday school, sitting on the wooden pew listening to the sermon, wondering, saying, *Is this really what church is supposed to be about? Is this what it was intended to look like?* It wasn't a good or bad, it wasn't a judgment question, it was me just pondering, *Is this really what God had in store for us? Is this really what He intended?* And I didn't know at 13 or 14, I just kind of went on, but I remember that was a moment that I was like, *What is church really all about?* And over the years just understanding and getting better clarity.

We're going to unpack in Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4 is known as the best commentary on the local church in the entire New Testament. It'll give us insight, it'll give us clarity, it'll give us direction, it'll tell us the destination of where we need to go; because God really meant for this church to be a powerful

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community that's changing the world and amazing things are happening. And your closest and best friends are here and you're doing things together. That's what the church was meant to be,

Let's see what Ephesians 4 has to say about it. So let's open up Ephesians 4, we're going to read it, we're going to read it together, 1 through 13. We'll break Ephesians up into three different sections over the next three weeks, I'll do 1 through 13 right now. Ephesians is known as, before we even read it, Ephesians is known as the queen of the epistles. It's Paul's book that pound for pounds may have impacted the church more than any other book in the New Testament. If you're a new believer, I say hey, start with the Gospels, start with the Gospel of John, learn about Jesus; but if you're ready to start digging in, jump into Ephesians. Ephesians has all the major things that you need to know, all the foundational things. Let's read it first, Ephesians 4:1-13, let's take a look:

**<sup>1</sup> I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup>with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup>eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-- <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. <sup>7</sup>But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup>Therefore it says,**

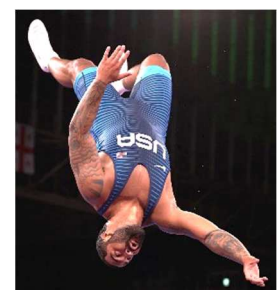
**"When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."**

**<sup>9</sup>(In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? <sup>10</sup>He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the Heavens, that he might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup>And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>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 fullness of Christ,**

**– EPHESIANS 4:1-13 (ESV)**

Doesn't that sound like a wonderful location to get to? **"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 fullness of Christ."** And it's going to keep on going on. So Paul is going to continue on and we'll pick up from there next week, but let's go back.

So who's been watching the Olympics? You guys been watching the Olympics? Seems like we're all, like, experts now in all these random things. I just couldn't get away from table tennis. Like, I... when in the world do I watch or care anything about table tennis and now I'm screaming at the TV, who's gonna win – Singapore or China? All of a sudden I just can't get enough of the Olympics. Wrestling, did you guys catch wrestling this weekend? Oh, that's close to my heart. We got a gold medal champion, Gable Steveson. This guy is 290 pounds. Did you guys see this guy – 290 pounds? And after every time he wins it was like a nail biter, he does, like, a handspring full, like, backflip, you know, not even in tuck, 290 pounds. All sorts of amazing Olympic things that happen.



**Post-victory Backflip  
Gable Steveson  
Olympic Gold Medalist**

The reason I'm going there is that the Olympics and teaming and athletics and coming together to accomplish a goal—we have a lot to learn from teaming of what the church is really

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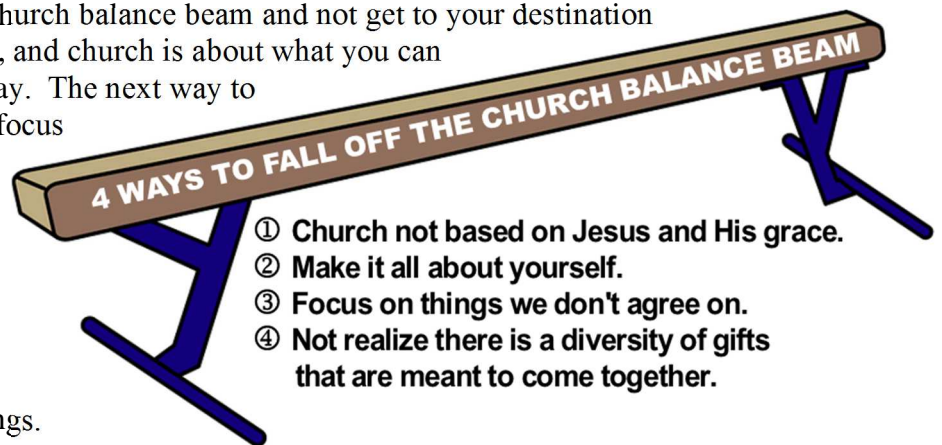
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meant to be about. How do we come together as a team? What can we do? Yeah, Simone Biles, you know, she got "the twisties." Right? So now she can't do her backflips, but she still did the balance beam. Did you guys know the balance beam is about this thick? [HOLDS UP HIS CELL PHONE] Can you picture flipping off of this, putting your phone down and now having to walk across your phone and do backflips and all that sort of thing? It's a difficult task, I'm sure. It takes a lot of energy to get from one side of the balance beam to the other, so easy to fall off, you can fall off one way or another.

