

BE THE CHURCH

Ephesians 2:11-18; 4:1-24

Identity, 5

Ephesians is an amazing letter and deserving of an entire series by itself. Ted did a great job of eliciting one of its key themes this morning when he talked about the new man. We have lived much of our lives independently and continue to face temptation to continue living our lives this way even though it is no longer true

of us. When we came to know Christ, we became part of something greater than ourselves. We became part of the new man, the body of Christ. We *are* an essential part of a larger community. If we choose to live on our own, the rest of the body is affected. We don't have a choice whether or not to be part of the new man. We only have the choice of whether or not we will fulfill our roles and contribute to this community by sharing our lives, stories, and gifts with one another. When we serve one another with the gifts God has given us, we are truly living as God designed us to live. What a privilege. God is good. He knew what He was doing when He created us.



Christian service is usually thought of as a duty rather than a privilege. For many of us, the service we do is not a joy. It often feels like another burden. Often times, this is a result of improper motivations or serving in a way other than God intended us to serve. Bill Hybels sums up the challenges we often face when it comes to serving in the following quote.

When you're enjoying the fulfillment and fellowship that inevitably accompanies authentic service, ministry is a joy. Instead of it exhausting you, it energizes you. Instead of burnout, you experience blessing. You say, "It's a privilege. I want to do this for the rest of my life."

How are you using your gifts to serve the body?
When have you felt most overwhelmed while serving?

When have you felt most satisfied while serving?
What was the difference between these two times? Explain.

For us to "BE THE CHURCH," we need to . . .

1. Realize our identity as the church. Ephesians 2:11-18

2. Relate to others based upon this new identity. Ephesians 4:1-17

Strive for unity.

Use your spiritual gifts.

A spiritual gift is a unique, God-given, God-empowered ability for service.

Focus on the goal . . . God's glory.

Experiencing Him and becoming like Him.

Displaying Him to the world.

3. Repent of the way you view life. Ephesians 4:18-24

The old man views life individually.

The new man views life corporately.

What does the context (Eph. 2:8-10) tell us about vv. 11-18?
Who is the "new man" and what does this mean?
What are your gifts and how are you/have you used them?
Why is it hard for many of us to be served?
When do you live out of a mentality of loving your neighbor?
Contrast viewing life individualistically vs. corporately. Explain.

What is the connection between these two passages?
How does this idea shape how we interact with others?
What gifts do you see in other people around you?
When do you live out of an entitlement mentality?
When have you been served/nurtured by the body?
What needs to change about your thinking in this area?

Prayer

Please pray for those new to the church. Ask God to give them the courage to reach out and get plugged in. Also, ask the Father to remind and encourage us to reach out to others in love and compassion. Pray, too, that TCBC would become more and more a place for people to get connected, healed, and equipped to live godly lives that are pleasing to God.