



**Saint John United Methodist Church**  
12700 W. Hwy. 42, Prospect, KY 40059  
stjohnky.com

**Message for October 4, 2020**  
**“Well-Connected: Huddle Up”**  
**Speaker: Pastor Tom Grieb**  
**Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-6**

## **Looking Up**

We shift gears this week into a new sermon series.

When everything around begs to drag us down and keep us on a negative path, we are going to stay positive. Over the next three weeks our focus will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ephesians and then after that the chapter 6.

We'll be talking about what it means to *Huddle up, Build Up, Grow Up, and Suit Up*, with the operative word here being the word, “*up*.” All the while we'll be “*looking up*,” seeking God's help so we might better live the sort of lives he wants us to live.

## **Living a Life Worth Living**

Throughout this series we will be talking about what it means to live a life worth living, and how our relationship with other believers plays a role in that.

The Apostle Paul urges us to “*live a life worthy of the calling we have received.*” Those who place their faith in Jesus know that he has laid claim upon their lives. He has called them to live a life that reflects his good work. I pray we are counted among that number.

When Jesus says that we are “*the light of the world,*” he knows that only happens because of his light shining through us.

In commenting on Ephesians 4, William Barclay says that “*the first three verses of that chapter shine like jewels,*” and indeed they do.

Paul, in talking about “*living a life worthy of the calling we have received,*” lists some pretty important characteristics that come along with living that sort of life.

Paul talks about:

- Humility—where we are aware of our place before God and others. God is God and we are not. Paul reminds us to stay humble. “*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than ourselves,*” he writes in Philippians 2:3. In a word, we are to have “*the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.*” (Philippians 2:5)

- Gentleness—where ours is not so much a matter of self-control, but God-control. Being gentle in our dealings with other people flows from letting God do his thing through us.
- Patience—where we seek to bear with people just as God has borne with us. God's patience is long and not easily thwarted and ours should be the same.
- Love—where we seek the highest good for all people, even when that is the toughest thing to do. And let's admit it, loving others can be downright tough sometimes.
- Peace—where a right relationship with God leading to right relationships with others brings unity.

Let's hear then this "jewel" of a passage that will challenge and inspire us to no end. We read today Ephesians 4:1-6.

### **Ephesians 4:1-6**

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

### **Huddle Up**

Football season is upon us. Yippee!! Football teams are huddling between every play. The huddle provides an opportunity for the players to get on the same page when it comes to what play they are going to run. It also is a sure reminder that they are playing a team sport.

Even with all the issues surrounding football these days and how to respond to the social upheaval in which we are living, the huddle is the one place where the team is together and of one mind. Football is a team sport, not an individual sport. When teams forget that, it is usually evidenced on the field.

The church is a lot like that. When we forget we are in this together and go our own way individually, our work as a church suffers. To borrow from our state motto, "*United we stand, divided we fall.*"

As Paul reminds us, we are to "*make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*"

I am challenged about how that sort of thing is being lived out in the broader church. I pray for the United Methodist Church every day. I want to ask you to join me.

In talking about the unity that is ours in God's Spirit, a Spirit that ultimately holds us together, Paul makes yet another list. This time he lists those things that keep our common life together well-ordered. Paul uses the word "one" over and over again to make his point.

Paul talks about:

- One hope—we long for the glorious future promised the church at the end of time.
- One body—*“Now you are the body of Christ,”* writes Paul in I Corinthians 12:27, *“and each of you is a part of it.”*
- One Lord—Jesus is the head of the church. We figure this is our church, when in reality it is his church. Jesus is the one who brings unity to all we do. In fact, his every prayer is that we be *“brought to complete unity,”* so that the world will know of God’s love through him.
- One faith—we are bound together because we each have our foundation in Jesus. As the old hymn puts it, *“The church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord; she is her new creation by water and the word. From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride; with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.”*
- One baptism—all along baptism has been the identifier for the Christian church. It was the very thing that set people apart as Christ followers. It is that way even to this day. As our bishop is wont to say, *“We are water washed and Spirit born.”*
- One God and Father of us all—and in this regard, Paul uses what I call some poignant pronouns. God is **over** all and **through** all and **in** all. We are under God’s leadership. God is actively working to bring about his good purposes. God is constantly present, regardless of what we face.

British Theologian Michael Green writes, *“As members of the body of Christ, we can be compared to pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. Each piece has protrusions and indentations. The protrusions represent our strengths and the indentations represent our growth areas. The beautiful thing is that the pieces complement one another and produce a beautiful whole.”*

- *Just as each piece of a puzzle is important, so each member of the body of Christ is important.*
- *Just as, when one piece is missing from the puzzle, its absence is obvious and damages the picture, so also is the whole weakened when we are absent from the body of Christ.*
- *Just as, when each piece of a puzzle is in place, any one piece is not conspicuous but blends in to form the whole picture, so it should be for the body of Christ.”*

I like the story told of the two porcupines who found themselves in a blizzard. To stay warm they tried to huddle together, but because they were pricked by each other’s quills, they moved apart. It wasn’t long before they were shivering again and had to lay side by side once more for their own survival. They needed each other, even though they needed each other.

Unity isn’t easy and shouldn’t be taken for granted. That’s why Jesus prayed for it so fervently.

Unity is not determined by whether we agree with every interpretation of scripture or doctrine, but by love for God and one another, and whether we reflect that love in the world.

In a world that is all too divisive, we would do well to share that love in unity with all our brothers and sister in Christ.

### **World Communion**

Today is World Communion Sunday. People all over the world of various branches of Christendom are sharing the Sacrament of Holy Communion. They are coming around Christ's table. They are considering, just like us, the common bonds we share in Christ.

He is the one who brings us around this table. It is his life, death, and resurrection that ultimately bring us together. I have said often that there are infinitely more similarities than there are differences between Christians. After all, we are a people of one book and, more importantly, of one Lord.

Where there are differing points of view, let's remember to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. Let's treat each other with humility and gentleness, always being patient, and bearing with one another in love.

Let's *"make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."*  
(Ephesians 4:3)

And let all that begin here as we gather around this table.

God bless us all.