In Ephesians 4:1-13 we're going to see some of the warnings of how we as a church might fall off that balance beam. Maybe you'll experience—some you have already experienced—these things that have made you fall off or jump off the balance beam and not make it to the final destination of where we're supposed to get to as a church. One side, point one, Ephesians 4:1 we're going to see one way to fall off the balance beam is to be involved in a church that's not based on Jesus and His grace. The second point is that another way to fall off the church balance beam and not get to your destination is if you make it all about yourself, and church is about what you can

get out of it and you get in your way. The next way to fall off the balance beam is not to focus on everything that we have in common, instead we focus on the things that we don't agree on.

The fourth way is not realizing that there is a diversity of gifts in our church and we all have a gift that's given to us and we're meant to come together and use our giftings.



Okay, you ready? Let's go to the first one, [Chapter] 4, verse 1, let me read it one more time. This is the side of the balance beam that's not all about Jesus.

**<sup>1</sup> I therefore,**

— whenever you see a "therefore" you say, *What's it there for?* That's a big one. That's a big little Bible scholar note for you as you read your Scriptures. As you're studying Ephesians 4 on your own and all of Ephesians, please, study it:

**<sup>1</sup> I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,**

**– EPHESIANS 4:1 (ESV)**

Paul's a prisoner, he's in jail; like, the spiritual leader who's teaching them is doing it from jail. Could you imagine if Pastor Lee was teaching us from jail and that was the example he was giving us? Wait a second, Christianity doesn't seem like I thought it might seem. Paul's in jail teaching and he says, "I therefore, urge you to walk" – walk across the balance beam. Hence that metaphor. That word *walk* is only the second time we're given a command in Ephesians. It's only the second imperative. So all three chapters prior to this you are given no commands except one – "remember." Ephesians 2:11 says to remember.

**<sup>11</sup> Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—<sup>12</sup> remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of**

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the promise, without hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

– EPHESIANS 2:11-13 (ESV)

So that "therefore," the reason it's there for is that you don't base your walk, you don't base how we're supposed to live our lives to get down this balance beam on anything other than Jesus. The first three chapters it tells us about His grace and His love. It explains to you you're a child of God, explains to you there's nothing that you can do to earn salvation—it's only through Jesus. So a first way to fall off a balance beam—I won't even get into this church because of that balance beam, I'll jump out of that church experience—is if the church that you were attending did not base it all on Jesus. It says *therefore* walk—it's not walk because you need to accomplish things to get to Heaven. Let me let out a little secret here, it's a very dangerous secret, a very dangerous secret sitting here in church on a Sunday morning: YOU DON'T NEED TO GO TO CHURCH TO GET TO HEAVEN. You don't need to be here to go to Heaven. I'm not a pastor trying to get to Heaven. We don't walk in a manner worthy SO that we could go to Heaven, we walk in a manner worthy BECAUSE all that Jesus has done for us. I gave up my engineering degree. It's not because I'm trying to get into Heaven, it's because of everything that Jesus has done *for* me. Walk in a manner worthy, *therefore* walk in a manner worthy.

A lot of you may have gone to a church that got those things backwards, the walk in a manner worthy comes second to Jesus. A lot of you may have shown up in a church that says no, you need to do this, this, this, this in order to be a good person, in order to also then be saved so that you could get to Heaven. Jesus might be in the mix, but they weren't putting Jesus at the front of the mix. Here at Calvary it's based on Jesus' grace, that's the only thing that has saved us. If you don't know that, it's a relationship, Jesus loves you, that's why we walk in a manner worthy; not walking in a manner worthy out of fear to get someplace. It's based on Jesus' love and grace, Ephesians 1-3.

