

## Oct. 11 - Small Group – Leader's Guide

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

1. We began our sermon series looking at the "what" and "how" of our Gospel calling. That is, our calling is to walk in balance or in equilibrium to Christ's measure (what) and to exercise the gifts (love, word, power) that the Spirit gives to each of us (how). This past sermon, we looked at "where" our calling is leading us. In verse 13, Paul described the goal of our calling as attaining to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of God's Son, to maturity, and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The word "attain" has a sense of eventuality and certainty and also has an active sense that implies action on our part. Knowing that we will eventually and certainly attain our goal, how does that change our attitude and motivations towards the Christian life and our call to action?

*The Christian journey is like a canoe portage trip with Jesus as the expert guide to bring us safely to our final destination. We will eventually and certainly get there because Jesus is the one leading us. But that doesn't mean we don't have work to do. The difference that certainty and eventuality bring to our attitudes and motivations is that we have a guarantee and the promise that our work and labour will not be in vain. Knowing for sure that we will eventually arrive to our destination, we can enjoy the journey, trust Jesus in His leading, and labour faithfully despite the hardship and pain that come at us.*

2. Unity of faith and knowledge of Christ has two levels: intellectual and relational. Unity of faith and knowledge of Christ is to be one and the same in our doctrinal and intellectual affirmations of Jesus. And it also means to be one and the same in our relational and moral priorities and commitments according to the Creeds. How are we doing personally and as a church in terms of our work to engage in unity or ecumenical and collaborative relationships with other Christians?

*Participants may or may not share personally but a conversation around how we as a community is doing in regards to ecumenical work and collaborative work with other churches or Christians would be fruitful. Reflect and discuss how we as a parish can do better in our living up to the words of the Creeds, particularly about being and living out the "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting".*

3. The word "maturity" means to become a fully grown adult (in contrast to being children who are tossed to and fro by the waves and winds of doctrine). To become mature means to be fully coordinated and to be in complete harmony in and with our own bodies. In that sense, what does being "mature" look like as individual Christians and as a church community?

*It is a big question and there are many ways to answer this question. Being mature is essentially being in obedience to the commands of Scripture, to be assured of one's salvation in Jesus, to be at peace, to know and feel forgiven, to extend the same grace*

*to others as we have received from God, to be generous with what we have because all that we have is from God's, etc. All of these apply to us on an individual level and also on a communal level.*

4. Attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature means to be conformed to His nature and person. The Orthodox Church called this process "divinisation". While it does not teach that we can become substantially as gods, it teaches that we can become as Jesus is in His perfect humanity. What does becoming like Jesus look like and how do you know you and our community of believers are becoming more and more like Him?

*We can ask the question: Am I becoming better in loving God and neighbour? The aspect of humility is one of the most paramount in our Christlikeness. That is, we are becoming more self-forgetful (becoming less selfish), and we are attuned to others and their needs. And while we can become better at being morally obligated to others, we are not proud of ourselves but rather we give glory to God and rely upon Him whenever we fail, or are arrogant, or are complacent, or are apathetic and lethargic in fulfilling our obligations to others.*