

## **Open the Eyes of My Heart (Part 15)**

Ephesians 4:1-6

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Today we celebrate Jesus' resurrection, through which He defeated sin and death. This is so important for us because through faith we share in His victory. And in Ephesians 4:1-6, we see how we should respond to all that has been freely given to us through Jesus' death and resurrection. In chapters 1-3, Paul described everything that God has done for us. Now he begins telling us what our response should be to all this grace. We must live in a manner worthy of the calling we have received.

Looking back at 1:5, we see that through Jesus we are adopted into God's family. In 2:1-3 we learned that before being in God's family, we were in Satan's family, slaves to the desires of our flesh. We were brought out of Satan's family into God's family. And this is especially poignant for us Gentiles, who originally weren't a part of God's people (2:12). Through Jesus, we have peace with God, formerly belonging to the enemy's family but now welcomed into God's family. But 2:14-16 tells us we also have peace with each other, for the wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles was broken down when Gentiles were welcomed with Jews to be united in the body of Christ. The calling we received is one of peace with God and each other. The gift of God is peace and reconciliation with Him, and our response is to live in peace and unity with each other (4:2-3). There is no greater testimony to the outside world than genuine peace and harmony among God's people.

Paul uses four nouns to describe how we are to live in peace with one another. We should live in humility, gentleness, patience, and love. We should put others before and above ourselves, we should be kind and considerate, we should bear with each other, and extend our love towards each other. Within these four words are two main ideas. The first is the implication that we will have our differences. We will offend each other and step on each other's toes. Within our family we see that as we now spend all day with each other, there is more opportunity for us to offend one another. And the same goes for our church family. The longer we know each other, the more our differences become apparent, and the more chances there are for disagreement and conflict. We must recognize that it's not always easy to get along. And this leads to the second point, which is that peace requires us to absorb loss. We all have this sense of justice and fairness that pushes us to seek retribution, demand restitution, and pass judgment on

those who offend us. As a child fairness was extremely important for me. When my sister brought home a slice of pie for me and my brother to share, my father would let one of us cut the pie and the other choose which piece to take first. Whoever got to cut the pie made sure it was as even as possible so the other wouldn't choose a bigger piece. This obsession with fairness must be relinquished in the family of God. We must be willing to lose, to absorb the loss. Follow the example of Jesus, who absorbed all our sin on the cross. There was no fairness for Him. And we did nothing to deserve it and there is nothing we can ever do to repay Him. But He's okay with it. Can you be okay with absorbing the minor offenses that others may have caused you?

Next, in v. 4 Paul emphasizes our unity by describing what we all share in. We all belong to one body, we all have one Spirit who dwells in our hearts, we all share the one hope of Jesus' return, we all share one faith in one Lord who is Jesus Christ, we all share in the water of one baptism and the baptism with the Spirit, and finally we all share in one God who is the Father of all and is above all and in all. We share all these things because we are united in Jesus Christ. And this oneness in the body of Christ is the greatest demonstration to the world that He is the Son of God. Notice also that Paul mentions the Spirit, the Lord Jesus, and the Father. Each Person of the Trinity unites us. Each has a different role but all participate in glorifying God and blessing His people. We likewise, though different, are united in purpose through our relationship with the triune God. So let us live in light of the resurrection by living in humility, gentleness, patience, and love.

For those who don't believe in Jesus, we understand that many times we Christians have failed. Sometimes we are hypocrites. But we are trying. We want to be better. We strive to submit ourselves to God, to meditate on His word, and to ask for His strength to transform our lives. We acknowledge we are sinners like everyone else, but through Jesus we have forgiveness, and the Spirit who pushes us to become more like Him, and the hope of final deliverance from our sinful bodies upon His return. Through Him alone can we have salvation from our sin.