When I tell people, "Listen, I'm a pastor, and if the ceiling collapsed on all of us right now and we're all standing at the pearly gates and whoever's standing there and introducing us to Heaven asking us why he should let us in, St. Peter, maybe it's Jesus, I don't even know, one of the angels, "Rob, why should I let you into Heaven?" I cannot say, "Let me in before any of these people because I was the pastor." "Let me in before these people because I never missed church, and I went to church every day as my job." "I was here every morning I was at church." And I can't say, "Let me in because I read my Bible." I couldn't say, "Let me in because I gave money to the church," or "I helped little, old ladies across the street," or "I didn't say the f-word," or "I never drank a drop of alcohol," or any of those things that your former church experience might tell you. It's all based on *therefore* – Jesus did all of this for us. That's the type of church, that's the first way to fall off of that balance beam.

And I encourage us as a church—amongst the congregation, amongst you all—never to let it get there. Guilt and judgment should not be amongst us. It's based on grace and love. Yes, encourage us to walk in a manner worthy. Yes, walk in a manner worthy, but it's based on everything that Jesus did for us. First way to fall off the balance beam.

### ② Make it all about yourself.

You ready for #2? Let's go to #2, [Chapter] 4, verse 2, we're just gonna go one at a time. It says, "**walk in a manner worthy**," and then it gives us some adjectives of what it looks like:

<sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

– EPHESIANS 4:2 (ESV)

The second way to fall off – it's on us. Are we entering into a church thinking it's all about me, getting my way? Is it all about me and my experience, making it easy for me? Letting me get my agenda accomplished? Let me do what I need to do? Oh, it's so easy, friends, it's so easy, but then I read these couple verses here, these couple words, it says, listen to this: humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love. Don't you wish instead of saying, "bearing with one another in love," Paul would have said, "Oh, when you're a Christian community everything's going to be peachy keen"? It's going to

### peachy keen

*adj.* Extremely good, exactly right; all right.

be like Disney World. It's just going to be a wonderful thing. Christians, once you become a Christian, obviously no Christians around you are ever going to be sinners, they're all going to be

beautiful, wonderful people. Instead Paul says put up with Christians, put up with each other—that's setting the tone—we have to just put up with each other, bear with one another. And then it says humility and patience and gentleness.

Ladies, maybe you don't feel this way but men you might feel this way, I read those words and it seems like they're a backhanded compliment. It's the sort of thing I wouldn't want somebody to say, "Oh, Pastor Rob is really gentle." Like, that's not... that doesn't seem like the thing, like, gentleness, meekness. You know, *Pastor John is such a meek guy*. That doesn't... it feels like, *Oh, Pastor John, you have such a great face for a mask*. You know, that's kind of what it feels like. *Ladies, you have such a great face for makeup*. You know, that's how these three words feel to me. Something I'm not necessarily compelled to do on my first read through. Men, do you want to be gentle and lowly and meek? At first you might not think so.

These are really interesting words though, gentleness, meekness is another word for it, it's actually a term described how you describe a horse. And so a meek horse is a horse that is strong and powerful and can take the crack of the whip and doesn't even like move, can be pushed—huge, muscular beast animals that pull heavy loads and go into battle—but a meek horse is one that is easily bridled by the master. Okay, I think meekness means something to me now. Christians are meant to be strong and powerful as a church. I'm not saying don't come in with opinions. I'm not saying don't come in with passions, we do need to, but we need to be easily bridled, we need to be looking out for each other, lowliness and long-suffering. Lowliness is a person—*Rob, you're such a lowly guy*—that means I'm okay with not being in control. I could be at peace with not having control. Long-suffering. Long-suffering is a person who has the ability to take retribution, they have the power to get back at you—but they don't. It's an issue of control. It's an issue of putting up with each other. It's an issue of looking out for each other rather than yourself. That's on us as individuals, making sure it's not all about us.

