



FIRST PREZ HONOLULU
SERMON TEXT

“GROW UP! - PART 2”
(WHAT GOD HAS DONE Sermon Series)
Ephesians 4:1-16
by Pastor Chris Pan
Sunday, November 16, 2025

Today is part 2 of our sermon GROW UP! Let's grow up.

We are in Ephesians 4:1-16, which is the text from last week. The Apostle Paul encourages us to grow up to maturity in Jesus, and discusses 4 topics:

- CALL
- CHARACTER
- UNITY
- GIFTS

We discussed CALL last week. Our First Prez mission is not: “Keep everyone comfortable while we steadily decline.” Our First Prez mission is: “Joining Jesus to restore and transform one another and our world.”

Last week, we also discussed the CHARACTER of a mature Christian: Always be humble and gentle, Paul encouraged. How did you do? And who made it hard? Always be humble and gentle.

I was humble and gentle all day Sunday. I was humble and gentle all day Monday. I was humble and gentle until 10:55am on Tuesday morning. At 10:55am Tuesday morning, I was getting ready for an 11am meeting at home (since it was a holiday),

and I couldn't find the folding table I've been using as a desk. So, I asked my wife if she moved the table and didn't put it back. I was not particularly gentle when I asked my wife this question. I may have been very harsh. Is this a safe place to confess?

Always be humble and gentle. That's hard work! But it is not my hard work. It is God's hard work. The work of transformation is God's.

In another letter, Philippians, Paul tells us that God has begun a good work in us—in me, and in you—and that God will see that work through until completion. We just have to stay close to God, and yield and surrender to His work in our lives.

One final detail to my folding table story: that 11am Zoom meeting I needed the table for, it was a prayer meeting. I was mean to my wife on the way to a prayer meeting, on my second day as senior pastor—which was the perfect timing for me to confess how I need to grow up. I need God's transformation, always.

Today, we continue with UNITY and GIFTS. As we read the Scripture passage today, ask yourself these two questions throughout our message today:

- What is God saying to me?
- What does He want me to do about it?
- What is God saying to US?
- What does He want US to do about it?

Ephesians 4:1–16 (NLT)

¹ Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making

allowance for each other's faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴ For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. ⁵ There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

⁷ However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. ⁸ That is why the Scriptures say,

"When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people."

⁹ Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. ¹⁰ And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵ Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together

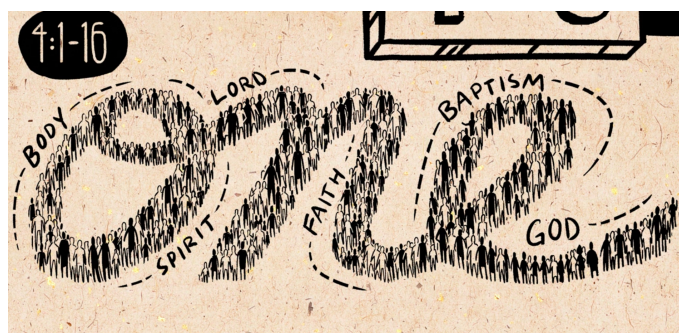
perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Paul talks a lot about UNITY in Ephesians. He could not be more clear than what He says in verses 3-6:

³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴ For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. ⁵ There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

Here's a graphic from The Bible Project, a great YouTube channel, that captures the idea here.



It is the word "one," but made up of lots of people. This is what Paul is emphasizing again and again in Ephesians: one Body, one Spirit, one glorious Hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God. One.

Paul says we have to "make every effort to keep ourselves united in the Spirit, binding ourselves together with peace." Being united takes work. Make every effort to be united. It doesn't just happen. We have to work at keeping ourselves united. We talked about this a few weeks ago, how

Christ tears down the walls of hostility between us. Remember tearing down that wall, and in its place, a united body, one body through the cross. One Body, one Spirit, one glorious Hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.

