

## Finding Yourself in Community | Dave Geldart | Ephesians 4:11-25 | Sept 11, 2022

1. Today we're wrapping up a little series on being CALLED TO COMMUNITY.
  - a. Today we'll be diving more deeply into Ephesians 4, and we'll be talking about Finding Yourself In Community
2. Read Eph 4:11-16 → THE GRAND VISION for The church and YOUR part in it!
  - a. **Stand**
  - b. **11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for the work of ministry\*, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 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.**
  - c. **14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**
    - i. *\*as in ESV. NIV->works of service*
3. **Pray, then everyone Sit**
4. **Paul shares a grand vision** for what an awesome church looks like. Builds on the picture we saw last week in Acts 2.
  - a. It's a vivid and alive picture of the body of christ building itself up in love WITH EVERYONE DOING THE WORK OF MINISTRY
5. Tie in from last week
  - a. **2 models of church**
    - i. Limitations of the traditional paradigm
    - ii. **BOREDOM**
      1. **Anyone here ever been bored at church?**
    - iii. Spectators. Those being served. LAY AROUND.
    - iv. Looking to find the best bang for their buck.
      1. The best program for them, at the lowest cost
    - v. Main engagement is ATTENDENCE at a service
    - vi. They come to "get fed" from the minister.

- vii. **Like infants** coming to their mother for milk. Then they'll take a poo and go to sleep.
  - b. **God's vision for the CHURCH is the organic**, interconnected, messy, beautiful thing that's alive and growing.
    - i. **Everyone does the work of ministry**
      - 1. **The job of the leaders is to EQUIP AND ENABLE ALL THE PEOPLE** – the members – to do the ministry, Good works that serve others.
      - 2. Which is far more than pulling off programs
      - 3. So that the body of Christ – the church – can be unified and built up together **BY ONE ANOTHER**
        - a. A healthy church literally builds itself up in love
        - b. Each part honored, specialized, released, supported, to their own part.
    - ii. **The goal is nothing less than MATURITY TOGETHER** – measured by the full measure of the maturity of Jesus himself
      - 1. **This is compelling! This is the awesome church**
        - a. The kind of life, connection, purpose we all were made for. Long for.
        - b. Our hearts are restless for.
      - 2. **A tall order**
      - 3. **NO LONGER INFANTS** tossed back and forth by life, situations, difficulties, successes, pleasures, fads, philosophies, and – ultimately – deceit from abusive leaders. -> ultimately doing the will and work of Satan – the deceiver of the world.
6. **Read 4:17-19** 17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.
7. **Without Christ, we think its up to us** to take care of ourselves. Provide for ourselves. Comfort ourselves. Satisfy ourselves.
  - a. **And since there is no other sustenance for our souls**, no other real comfort, peace, satisfaction, meaning, other than through the God who made and sustains us, we get confused.

**b. Our thinking becomes futile.**

i. Darkened

**ii. We pursue our own sources of life that do not actually exist.**

8. My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

a. *Jeremiah 2:11-19*

b. **That's you. That's me.** Apart from dependence on our Creator God.

i. **Digging holes in the sand** looking for water that runs away faster than we get to it.

**c. Where are you digging for life these days?**

i. Pleasure?

ii. Success at work or school?

iii. Distraction through Netflix?

iv. Romantic Relationships

v. Respect from others?

vi. The right political stances?

vii. The sparks of zip that come from deep dives into social media or online news?

viii. If I could just have \_\_\_\_\_ then I could be happy.

d. I've caught myself frequently just standing with the fridge door open, bent down. Looking. For I'm not sure what.

i. And I keep thinking to myself: what am I looking for?

1. And I keep saying: happiness

2. Historically I've used food as a way to cope with negative emotions.

It's still a temptation!

