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By Dan Maines

Ephesians 4

Ephesians 4:1-2

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.

† Paul speaks as a prisoner, urging the church to live worthily of their calling.

† Humility, gentleness, patience, and love are marks of maturity

in Christ.

† Ignatius (Letter to the Smyrnaeans 4) exhorted believers to be marked by humility and patience.

Ephesians 4:3-4

Being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you also were called in one hope of your calling.

† Unity of the Spirit must be preserved diligently.

† One body, one Spirit, one hope emphasizes the oneness of Christ's church.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 46) urged the Corinthians to preserve unity in the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:5-6

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

† The foundation of unity is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.

† This excludes division and multiple gospels.

† The Didache (7.1) emphasized the oneness of baptism in the name of Christ.

Ephesians 4:7-8

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive the captives, and He gave gifts to people."

† Christ distributes grace and gifts to His people.

† The ascension fulfills Psalm 68, showing Christ as victorious King.

† Justin Martyr (Dialogue with Trypho 39) connected Christ's ascension with the giving of gifts to His church.

Ephesians 4:9-10

Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.

† Christ's descent speaks of His incarnation and death.

† His ascension shows His exaltation and authority to fill all things.

† Irenaeus (Against Heresies 3.19.3) explained that Christ's descent and ascent fulfilled God's redemptive plan.

Ephesians 4:11-12

And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ.

† Christ gave ministry gifts for the building up of the church.

† Leadership exists to equip the saints for service, not to dominate.

† The Didache (15.1) instructed churches on appointing faithful teachers and leaders.

Ephesians 4:13-14

Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of people, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.

† The goal is maturity in Christ, growing into His fullness.

† False doctrines threaten the immature, but stability is found in truth.

† Origen (On First Principles 2.3.4) warned of spiritual infancy

leading to instability.

Ephesians 4:15-16

But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, that is, Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

† Truth in love is essential for growth into Christ.

† The body grows as each member functions properly.

† Cyprian (On the Unity of the Church 6) affirmed that the church's unity flows from Christ the Head.

Ephesians 4:17-19

So I say this, and affirm in the Lord, that you are to no longer walk just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their minds, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart, and they, having become callous, have given themselves up to indecent behavior for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

† Believers must not live like the nations, darkened in understanding.

† Hardness of heart leads to impurity and greed.

† Josephus (Antiquities 20.2.4) described how greed and moral corruption spread in the last days of Israel.

Ephesians 4:20-21

But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus.

† Truth is found in Christ, not in the ways of the world.

† Learning Christ means a transformed life shaped by Him.

Ephesians 4:22-24

That, in reference to your former way of life, you are to rid yourselves of the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you are to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

† The old self must be put off, the new self put on in Christ.

† Renewal of the mind is central to transformation.

† Philo (On the Special Laws 4.135) spoke of renewing the mind toward virtue, though true renewal is found in Christ.

Ephesians 4:25

Therefore, ridding yourselves of falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, because we are parts of one another.

† Lying is forbidden, truthfulness reflects the unity of the body.

† As members of one body, deceit damages all.

Ephesians 4:26-27

Be angry, and yet do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.

† Anger must be controlled and not lead to sin.

† Lingering anger gives the devil an opening.

† Tertullian (On Patience 12) warned that unchecked anger invites the devil's influence.

Ephesians 4:28

The one who steals must no longer steal, but rather he must labor, producing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with the one who has need.

- † Believers must turn from stealing to working and sharing.
- † Work is not just for provision but for generosity.

Ephesians 4:29

Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but if there is any good word for edification according to the need of the moment, say that, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

- † Speech must edify and give grace.
- † Corrupt talk destroys, but godly words build up.

Ephesians 4:30

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

- † Sinful conduct grieves the Spirit who sealed believers.
- † The Spirit is God's mark of ownership and security.

Ephesians 4:31-32

All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

- † The old attitudes of bitterness and wrath must be put away.
- † Kindness, compassion, and forgiveness reflect God's character in Christ.
- † Clement of Alexandria (Paedagogus 1.8) exhorted believers to kindness and forgiveness as imitating Christ.

How it applies to us today

- † Ephesians 4 calls us to unity, maturity, and truth in love.
- † We must put off the old life and put on the new, showing Christ in speech, conduct, and forgiveness.
- † In the fulfilled kingdom, we are one body in Christ, equipped to build each other up in love.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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