

OPEN: What is the best Mother's Day gift you have ever received or the best gift you have ever given?

Ephesians 4:1-16 (NIV)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says:

"When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people."

⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

DIG: Read Ephesians 4:1-16

- Where else does Paul use the prisoner imagery in Ephesians?
- How does 4:1-16 grow out of or follow up on Ephesians 1-3?
- In this section, what specifically does it mean to live worthy? What are we supposed to do or be?
- How does the church fit into to the idea of using our gifts?

REFLECT

- What does it mean to you to live a worthy life? How is this different from the idea of earning it?
- In verse two Paul recommends being "humble, gentle, patient, and bearing with one another." Which of these traits comes most easily to you? Which trait is more of a challenge?
- How are things going in your house? Good? Bad? In between?
- Is this anything in particular that you hope does not change when we go back to normal?

PRAYER TIME: Father, we thank you for the blessings that are ours in Jesus. May we strive for unity of the Spirit in all we do. In Jesus we pray, Amen.