9. Continue – v 20-25

a. 20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood (not specifically lying as much as living in falsehood) and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

10. **PUT OFF, PUT ON**

- a. Put off the old self, put ON the new self
- b. Put off the old way you used to try to make your life work apart from trust in Christ
- c. Put on the new self, the new identity, that God is remaking you into.
  - i. God's vision for you. The you he's made and remaking you to be. The you that he sees.
  - ii. Like a loving and wise father, he's working to parent you well – to help you learn, grow and mature – so that you can become mature and complete, lacking nothing.
  - iii. And so that you can bless others. Building up the body of christ in love.
- d. PUT OFF
  - i. **Behaviors and identities** we used to live in. Before Christ.
  - ii. **On the surface, these are sin patterns.** Ways we try to please and placate ourselves apart from the way of flourishing God has shown us.
    - 1. Could be big, obvious, traditionally understood sins
      - a. **Sexual** - sexual activity outside biblical marriage (one man, one woman, one flesh, one lifetime).
        - i. Extramarital sex, hookups, pornography, fixating fantasies
      - b. **Substance Addictions**
        - i. Alcohol, illegal drugs like meth and coke, prescription drugs, you name it
        - ii. Food addictions could also fall here
      - c. **Abusing others**
      - d. **Lying, greed, pride...**
    - 2. And these are things that must be put off as you follow JC and take your place in community!
      - a. **These will be major hinderances** to your healing and growth!  
And your ability to be a healthy member of the body in community.
    - 3. **But there's always more under the surface**
      - a. The things that DRIVE these behaviors
- e. **The real, lasting work of putting off comes from these deeper places.**
  - i. Our styles of relating. Our unconscious strategies to make life work. To protect and please ourselves.

1. To try to get love, value, respect, acceptance from others

**ii. Our FALSE selves**

f. **We all develop false selves from childhood** as we learn how to make life work - > cope with pain, get love and value.

i. a STRATEGY to make life work on my own (w/o vulnerability to God, others)

ii. These strategies/styles of relating always become unconscious identities.

iii. **And they keep us in bondage** to desperation, anxiety, defensiveness, and disconnection.

**11. A few weeks ago I taught on the parable of the grouchy neighbor**

a. And we looked at the **masks we tend to put on God** based on our own experiences with our earthly fathers, parents, significant leaders.

b. We looked at how the styles of parenting, the kinds of homes we grew up in significant influence on the way our personalities developed. The messages we believed about what we have to do to get love and acceptance.

**i. Masks we wear are an integral aspect of our false self!**

ii. PERFORMANCE .... OTHERS???

iii. SELF-SUFFICIENCY/RELIANCE

iv. PLEASING OTHERS

v. BEING INVISIBLE

vi. The need to be right or best or most

c. These are the things that are the deeper work of putting off.

**i. They take time – and work – and COMMUNITY**

**12. That's right – what was broken in relationship must be mended in relationship**

a. We're wounded in relationships – EVEN DISTANT ONES

b. And we must be healed IN RELATIONSHIPS

i. This is one of the main missions of the church – to help people heal in relationships, built upon and empowered by the Spirit of God.

ii. **James 5:16 - 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.**

**13. It's God's vision for Christian community to be the place where we learn to put off, and put on**

a. Helping one another see false selves we still go to by default.

b. AND help one another PUT ON the new self – see and believe the new and renewed life we have and are called to IN CHRIST.

- c. **ONLY THEN will we have the ability and courage** to turn to others and serve them with this same kind of love and integrity.
  - d. Only when the mask is off, and the **new self is experienced and embraced** will we be able to minister out of the power of Christ.
  - e. And though some of this work can be done alone in prayer, **the bulk of this transformational process requires the intimate context of community.**
  - f. **You are called to Find Yourself In Community**
14. In community we learn to lovingly **hold up the mirror** to one another, to help us see what is glaringly obvious to others but almost never visible to ourselves:
- a. Both our false self.
  - b. **AND OUR TRUE SELF!**
  - c. **We must reflect what we see back to ppl. We can't see ourselves very well.**
    - i. That's why even the most trained therapists need therapists.
      - 1. THE one who has himself for a patient has a fool for a counselor.
    - ii. We need OTHERS to tell us WHO WE ARE
  - d. Our true self – our new identity comes first and foremost from God Himself through Jesus.
    - i. He is the primary OTHER who must tell us WHO WE ARE
    - ii. **He does this through his word.**
    - iii. Sometimes Through the inner voice of his Spirit
    - iv. Teaching and confirming to you the **general truths of who you are in Christ**
      - 1. **USE THE BOOKMARK ON YOUR SEAT!**
        - a. We'll attach online when we post this
      - 2. You are chosen and wanted
      - 3. You are his beloved child – adopted forever into his royal family
      - 4. You are forgiven of all your sins, past-present-future.
      - 5. You are immensely valuable
      - 6. You are worthy of love
      - 7. You are cared for, looked after.
      - 8. You are DELIGHTED IN!
      - 9. You are now a royal priesthood! – a MINISTER of the Gospel
      - 10. You are an ambassador for Christ to the world
      - 11. You are strategically and specifically gifted to display God and build up the church

