



LIVING GRACE  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

## ***“Walking in the Body of Christ”*** **Sermon Date: February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

### **Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon**

*Below is a reference to the section of the New City Catechism that we went over on Sunday:*

#### **The New City Catechism—Lord’s Day 6**

##### **How Can We Glorify God?**

We glorify God by enjoying him, loving him, trusting him, and by obeying his will, commands, and law.

### **Prayer**

Praise Jesus for not only redeeming us from our sins but also gifting us and enabling us that we might play a part in the building up of His church. Praise the Holy Spirit who opens our hearts to hear and receive the Word that we might grow in service, unity, knowledge, and spiritual maturity—the image of Christ. As you pray, consider making this prayer your own (this prayer was taken from Ephesians for You by Richard Coekin).

*Almighty God our Heavenly Father, by your grace in Jesus Christ and in the power of your Holy Spirit, please help me to be prayerfully holy and joyfully obedient to your word and so, as a member of my church, in submission to its leadership, to:*

*Believe and proclaim the gospel that Christ is my loving Savior and living Lord;*

*Attend regularly my Sunday congregation and appropriate mid-week small group;*

*Contribute my prayer, time and talents to our church life and outreach; and*

*Give sacrificially for the gospel ministry of our church and its mission partners,*

*In the name of Jesus Christ my Lord, amen.*

## **Scripture**

### ***Ephesians 4:7-16 (ESV)***

*7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says,*

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

*9 (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 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, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

## **Handling the Word**

Break down the passage:

1. What has Jesus given to His bride on account of His descension (incarnation or humiliation) and ascension (victory)? (vv. 7-12)
2. What is the purpose of Jesus gifting His church with evangelists, shepherds and teachers? (vv. 11-12)
3. What is the goal of the gifts that Jesus has given to His church? (vv. 13-14)
4. What does it look like when the saints are growing in service, unity, knowledge, and maturity? (vv. 15-16)
5. Who is the source of the church's growth (v. 16)?

## **Understanding and Applying**

1. Because of Jesus' victory over Satan, sin, and death Paul declares that *all* saints have been given grace—gifts of service (vv. 7-8). Have you ever considered what your gifts, talents, or abilities are and if so, what might they be (i.e., hospitality, patience, faithfulness, wisdom, kindness, encouragement, and the like)? If not, why do you think that is?
2. As you will notice in verse 12, *all* saints are to be equipped for ministry, 'for building up the body'. Do you believe that Jesus has not only graced you with gifts but also that these gifts are not for your own pleasure but to help build up the saints? Please explain. At times, do you think the church falls prey to expecting a few saints to facilitate what the entire church has been gifted to do?
3. In verse 7, we read that grace was given to each saint according to 'the measure of Christ's gift.' In other words, as one commentator says, "whatever spiritual gift we possess we have because of the good pleasure and kindness of Christ." Have you ever compared or been jealous of another believer's gifts and why? Why is it comforting and humbling to know that Christ has distributed gifts according to His sovereignty rather than our merit or ability?
4. Referencing verse 12, one commentator states that Paul, "highlights five of the gifts Christ gave to enrich, mature, and equip His people...they are all identified with the ministry of teaching." Do you see the teaching ministry at Living Grace as one of God's means to equip you to serve and use your gifts? Please explain. Why do you think God uses the teaching ministry to equip His people to build up the body (Colossians 1:9-12)?

5. In verses 12-14, we see the goal of Jesus gifting His church with teachers to equip the saints for ministry—unity of the faith, knowledge of the Son, Christlikeness, and no longer being misled by bad or false doctrine. Has this been true for you, has ministry (the use of gifts) from others at LG led you to a greater unity among saints, a proper knowledge of the Son, Christlikeness, and discernment of truth? Please share.
  
6. Jesus has bestowed gifts to His people in order that they might speak ‘the truth in love’ and so ‘grow up in every way into him,’ into Christ (v. 15). Thus, there is a direct correlation to a healthy church and the maintenance, defense, and pursuit of truth and love—doctrine and service (Ian Hamilton). For the saint, why do truth and love go together? What does truth without love look like and what does love without truth look like?
  
7. As we grow into the image of Christ and are enabled to speak ‘the truth in love’ (v.15), how might we respond to these scenarios:
  - A fellow believer is going through hardships
  - A fellow believer is struggling with sin
  - We want to share the gospel with an unbeliever
  
8. All glory to Christ who ascended into heaven and distributed gifts to His people that they might be equipped for ministry, attain unity of faith and knowledge, mature, not be misled, speak the truth in love, be held together, and work properly. It is Christ who ‘makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love’ (v. 16). Given our passage, what are you encouraged by and what are you asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand and apply?

*“Paul’s primary emphasis is on the Head, Christ, who ‘causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.’ But the spiritual growth and maturity that flow from the Head, Christ, does not happen automatically. Growth into a perfect man happens only with ‘the effective working by which every part does its share’ (4:16). All Christians have a responsibility to do their utmost with the gifts and capacities given to them by the risen Lord to help build up the body of Christ, His beloved church. There are to be no passengers in the church, just as there are no redundant joints and ligaments in the body. Everyone is needed. Everyone has a significant part to play in the church’s growing into a perfect man (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-27).”*

*-Ian Hamilton*