Since we're talking sports, I had this friend back in Jersey, Jorge, he was from Ecuador; his whole family was from Central and South America, and I used to go to parties at his home. I was the only non-Spanish speaker and I was very proud, they thought I was Argentinian or something along those lines. So I had my hat on, I'd always get spoken Spanish to and I couldn't keep up much of a conversation. Before one of these parties though I was like, "Hey, Jorge, what's going on?" He's like, "Hey, I'm coaching the middle school sixth grade soccer team down in the park." I was like, "Great, let me bring my little boy, I've got a little disabled boy, like, let's go watch."

And so me and Trey go down to see Jorge and the little kids are all running around and, you know, typical sixth grade soccer, everything seems a little bit messy. But then I started paying attention and the first thing I noticed is that the striker with the ball is running to make it to score again and I realized it's his team and the kid looks over at him and he goes



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[SHAKES HIS HEAD AND FINGER AT HIM] and the kid shanks it. I was like, "What just happened, why did he do that?" He's like, "Oh, we're too far ahead. I don't want to, like, embarrass the other team." They were 7-0. I was like, "What? Jorge, how'd this happen? How'd this happen?" And then the other team, they put in a disabled kid in the net, and the other team did score on him and then it happened again and the kid looks at him and he goes [NODS, GIVES A THUMBS UP], "Yeah, go ahead." He scores the game real quick. I'm like, "Jorge, how did this happen?"

And he goes, "Take a look. Americans, when you end up playing soccer if you have a good team, a good middle school team, it's usually because you've got one kid who's like a killer and could just dribble around everybody. If you get two, you're going to state." That sort of thing, dribble and pat, two kids. He said, "You see this little girl here?" It was a Jewish girl and she had her long black dress on playing soccer, playing football with them, and he said, "You see, at first when she was playing she would hold on to the ball too long and she wouldn't listen to me when I told her to pass it, and so I benched her." I was like, "You benched a little six-year-old? And he's like, "Yeah, her parents were so mad. But I was like, 'I'm the coach, they have to learn how to play correctly as a team.'" And he said, "Watch her now. She gets it, takes two steps and passes it, quick passes. Americans hold on to the ball too long." Basically, Jorge said to me, "It's like, listen, none of these kids are superstars, but if they're looking out for each other we're going to the finals because, Rob, Americans don't know how to play football," is what he came down to.

The power of not looking out for ourselves, coming into church and your first value is to pass the ball. It's not all about you being the superstar and being the one that has the ball all the time. You always having your way. It's passing the ball realizing it's a team, realizing it's difficult to play, realizing how hard it is, but when you come together – lowliness, meekness. It's about meekness, men, it's not about weakness.

**③ Focus on things we don't agree on.** Let's go on to the next one. The next way that you're going to fall off is not understanding all the things that we have in common. This happens all the time. It's been happening all the time in our country nowadays. It says:

**<sup>3</sup>eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-- <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.**

**– EPHESIANS 4:3-6 (ESV)**

I was a missionary in Bulgaria for a year and before I went there for a full year I went there with a group of college students from all over the place, and so we went for a summer on a summer mission. And our whole goal was to share the Gospel with college students, we were there just to have conversations with college students about Jesus, and we're creating community and hanging out with them. And one day one of the Bulgarians says to me, he goes, "How long have you Americans known each other?" I'm like, "Oh, about two or three weeks." And they're like, "What?! How could you only know each other for two or three weeks?" They began to see the unity of everything we have in common. Part of the beauty of our church is we've got Christians from all over the world that come here and we have everything in common—one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one hope—that we don't focus on the things that we disagree on, those things are gonna pass away. We focus on the things that we have eternally in common as a church.

Such a slippery slope nowadays, friends, all the things politically, mask/no mask, vaxxers/no vaxxers, all these different things that we keep out of our worship service because we focus on all the things that we

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have in common and unity is powerful. Unity is utterly powerful. This isn't just like a little one-off conversation that we're having about Scripture and about the church, unity is threaded, the power of unity is threaded throughout the entire of Scripture. I had a class on this once, just pointing out how unity, the power and law of unity is throughout all of Scripture. Unity is eternal.

