

Learning to Trust *Discipleship from Wilderness to Kingdom*

2. God's Promises: Trusting the Unseen

Obedience and Uncertainty: Growing up Together

Ephesians 4.1-16

Aim: To look at Paul's vision for unity and common growth in the church, and to practically consider our individual part in the growth of our church community at King's.

To start with:

When have you tried to grow something? How successful were you and what did you learn through it?

Engaging with the Text:

Read Ephesians 4.1-6

1.
 - a. How would you summarise the kind of atmosphere Paul wanted to promote in the Ephesian church?
 - b. Why do you think he was at such pains to emphasise these qualities? (What would a church look like without them?)
2.
 - a. Verse 4 gives Paul's theological reason for working at these qualities. Why do you think Christians still so often struggle to create that atmosphere of unity?
 - b. What do you think Paul would write to us in this area?

Background Info: v. 7-10 can be a bit confusing. Paul is probably quoting from Psalm 68 - seeing it as prophetic and paralleling Jesus' ascent to heaven with the Holy Spirit descending from heaven to give spiritual gifts to God's

Now read Ephesians 4.7-16

3. How would you summarise what Gifts from the Holy Spirit are for? Where do you currently see that in action?
4. In your experience how does using your gifts aid in the process of 'growing up in Christ' as an individual, and as a group?
5. *'Unity is not monochrome uniformity'*
 - a. How far do you agree with this statement?
 - b. Why do you think people so often wish they had someone else's gifts?
 - c. What would the consequences of uniformity in our community be?
6. What would you say your gifts are - and how are you currently using them? (You could get people to affirm each other's gifts if they are too modest to identify their own!)
7. What are the challenges to our growth in maturity and unity as a church? Practically how might we tackle those? What could you do as an individual/cell to contribute to us growing into the kind of community Paul would approve of?

Reflect and Pray:

Try one of the following:

- In pairs/small groups discuss what 'growing up' might look like for you, and pray for each other in that.
- Pray for each other to explore, grow in and learn how to use their gifts to serve Jesus and his people
- Pray for the church, for our unity, for creative ways for people to get involved, use the gifts and bless each other.
- Pray for the leaders and staff as they try to move the church forward wisely, to see growth of maturity as a congregation and in individual church members.