



A WEEKLY RESOURCE FOR LIVING OUT THE WORD OF GOD

What: a weekly resource that helps the community of CCE take the sermon into their lives throughout the week with a variety of reflections, group discussions, and individual practices.

Why: Sermons aren't just for Sunday morning. "We submit ourselves to the way of faith and practice revealed in the Word of God. The sermon is explanation and exhortation, making this Word clear and *applying it to our lives.*" (definition on bulletin)

Individual and communal rhythms that help us take the liturgy into daily life allow us to open ourselves to what God is teaching us through his Word and his people.

Feel free to go through all the days or select one or two exercises that help you apply the sermon to your life this week.

February 23, 2020

Sermon Series: 2020 Vision

Title: Unity with each other

Passage: Ephesians 4:1-16

OT Reading: Psalm 68:15-20

Scott Armstrong

Summary:

Ephesians 1-3 has been asking the question of our identity—"who are we?" But beginning in chapter 4, Paul switches the question to "What are we to do?" He says in the opening verses, that we are to "walk in a manner worthy of our calling"—in other words; to practice what we preach. Paul's great concern is for the unity of the church. The church should be a sign to the wider world that God is a God of mercy, justice, truth and love. Our challenge, then, is to remain grounded in our creed that we are unified in Christ, while also rejoicing for the diversity of gifts, talents and characteristics that make us the mosaic of God's family. We are to live in the tension—rejoicing for the unity and diversity we have, while simultaneously asking the Father to

give us more unity and more diversity. We acknowledge that none of this is possible apart from the reconciling work of Jesus Christ in us.

Monday: Lectio Divina

Take some time to practice an ancient way of reading Scripture. For more on lectio divina click [here](#)

- (*Lectio*) *Reading*. Slowly read the sermon text (Ephesians 4:1-16) and get a sense of what it is saying. Read it a second time and listen for any words that strike you.

- (*Meditatio*) *Reflecting*. Read the passage again slowly. As you pause on the words or phrases that stick out to you, take some time to consider what the word, passage, or phrase means (in the context of Scripture) and how God might be using it to speak to anything in particular in your life.

- (*Oratio*) *Responding*. Read the passage again, slowly. Consider now how God has spoken to *you* in this passage and offer your responses back to Him.

- (*Contemplio*) *Remaining*. Now, take time to simply remain in the presence of God.

Tuesday: Discussion Guide

Each week we'll provide some questions to consider that will help you take the Scripture and the sermon into a deeper place. We hope this fosters meaningful conversations with those in your community group, your spouse or a friend. Authentic change happens in community.

1. Last week we spent time learning about our identity as being rooted and grounded in love. We pondered the question, "what gets in the way of my experience of God's love." How might those barriers to receiving God's love influence your ability to function as a member in a unified body? Ask your group or a trusted friend to help you connect the dots on how you personally can grow in this area of experiencing God's love and/or "walk in a manner worthy of your calling" (Eph 4:1)

2. Scott spoke about the gap between our creed (beliefs) and practice. He specifically mentioned the "four graces" (humility, patience, gentleness and love) that Paul says should be distinctive of the Christian community. Of those four, where do you feel the greatest gap in your life? Why do you think it is so hard to faithfully "practice what we preach"?

3. Paul talks about the diverse, spiritual gifts given to the church to "grow us up into Christ." Have you ever identified what your spiritual gifts are? If so, what are they? If not, what commitments will you make to discern them?

4. Scott extended the diversity image given by Paul to tackle the paradox of unity in diversity in other areas—race, economics, etc. Do you agree that part of the problem in our world today (and sometimes in the church) is that our secondary identities (race, gender, political ideology, etc.) have replaced our first identity (children of God, His sons and daughters reconciled to Him)? How can City Church be part of the solution, addressing this problem?

5. Scott concluded by challenging us to simultaneously rejoice for the unity and diversity we do have while crying out to God for more unity and more diversity. What commitments will you make along these lines?

Wednesday: Review of Confession

We confess corporately to acknowledge that we all alike fall short of the glory of God, but we also all alike can rest with assurance on His amazing grace.

Father, our world is so polarized. We see many tribes, many identities but no unity. And we confess that, as the church, we are sometimes no different. We have not embraced our primary identity in you, Jesus, and have looked to secondary identities for satisfaction instead. Forgive us for our immaturity. Forgive us for separating what we say we believe from how we live our lives. Jesus, you came to reconcile us back to the Father through your sacrifice for our sins. Restore to us, through the work of the Holy Spirit, a new desire to practice the unity in diversity that we preach. Cause our church to be a living sign of your love and mercy for the world. Amen.

Thursday: Devotion for Unity in the Body

[Excerpts from Every Moment Holy vol 1](#)

A Liturgy for a Purposeful Gathering

Accomplish your purposes among us, O God. Tune our hearts to the voice of your Spirit. Wake us to be present to you and to one another in these shared hours we are given. For it is you, O Lord, who have so gathered us from our various places, and you alone know our hearts and our needs.

Let us prize these moments and care for one another deeply— for each of us, and our relationship to one another, are precious and fleeting.

Amen.

Let us prize these moments and care for one another deeply— for each of us, and our relationships to one another, are precious and eternal.

Amen.

Breathe upon our gathering, O spirit of God.

Grant each of us a place to humbly receive and to faithfully serve, that we might know in this brief gathering a foretaste of that greater communion yet to come.

O Father, enlarge our hearts.

O Spirit, expand our vision.

O Christ, establish your kingdom among us.

Be at work even now, O Lord.

May your will, in us, in these hours,

Be accomplished.

Amen

Friday: Sabbath/Soul Rest

Take a few minutes— ideally at the beginning of your day, or whenever works best for you— and simply do nothing. Just be. Stand in silent love before God. Rest in the Father's deep love for you today. His love has no limits.

Additional Resources:

[Songs for Lent](#): A playlist of Lenten songs curated by AnamCara Ministries

[Meditations on the Lord's Prayer](#) brief 4-6 minute guided reflections on this famous prayer

[The Return of the Prodigal Son](#) by Henri Nouwen