We're the only religion that has any, like, an ability to say this because of the Father, Holy Spirit—love and unity have been around for eternity. If it was just the Father, where's unity, where's love? Love only comes into existence when He makes us and we're like pets compared to, you know, like that kind of – it's like us loving a pet. But the love of the Trinity and the unity, the difference, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all are different yet they're united for eternity. So unity is an eternal thing. You remember in the Tower of Babel where God said to Himself in the form of the Trinity, He says, "Hey, we have to mix up their languages because if they're united there's nothing that they can't accomplish."<sup>1</sup>

The word *logos* when it says in John that Jesus is the Word,<sup>2</sup> that's the *logos*, and the definition of *logos* that could be explained in their understanding was "that which holds all things together." Jesus holds all things together. I think there's a lot more to that that would blow our minds, how much He holds everything together. Okay, now imagine you're on your deathbed and you're gonna have your final words, your final plea coming out of your heart right before you're gonna die—do you know what Jesus prayed for? You guessed it – unity. He didn't pray that we would be more or better evangelists or that we would study more, you know, memorize more Scripture, or that we would do this, this, this, and that. Those are all good things. He prayed for unity and it wasn't just unity in general. Did you know Jesus prayed for you? And He prayed for me. Before He went to Gethsemane, John 17, His high priestly prayer, holy cow, like, He's ready to die, Jesus is ready to die and He spends some of His final breath praying for me, and praying for you if you're a believer. He says in John 17:20:

**20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,**

— that's us—

**21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**

— I in you, you in me, just like the Trinity —

**22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.**

– JOHN 1:20-23 (ESV)

Friends, friends, if you want to be a Christ follower and you want to know what His heart is, His heart is that we would be unified. Unified – that's what He's asking us to do. Ephesians 4, let's keep on going on, look back down, he says:

**3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

— because everything we're having:

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

– EPHESIANS 4:3 & 5 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Reference: [Genesis 11:1-9](#)

<sup>2</sup> *Logos*, John 1:1. Strong's Greek 3056: From *lego*; something said; by implication, a topic, also reasoning or motive; by extension, a computation; specially, the Divine Expression. Source: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/John/1-1.htm>

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Eager, we have to be eager to walk across that balance beam because it takes work. Eager. Now unity though is not just about everything we have in common, unity is also recognizing that God has gifted us all differently. The beautiful unity of a guitar isn't that every string is tuned to the same note, that's the final step in this passage of getting down to this perfect, beautiful destination that God has for us in the church. Don't fall off, that is not based on Jesus, it's about His grace, not about our works. Don't fall off making the mistake of thinking that the church is what *you* could get out of it. Don't fall off and focus on our differences, we need to focus on everything that we have in common.

④ **Not realize there is a diversity of gifts that are meant to come together.**

Lastly, and I think this is one of the most difficult things that we're entering into as a church, is how can we continue to equip the saints for the work of ministry,

recognizing that all of us are God's children and all of us have gifts and backgrounds and everything to bear and we need one another? We need one another. Take a look here. Let's keep on going on, it says:

**<sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.**

— He's giving us —

**<sup>8</sup> Therefore it says,**

— check this one out, this is a beautiful little point here:

**"When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."**

– EPHESIANS 4:7-8 (ESV)

This is going back to Psalm, Psalm 68 I believe, and the picture that we have of Jesus is that He's returning as a conquering King from battle. He's returning home after having vanquished His enemies, and as the King returns home to His beloved people He gives out gifts. He gives you a gift, and gives you a gift... we have a rich, glorious King and He gives you a gift and each one of us is given a gift to use in the church. It takes all of us, takes all of us. He goes into apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher, just to give you a framework in this passage, apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher. The way I look at it, I see it as though it's like a spiritual lens that God has given you. It's kind of like a spiritual Myers-Briggs, how do you see the world?

### PSALM 68:18 (ESV)

You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there.

Let me ask you this: apostles, might you be an apostle? Might you be somebody who's really organized and likes to push the envelope, likes to do new things, and pull people together? Are you a prophet? Prophets are people who just like, *We gotta pray, church! What is God saying to us? Where does God want to lead us? Your heart is just to listen to God, we need to listen to God.* Evangelists, you are the people who are concerned about our new people, what about the new people walking through our doors, how do we get them connected? How do we make sure that they know about Jesus? Maybe you're a shepherd, *Man, we got to care well for each other. We, you know, people are hurting inside our community, we need to help them. When there's babies we need to make sure – feed the families, gotta make sure we bring all the food to the home.* Or care for the local community. Maybe you're a teacher, you're like, *We just gotta know the Word!* Our small groups and our men's and women's, we just got to make sure we're studying the Bible together. Which one of those might you be?

