



# Reaching Across the Aisle



## Knowing and Being Known

Ephesians 4.7-5.2

*“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.” Ephesians 4.7*

*“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4.11-13*

All of us have goals. There are some fitting questions we should ask ourselves... What are your goals? Does God have goals for us? Are there any common goals for all believers, and for the church? **There is one all encompassing goal for every believer and for every church. It is to become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.**

*“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” Romans 8.29*

*“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” Ephesians 5.1-2*

The goal in life which God has for us is to become spiritually mature. This is true for individuals and for churches. One of the things we discover in community is that every one of us struggles. It is God's plan that through shared experiences we are transformed. The text we have before us today reveals the characteristics of this quest and the marks of a mature Christian and a mature church. Our focus this morning is on the language of maturity.

## Joining Truth and Love

*“. . . but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into him, who is the head, even Christ . . .” Ephesians 4.15*

A clear mark of maturity is **speaking the truth in love**. For a believer to be mature there must be a joining of **truth** and **love**. Both are essential. One without the other is inadequate.

*“**Do not judge**, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.” Matthew 7.1-5*

*“**Accept one another**, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” Romans 15.7*

## The Language of Building Up One Another

*“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”* Ephesians 4.29-32

*“An anxious heart weighs a man down,  
but a kind word cheers him up.”* Proverbs 12.25

*“Pleasant words are a honeycomb,  
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”* Proverbs 16.24

*“A word aptly spoken  
is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”* Proverbs 25.11

*“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions.”* Galatians 4.1-4a

## Be Imitators of God

The bottom line is that we are called to be **imitators of God**. A lifestyle that honors God is one that reflects him.

*“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”* Ephesians 5.1-2

That is our privilege. That is our calling. That is our destiny. We can live our lives in such a way that we hinder, and even destroy that privilege. Or we can live our lives in such a way that we cooperate with God's Spirit in allowing Jesus to live his life in us and through us.