Paul continues. Unity isn't uniformity. We're not all the same. We may be one body, but we all have different gifts, and Jesus gives these gifts to all of us, not just some of us. Not just the church staff or elders or deacons. Everyone in the church gets a gift. You get a gift! You get a gift! You get a gift! Each one of us has a special gift.

⁷ However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.... ¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

If you need an easy way to remember, it is APEST.



Which special gift do you have? You have at least one. We'll come back to explain these gifts in a moment, but first let's find out why we have these gifts:

¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

We all have these gifts to (1) equip God's people, (2) to do God's work and (3) to build up the church. This continues until we all come to unity and maturity.

This is how God designed the church.

- That we all have gifts.
- We all equip each other.
- We all do God's work.
- We all build up the church.
- Do it until we all come to unity of faith and knowledge of Jesus,
- And until we all are mature in the Lord.

We all.

You know, this is a totally different way of understanding the church for me. I didn't grow up with a WE ALL model of church. I had a "the pastor does it and we watch" model of church.

Here's how I thought God designed the church:

- God has given a few people a special gift.
- This is the gift: pastor.
- The pastor's responsibility is to do God's work and build up the church.
- This continues until a few really holy people become spiritually mature. People can opt in or opt out.

Does anyone else think, “Yeah, that’s how church works? The author Alan Hirsch has been calling the church back to Ephesians 4—to this passage—reminding us about God’s design for the church.

It’s all right here in Ephesians:

- God has given a few people a special gift.
★ *⁷ However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.*
- This is the gift: pastor.
★ *¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.*
- The pastor’s responsibility is to do God’s work and build up the church.
★ *¹² Their [APEST] responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.*
- This continues until a few really holy people become spiritually mature.
★ *¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.*

As we begin this new chapter in the life of First Prez, let’s be the church the way God designed us. I invite you to embrace your gift with prayer and humility. I invite you to have courage to take a new step to equip your fellow brothers and sisters, to do God’s work, and to build up the church, until WE ALL come maturity, until we all look like Jesus.

If First Prez were a boat, we’re all the crew. There are no passengers just along for the ride.

If First Prez were a sports team, we’re all players, in the game, on the field. There are no spectators, no stands. We cheer for each other as fellow players.

If First Prez were a body, we’d be a body, no random parts laying around—disconnected arm, foot.

Let’s look at each other, through the cross. The church is not a pastor performance, or a worship team performance. It’s body participation. Each of us has gifts. The Holy Spirit speaks to all of us. We all are the body of Christ. May we all use our gifts and get this body movin’!

Nolan Watkins is a pilot who belongs to our church ‘ohana. He felt called to lead a study at the Hope Center, and he went and did it. Church staff had no idea that he was doing it. Nolan followed the Holy Spirit. He’s using his gift. (If you want to get involved in Hope Center, talk to Joe Janson or Josh Gray.) If we were a boat, the good ship USS First Prez, Nolan is part of the crew, doing crew things.

We all are part of the crew, part of the body. May we all use our gifts and get this body movin’!

Monika Wurlitzer is a mom and a lawyer who belongs to our church ‘ohana. She felt called to pray for schools, so she organized a prayer walk at Castle and two schools in Waianae—three schools that quickly became 33 schools. And then someone from the Big Island called and said, “We heard what you’re doing. Can you help us?” She added five more schools on the Big Island. Church staff had no idea that Monika was doing this. We only found out when Monika said, “Hey, I feel called to put together a strategic prayer meeting. Can you help?” We said sure. (Info to come. If you want to find out more, find Monika after the service.)

Monika followed the Holy Spirit. If we were a sports team—the First Prez Prezians or Mountaineers or Fat Tadpoles—Monika is in the game, playing, participating, not spectating.

We are all part of the team, part of the body. May we all use our gifts and get this body movin'!