- e. But it's in **COMMUNITY** that these truths tend to really take root in our hearts.
  - i. We have to **EXPERIENCE other people affirming and accepting** us for us to really begin to believe it.
  - ii. And helping us see our tendencies to lapse back in to old-self living.
  - iii. And its in community that we begin to discover more specifics about exactly how he's wired us. Rewired us. How he's gifted and increasingly gifting you to build up others.
- 15. How this plays out in community
  - a. We love and rightly value our time together here in larger gatherings.
  - b. But for the real richness of community to play out, for us to be able to take off and put on in the way the NT describes, we need contexts that are small enough for each person to get directly involved.**
  - c. Plays out in smaller groups of Community, whether just a couple believers meeting together, a small group of 5, a life group of 20. OVER TIME.
  - d. Where you can really get to know one another. Do life together. Long enough that you can actually discern aspects of people's false and true selves.
    - i. **You have to actually BE IN RELATIONSHIP** with people to get that.
    - ii. Have to have lots of face time with one another.
    - iii. Be close enough life on life to experience the contours of their personality,** to watch how they respond, how they treat others. What other people tend to appreciate about them. **And where you experience the life of Christ in you resonating with the life of Christ in them.**
  - e. Often times, its not one off comments that make the difference, but sustained relationship over time.
    - i. It's more CAUGHT than taught**
    - ii. **Where you SHOW them they're lovable by loving them.** That they're valuable by valuing them. That they're cared for by God by being his hands and feet, caring for them over the months and years. In the big things like cancer or divorce. In the small things like inviting them to grab coffee and a walk.
    - iii. Time and history encouraging them to put off the old self, the old messages and identities. And building them up with honest words about their true selves. The good God is doing. The ways they're a blessing. Vital. Loved.
  - f. We find ourselves in community as others love and speak truth to us.**

- i. **And we do the same for others.**
- ii. This is how ultimately our communities face outward. Showing the world what the Love of Christ is really like. And building up, equipping, one another to engage their friends and neighbors with this kind of love-truth, the kind that's so rare, and yet so desperately needed.
- iii. **So that the body of Christ, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**

## MY STORY/Self

1. **I grew up as a pastor's kid. Loving Christian home.** East coast: Born in Beaufort SC – lots of moss and tidal marshes.
  - a. Here I am at a fairly young age, with my name on my shirt, singing along to what I'm sure is my mom's choir music with my tan fisher price tape player.
    - i. Kids that's an early type of spotify. But you had to put a plastic box inside another box. And it would actually put magnets together using batteries and you had to listen to the few songs that were on the tape.
  - b. Always at church – even late Saturday nights.
  - c. Loved it
2. False self
  - a. But like all of us, **I grew up in a world I wasn't made for.** And had to learn how to deal with pain, sadness, loneliness, and fear.
  - b. Like you, I **developed a false self.** Fairly early.
  - c. One of the major aspects of my false self is the constant fear that **if others knew the real me, they'd reject me.** That I'm not good enough. I'm a fraud.
    - i. So I can live from fear, anxiety, depression, self-loathing and secrecy.
  - d. **And I compensated by trying to appear put together**
    - i. Be good
    - ii. Be smart
    - iii. Be reliable
    - iv. Be in control
      1. Think through every angle
      2. Consider all the data all the eventualities to stave off disaster
    - v. be defensive
      1. be right
    - vi. be secretive/disintegrated
3. 7 Pillars



