

## **Ephesians 4:1-16<sup>vi</sup>**

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

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### <sup>vi</sup> **About Ephesians 4:1-16**

This reading continues the ethical exhortations from last week. It examines the basis for the new life of the Gentile converts, contrasting it with their former lives. Their new life is not a result of their own discoveries and efforts but originates from God. It is the new life God recreates, through Jesus, in the Christian.

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The passage is very similar to Colossians 3:1-17 and may have been drawn from the pre-baptismal instruction of the early Church that led to the renunciation of the “former way of life” and through baptism, as illustrated by putting off one’s clothes and putting on white baptismal robes. The convert is thus part of the new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) of the body of Christ, which includes both Jews and Gentiles. He or she is “created according to the likeness of God” (v. 24) exhibiting right relationships and holiness, which are distinctively divine characteristics. And this incorporation into Christ will always demand specific behavioral consequences.