So, what are those gifts? These are the gifts that Christ gives the church. Jesus Himself embodies each of these gifts, perfectly. As I talk about these gifts, listen to God to figure out which gift God gave you, because after I go through each of the five gifts, I want us to stand according to gifts, so we can see the beautiful way God makes the body fit together. It's going to be really awkward if no one stands because you think, "Oh sorry. I wasn't paying attention. Can you repeat that?" Help me out. Figure out which gift God has given you.

Are you an **APOSTLE**? Apostles are the "sent ones." They extend the mission of the church in new directions, start and build things, develop leaders, are risk-takers, pioneers, entrepreneurs. If we were missing Apostles, or our Apostles don't contribute their gifts, then we wouldn't try new things or move outside our comfort zone. Apostles are symbolized by hiking boots and a pioneer hat.

ARE you a **PROPHET**? Prophets hear from God and call people to faithfulness. They tune to God's will, call us, correct us, and challenge us to obedience and faithfulness. Without Prophets, we wouldn't stay faithful to God's values and His voice. Prophets are symbolized by headphones and a bullhorn.

Are you an **EVANGELIST**? Evangelists proclaim the Good News, recruit people to the cause of Christ's love, introduce people to Jesus, tell them Good

News that we can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Without Evangelists, we wouldn't welcome new people into the kingdom. Evangelists are symbolized by a newspaper and compression socks. (Alluding to a previous sermon where I told a story about being an evangelist for compression socks when I discovered how great they are.)

Are you a **SHEPHERD**? Shepherds nurture and protect a healthy community, reflecting the love of God, fostering a sense of belonging and life-giving relationships. Without shepherds, we would just become an organization or a corporation, not a family. Shepherds are symbolized by a shepherd's staff and a blanket.

Are you a **TEACHER**? Teachers understand and explain the Word of God, pass on God's wisdom about how God wants us to see and live in our world. Without teachers, we would lose grounding in God's truth. Teachers are symbolized by an apple and a stuffed owl wearing a graduation cap.

¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

We need each other to be the church God designed. We need each other to contribute our gifts and do our own special work in order to help each other grow and be healthy, otherwise we will be immature like children, or sinking in a giant pool of fat tadpoles.

Give it your best guess. Which gift do you think God has given you? "As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

I don't like feet. I think feet are gross. But, we need feet! Feet do special work.

When I was speaking with Monika and her call to pray, she said we need the whole body. She said she's an eye, she's not a foot. She said she can't be hating on feet, because you can't walk on an eye. That really stuck with me. If we each don't contribute our special gifts, it's like the body trying to walk without feet. If we are spectators, instead of participants, the church warps and is not healthy. Do we want to be a church trying to walk on our eyeballs, or even our elbows? We need you, feet! We need each other.

¹⁵ Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

It is Jesus Christ that is the head of this body. He makes it fit together perfectly.



In 1 Peter, Peter writes that Jesus is the Chief Shepherd. That's why I want to be called Undershepherd, not Lead Pastor or Head Pastor. Jesus is the Head Pastor, the Lead Pastor. I am a shepherd under Jesus.

Jesus Christ is the Chief Apostle, the Chief Prophet, the Chief Evangelist, the Chief Shepherd, and the Chief Teacher. Jesus is the head of the church, the head of the body. If we forget that, and try to put anything else, or anyONE else as the head, then the body will not fit together perfectly.

Do you want to see what it looks like when the body fits together perfectly?



Christ is the head of the body. He makes the body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Do you want to see what it looks like when the body does not fit together perfectly?



If Christ is not the head of the body, if we don't make every effort to stay united, if we don't contribute our own special gifts and work, the body will not fit together perfectly.

I don't know what's more terrifying: the pool of fat tadpoles from last week, or this messed up Mr. Potato Head. Either way, may God have mercy on us and save us from this fate!

Lord Jesus Christ, help us to live a life worthy of our calling! Let's grow up to be mature in the Lord.

What is God saying to you? And what does he want you to do about it?

What is God saying to us? And what does he want us to do about it? What is our next spiritual step?

Listen and let God speak, as we read:

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you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴ For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. ⁵ There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

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May it be so.