

Church in the City ⑦

Introduction | Unity in the Spirit

According to the Bible, people who trust and follow Jesus Christ have a purpose in life and a vision. What is the purpose of your life? Let's look at 3 points today. First, the purpose of our lives: if we summarize this passage, it is unity. Secondly, let's reflect on this ultimate link that bonds us in unity. It takes its root in the perfect relationships of trinity. Thirdly, we will take a look at the community unity and diversity of gifts that produce a dynamic balance.

Scripture | Ephesians 4:1-10

4:1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 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 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.)

Questions |

- 1: (verses 1-3) In this passage, Paul talks about a "calling" and insists on this word as he repeats it twice. The "calling" here refers to the conversion of people who believe that they are sinners, who are saved by faith in Jesus and who live a new life according to the Spirit. What does it mean to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called"?
- 2: The answer to the previous question is unity. But what can be an obstacle to unity among us? And how can we build unity? (reference: Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
- 3: (verses 4-6) What is the foundation for unity, harmony and cooperation among us? This passage talks about God's trinity: the Spirit, the Lord (Christ) and the Father. How does this encourage you? (reference: C. S. Lewis)
- 4: How can our unity in the trinitarian God be useful in our testimony or when we share the Gospel? (reference: John 17:21)
- 5: (verses 7-8) According to Paul, the Spirit not only allows Christians to experience unity, but He also provides a diversity of gifts. What do you think is your gift? It might be difficult to know what it is. Discuss about it with other and tell each other what their gifts are.
- 6: (verses 9-10) What does Paul say about Christ? What does it mean for us in terms of how we should use our gifts?

Reading |

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* p. 27

Every human wish dream that is injected into the Christian community is a hindrance to genuine community and must be banished if genuine community is to survive. [...] God hates visionary dreaming; it makes the dreamer proud and pretentious.

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* p. 268, 270

In Christianity, God is not an impersonal thing nor a static thing—not even just one person—but a dynamic pulsating activity, a life, a kind of drama, almost, if you will not think me irreverent, a kind of dance... [The] pattern of this three-personal life is ... the great fountain of energy and beauty spurting up at the very center of reality.

John 17:21

That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* p. 269

The whole dance, or drama, or pattern of this three-personal life is to be played out in each one of us: or (putting it the other way round) each one of us has got to enter that pattern, take his place in that dance. There is no other way to the happiness for which we were made.

Prayer |

- Praise our trinitarian God. He has bonded us together to fill our community with love and tolerance for people around us to know about God's plan of salvation. Let's pray for unity, cooperation and love.
- Pride and self-centeredness can destroy unity. Repent for this kind of behavior and pray to be freed from them. Pray to be able to find your gifts and use them to serve the community.

Upcoming events

Community group leader training (19)

Lunchtime meeting (20 Akasaka, 21 Kasumigaseki, 22 Otemachi)

Retirement home visit (24)

Worship & fellowship (25) Church in the city, study of Ephesians (8) "the work of service", 1st service from 13:00, 2nd service from 15:30 @KDDI hall

Community group leader training (26)

Lunchtime meeting (28 Marunouchi, 29 Otemachi)

Obento project (7/1) *Summer clothes wanted!

Worship & fellowship (7/2) Church in the city, study of Ephesians (9) "the new self", 1st service from 13:00, 2nd service from 15:30 @KDDI hall