

# God's Life in Our World

Thomas Robinson, *Ephesians – Growing Up Into Christ 14*, June 23, 2013

## Ephesians 4:1-10

<sup>1</sup> I therefore, a **prisoner in the Lord**, appeal to you to **walk** in a manner **worthy** of the **calling** by which you have been **called**, <sup>2</sup> with all **humility of thought** and **gentleness**, with **patience**, bearing with one another in **love**, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity / **oneness** of the **Spirit** in the bond of **peace**:

<sup>4</sup> **One body** and **one Spirit** – just as you were called **in one hope**  
**that belongs to your call** –

<sup>5</sup> **one Lord**, **one faith**, **one baptism**,

<sup>6</sup> **one God** and **Father** of all, who is **over all** and **through all** and **in all**.

<sup>7</sup> But **grace** was **given** to **each one of us** according to the measure of **the Messiah's gift**.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore it says,

*“When he ascended on high, he made captivity a captive,  
he gave gifts to the people.”* [Psalm 68:18]

<sup>9</sup> In saying, *“He ascended,”* what does it mean but that he had also **descended**  
into the lower things of the earth?

<sup>10</sup> He who descended is the one who also **ascended**  
**far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.**

## Psalms 68:17-19

<sup>17</sup> ... The Lord came from Sinai into the holy place.

<sup>18</sup> You ascended on high, leading captives/captivity captive  
and receiving/taking gifts among people, ...

<sup>19</sup> Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation.

## Ephesians 2:14-16, 18

<sup>14</sup> For he (Jesus) himself is **our peace**, who has **made both one** and has broken down the dividing wall – the hostility – in his flesh <sup>15</sup> ... that he might in himself create the two **into one new humanity** so making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might **reconcile us both to God in one body** through the **cross**, thereby killing the hostility.... <sup>18</sup> Through him we both have **access in one Spirit** to the Father.

## I Corinthians 12:12-13

<sup>12</sup> For just as **the body is one** and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are **one body**, so it is with the Messiah. <sup>13</sup> For in **one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body** – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of **one Spirit**.

## Romans 8:11

<sup>11</sup> If **the Spirit** of **him who raised Jesus** from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also **give life to your mortal bodies** through his **Spirit** who dwells in you.

## I Corinthians 8:6

<sup>6</sup> For us there is **one God, the Father**, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and **one Lord, Jesus Christ**, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

## Ephesians 1:22-23

<sup>22</sup> And he (God) has put all things under his (Jesus') feet and has made him the **head over all things for the church,** <sup>23</sup> which is **his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.**

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### Beautiful! I want to be like that.

Paul is taking us into very practical guidance about daily life as followers of Jesus. But he knows we don't lack rules and guides telling us wise things to do; we lack in ourselves the vision/understanding of our world, ourselves, and God to transform us from within (Ch 1-3). Fear, will power, control won't do it. Our hearts and minds must love and be grasped by the beauty and worth of our Call – the Gospel seen in Jesus – so that everything in us wants to respond and walk step by step in a way that is worthy of such beauty, grace, and love. Paul musters all resources. Vision, worship, appeal, doxology, prayer, scripture, confession. The life is marked by a distinct kind of unity/oneness created by the Spirit that holds together diverse individuality and gifts under one God who made and redeemed them all. It's easy to break up into clubs. The miracle is to be one new humanity, rich in variety.

### The One God Interweaves Our World

The basis of oneness is One God (*Shema*, Deut. 6:4). But one of the astonishing beauties of the Gospel is how that One God has revealed himself as a deep community of love: Father, Lord, Spirit. But this is not an abstract concept; it reflects how the One God shows himself by shaping our life and drawing us into his own life as an embodiment of his love. Paul starts with the experience of "Body," a diverse community animated by God's Spirit and thus drawn into a shared life and hope both for this world and for resurrection life. The body has one Lord, Jesus. His faithfulness in life, ministry, and crucifixion, is the basis for one faith that responds to his faithfulness and that changes our minds, hearts, lives. One baptism shows that his lordship never remains abstract. We are wholly plunged into his death and life, into his identity, so that he can live fully in us, in everyday life. Finally the all-inclusive God, Father of all, creator beyond his creation, but also permeating it from the vast to the infinitesimal. The one who expresses himself in the whole astonishing range of reality: Father, lover, artist, mathematician, physicist, biologist, story creator, poet, one who desires part of his creation to share in the love that is at the heart of God.

### Deep Past and Brilliant Future

That amazing God has been dealing with his people through a long, patient history. Paul links us to that history by quoting Ps 68 – a psalm with many of the themes of the whole letter. He quotes a verse open to more than one reflective translation and interpretation – showing how his meditation on the Gospel is fed by the Hebrew scriptures. The story of Sinai and Zion are linked to Jesus' descent into lower things (incarnation/crucifixion). His ascent is liberating and generous to us, but is all encompassing – he reclaims all his creation.

### Each One of Us Receives a Distinct Place

All of that is linked to the last "one" in the passage: "each one of us." This freeing, generous, powerful, complex God gives grace to each one of us – the gift of the faithful Messiah. There is so much! Forgiveness, Healing, Life, Spiritual Gifts, Community, Love – Worthy!