

Ephesians 16:2-15

1. This section is divided into four parts
 - a. Paul's encouragement to treasure unity in the Spirit
 - b. The baptismal creed
 - c. The gifts of the ascended Christ
 - d. The office of the ministry as Christ's gift to unite and edify the church

Read Ephesians 4:1-3

2. When reflecting on the status of the Christian, and remembering everything that Paul has taught us about the Christian faith up to this point, he then encourages us "to walk..." and to talk in a very specific way
 - a. With humility and gentleness
 - b. With patience, bearing with one another in love
 - c. Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace
3. What kinds of implications does this have for the congregation?
4. The issue here is not that Christians would destroy the unity of the Body of Christ or the Church- we cannot do that because the Church is found in God, but that the Christian would cease to be a member of the body, defecting from the church, walking away from the unity and life she provides.

Read Ephesians 4:4-6

5. This section could possibly be quoted from the early church's baptismal rite due to its poetic style
 - a. How is it similar to the creeds we use today?
 - i. Note the use of the word "one." It is used seven times- the number of divine perfection.
 - b. How is it different? Why might this pattern be significant given that it is a baptismal creed?

Read Ephesians 4:7-10

6. We have a quote from Psalm 68 which is a Psalm about the protection that God provides his people from their enemies and how he gathers his people unto himself.

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

7. One of Paul's famously long and complex sentences in which he unpacks the gifts of Christ and their consequences for the church.
8. Paul uses five nouns to represent the one office of holy ministry as a gift of Christ in the actual men who carry out the office in distinct ways. Each of the five are an office first held by Christ on behalf of his Father.
9. He identifies the purpose of the Office of the Ministry
 - a. as being
 - i. For the completion of the saints
 - ii. For the work of the ministry
 - iii. For the building up of the body of Christ
 - b. Until we should all attain conformity to the image of Christ
 - i. to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God
 - ii. to the maturing of manhood
 - iii. to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ
 - c. So that might no longer

- i. be infants- but grow up into Christ
 - ii. be tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine- but be joined and knit together
 - iii. be in the trickery of men, in the craftiness in accordance with deceitful scheming which leads into error- grow and build the body of Christ in love
10. When people reject the divinely ordered Office of the Ministry and no longer understand that the pastor stands in the place of Christ, as Christ's gift to his church this is an evil thing. Walther warns about it in this way, "The distinction between preachers and those who hear what they preach is quite certainly not something which is so ordered at the option of the church or men. It is so instituted by the Son of God himself, and it is therefore quite clearly a violation of what God has so ordered, indeed nothing other than a rebellion in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, when Christians, who have not been rightfully called and put into the holy office, presume to exercise it."
11. This does not mean that the church is passive, instead what is the body to do (thinking back to the beginning)?
12. Paul closes with the reminder that the body grows, not because the body wills it, but because the head provides it with spiritual energy, bound together by the ligaments of peace, and then gives it direction for its work. This work shows the vitality of life in the body through the love that comes from Christ and flows through his body to its parts and our of his body into the world.