Part of the dysfunction of falling off the end of this balance beam right before you get to the end, like you're almost there, part of the dysfunction is a church that focuses not enough on all five. Maybe you've



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been in a church—many churches are only shepherd/teacher which you need, imagine it's like... that's a terrible church that you don't care for each other and you're not studying the Bible—but how much is it if you don't have anybody in the church who's a go-getter organizer who's going to push the envelope. Or anybody in the church who's like, *What is God saying to us? Where should we be going as a church?* Or anybody in the church who really cares about new people?

I've been in plenty of churches that are just these, or it could go the other direction, the point is we need all of us to get these five activated; in our small groups and in our communities and here on Sunday mornings, we need all of us. This is the compelling part, we can't do it alone. It's not a pastoral duty, it's all of our duty to equip the saints for the work of ministry. And as a church we want to help you do that, we're asking you to join with us. Remember I asked you guys the question: Why are you guys here? Right now, like, what in the world is compelling in your heart to make you show up on a Sunday morning? There's probably a little bit of obligation out of some of us, to be honest, but if you dug a little bit deeper what is it that you're looking for? What kind of community do you really want? Is this meant to be just a Sunday morning activity, or is it something bigger than that?

As I was asking that question shortly later on the Lord brought me to Acts 2:42-47. I'd like to read it to you, Acts 2:42-47, this is a picture of the early church right after Pentecost and Peter preached and 3,000 people were saved. And so now the church is born, picture of the very early church, listen to this, listen to this church:

**<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul,**

— "awe came upon" – they were in awe in this community. It's actually *phobos*,<sup>3</sup> there's a little bit of fear that if a non-believer walked into this community they would be a little afraid because, like, *What do they have here that I've never seen before?* —

**and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.**

– ACTS 2:42-47 (ESV)

Friends, church is not meant to be just a once-a-week activity, it's never gonna work that way. Church was never meant to be something that just the professionals did, it's not gonna work. Church was not a place that's meant to hash out our social and cultural differences and get that job done, we'll have those conversations but it's about Jesus, friends. And church is not a place where you could kind of just come and sit. If we all just sit, we're never gonna get to the end of that balance beam. It's something that we *all* have to come, we're inviting you to please, please join us, just walk, take a step, it doesn't say run, it says walk. What's the next step that you might do in order to walk with us?



Could you imagine this church in Acts 2 within a few chapters, this church spread the Gospel in the entire city of Jerusalem, that the high priest was upset? Basically, the great commission was fulfilled in

<sup>3</sup> *Phobos*. Acts 2:43. Strong's Greek 5401: (a) fear, terror, alarm, (b) the object or cause of fear, (c) reverence, respect. From a primary *phobomai*; alarm or fright. Source: <https://biblehub.com/strongsgs/acts/2-43.htm>

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Jerusalem through this church in a very short period of time. Think about what our church could be in Downingtown, in Chester County, if we all came together, if we all did a little bit, if we all took another step. We could be a church that the Gospel is just known and people's lives are changing and awe and miracles and people would step in here and be like, *What does this community have that I've never seen before in my life? What is here?* It's Jesus, but it's all of us as His children coming together. Might you walk with us? Might you this month take another step as we're coming into the fall, who knows what the future holds, but let's do it together. That's what we're asking, that's what church is meant to be. Are you with me? Let me pray.

Lord,



I thank you so much for your Scripture, I thank you for Ephesians 4. O Lord. I thank You, Lord, that You've given us strength, given us clarity. I thank You, Lord, just for all that You could do through us, using us in eternal things, and baptisms last week.

Lord, we're going to worship You right now as a church. We're going to praise You, Jesus. We're going to remember Ephesians 2:11. We're going to remember all the things that You've done for us, your grace and your Gospel. We have nothing to be afraid if we're your children and we've placed our faith in You, Jesus, nothing to be afraid of. We don't have to work to go to Heaven, You've done it all. We thank You, Jesus, just thank You, and want to praise You together as a community with all our hearts and all our voices. In Jesus' name. Will y'all say amen with me? Amen.



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