

Outline

Introduction

- Two competing messages in our world
 - Individual freedoms, rights, and liberties
 - Biblical call to set aside personal freedoms for Christ
- Core truth: Followers of Jesus are people under authority who have yielded to God
- Paul's call in Ephesians 4: Walk in unity, preserve Spirit-created unity, grow together

Scripture Reading

- Ephesians 4:7, 11-16 (CEV)

Two Big Ideas

1. We Have All Been Given Spiritual Gifts

- Grace gifts (dōma) - gifts of bounty from a conquering king
- Christ as conquering King who descended, rose, and ascended
- Connection to Psalm 68:18 - God's triumphal ascent
- Every believer carries a piece of Christ's treasure
- Gifts purchased by Jesus' blood and obedience
- Gifts are intentional, not random

Examples of Spiritual Gifts

- Ephesians 4: apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers
- 1 Corinthians 12:27-28: miracles, healing, helping, leadership, tongues
- Romans 12:6-8: prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, kindness

Purpose of Gifts

- To serve others and build up the Body of Christ
- Ministry starts Sunday but continues throughout the week
- Staff role: equip people for ministry
- People's role: do the ministry

Church as House Construction Analogy

- Different trades working together
- Each person doing their part faithfully
- General contractor overseeing coordination
- Many places to serve at Rivers Edge

2. Gifts Lead to Deeper Maturity

- Goal: Think more of benefiting others than ourselves

The Goal: Maturity in Christ (v. 13-14)

- United by faith and understanding of Jesus
- Teleios (mature, complete, full-grown)
- Not spiritual perfection, but completeness
- Stop acting like spiritual children
- Not easily deceived by false teachings
- Importance of finding and settling into a Bible-teaching church

Truth and Love Together (v. 15)

- Truth alone can be harsh

- Love alone can be permissive
- Truth in love disciplines people
- Pattern of healthy church: gospel truth wrapped in genuine care

Christ as Head (v. 16)

- Christ holds the body together
- All parts work perfectly
- Growth comes through love

How to Pursue Maturity as a Church

Three Practical Steps

1. **Intentional mentoring**

- Mature believers guiding new believers
- Culture of spiritual parenting
- Men's and women's fellowship gatherings

2. **Structured pathways**

- Small group Bible studies
- Doctrine classes
- Ministry and service opportunities

3. **Redeeming technology**

- Social media outreach
- Video shorts and reels
- Online presence through websites and podcasts

Closing Application

Three Challenges

1. **Balance your life** - Humility, gentleness, patience, maintaining unity
2. **Work with your gift** - Use it as a tool, not a trophy, to build up the body
3. **Grow up together** - Commit to truth in love, mentoring, letting Christ direct

Ultimate Goal

- Display "the fullness of Christ" through His church to the world

Invitation

- Refocus from world to Kingdom
- Discover and use spiritual gifts
- Move from spiritual neutrality to spiritual adulthood