

## SERMON NOTES EPHESIANS 4:7-16 GOD'S PLAN FOR US

### INTRODUCTION

Have you ever asked yourself, “Why am I here?” “What am I to do with my life?” These are vitally important questions and the apostle Paul answers them in the section of Scripture we are to consider this morning. Many commentators feel that these verses are the heart of the letter to the Ephesians.

### GOD'S GIFTS – TO EQUIP BELIEVERS (verses 7-12)

Having established the doctrine of the unity and equality of Jews and Gentiles in the new society called the church in the first three chapters, Paul goes on in chapter 4 to call for this unity to be lived out. We could summarise his message as: “Be what you are.” Having been made a unity by the Spirit we are to live out the unity of the Spirit in your everyday lives. Having stressed unity Paul goes on, in the verses we are to look at today, to talk about the diversity of God's gifts to the church. God uses a diversity of gifts to bring about unity. To achieve his purpose of equipping believers for the work of ministry God gives every believer at least one spiritual gift. Characteristically Paul anchors this understanding in the Scriptures. In verse 8 he quotes from Psalm 68:18. He argues that our resurrected and ascended Saviour gives spiritual gifts to his people so that “*he might fill all things.*” This means, so that his grand eternal plan of redemption might be fulfilled by all things being reconciled to him. Along with his individual gifting of believers, God has given gifted leaders so that our individual giftedness does not produce anarchy.

### GOD'S OBJECTIVE - TO MATURE BELIEVERS (verse 13)

God does not want the church to be a bunch of spiritual babies. He wants us to come to spiritual maturity. He expresses this in four ways, really two pairs. We are to strive for:

1. *The unity of the faith* – that is our trust in the gospel.
2. *The unity of the knowledge of the Son of God* – our *knowing* or our experiential relationship with our Redeemer. These first two go together.
3. *Mature manhood* – a settled, balanced Christian life.
4. *The stature of the fullness of Christ* – this is speaking about Christlikeness. These last two also go together.

### GOD'S PURPOSE – TO UNITE BELIEVERS (verses 14-16)

God's purpose is that the people of God grow in:

1. Spiritual maturity (verse 14)  
Paul was writing to the Ephesians because they were being troubled by false teachers. His desire was they would grow into spiritual maturity so that they could resist false teaching. He paints a graphic picture of what was happening: people were being *tossed around by every wind of doctrine* as one false teacher came through and then another. Such false teachers employ *human cunning* or *trickery*. They are not honest. They seek to profit by deceiving the unwary. They are *crafty* and employ *deceitful schemes*. We are to know our Bibles so well that such people will not take us in.
2. Love (verses 15 and 16)  
There is to be an increasing unity in love. Notice that we are to focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the head; he is the ultimate ruler of his church. When we are in right relationship with him the church will function together as his body, and will “*build itself up in love.*”