- a. **I have the privilege to lead the sexual health and freedom ministry at our church.** We partner with a ministry called Pure Desire and use their materials and trainings to lead PD groups in our church.
- i. **Though I had been free from my own addiction** to pornography for many years, when I led the first groups: the 7 Pillars of Freedom for men, and went through the material with the guys, **I was shocked at how much I still needed to heal.**
  - ii. Again, even I'd been free from my unwanted behaviors for quite a while, I still needed to deal with the deeper stuff that had driven those behaviors.
    1. **Strongholds in my life where the old false self still held tremendous sway.**
  - iii. In these groups, again, even though I was leading, I was faced with having to open up and share things I swore I'd take to my grave. Secrets I was hiding. **Because I still believed in many parts of my heart, that if people knew the real me, the WHOLE me, they'd reject me.**
  - iv. But these guys didn't. This little community saw most all the parts of me I'd most tried to hide, and they didn't reject me.
  - v. **They kept loving me.**
  - vi. Being present with me.
  - vii. Kept encouraging me to take off the old self and put on the new.
  - viii. Offering me an experience of what I'd so longed for, but unconsciously given up hope of ever experiencing: **true love and acceptance.**
  - ix. **And it's changed me.**
    - x. And it's not been that many years ago.
    - xi. Even as an adult. A pastor! I'm still in the process of learning to put off and put on. And it's only been possible in community.
- b. **Ben Deaver and I have been through a lot together.** Ministered together since 2008. He helped lead the **pilot 7 Pillars group** with me a number of years ago.
- i. And knowing that through that group, one of my greatest temptations to live out of the false self, and conversely my greatest opportunity to choose to put on and live out of the new, true self is in what I believe (not just with my head, but with the deep foundations of my heart) **about my worthiness to be loved.**
    1. Indeed my very name, David, means Beloved
    2. And one of my biggest take-aways from that process was to choose to believe that I am truly Beloved.

- 3. **Even to this day, from time to time, Ben will call me (or write in a slack message), “David the Beloved”**
- 4. He’s reminding me who I am.
- 5. And it really helps.
- ii. **We’re wounded in relationships, and so God knows we must be healed in relationships.**
- iii. He’s calling each of us to find ourselves in community.

#### 4. Next steps

- g. **Who knows the real you?** Who do you trust to speak into your life with love and truth?
- h. **If you’re not in a context** where you can regularly practice out this kind of community, where you know and are known, get connected.
  - i. **Sign up for a group** – our small groups are just now relaunching for the fall.
  - ii. **Men, if you’re ready** to take a next step of healing with your sexual health, jump in our next round of **7 Pillars of Freedom for men, launching this month.**
    - 1. This is one of the most concentrated forms of this type of community I’ve ever experienced.
    - 2. In person or My email on the screen
  - iii. **Women**, if you’re interested in getting on the waitlist for the next round of PD women’s groups, whether for your own sexual health or because of the trauma of betrayal from a loved one’s sexual addictions.
    - 1. Contact my wife Jenn, email on the screen
- i. **If you’re already in a small group, practice ministering in your group.** Consider next steps you can take this semester towards the kind of maturity described in Eph 4.
  - i. **Come to group ready to minister.** Come having prayed the prayer on the way: “Lord, show me someone I can build up.” And see what he does. Ask your group leaders for help.
  - ii. **Maybe you practice speaking more boldly** words of grace and truth.
  - iii. Maybe you practice being more willing to **open up and receive from others.**

- iv. Maybe you decide to **engage more deeply with one or two others** in your group for the purpose of mutual encouragement and growth – personal discipleship!

**j. What's your next step in finding your true self in community?**

**16. Communion transition**

- a. **We who trust Christ are all members of one body.** We trust in the same Jesus whose body and blood shed for us atones for our sins and bring us into a new covenant with God, one based on grace rather than effort
  - i. **He has given us the opportunity to take off the old self**, determined to make life work apart from God
  - ii. **And give us a new self in him**
- b. So if you've chosen to trust Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. We invite you to come and together celebrate communion with us.
  - i. **The one loaf of bread and the one cup** remind us that we all partake of the same source.
  - ii. We're going to be experimenting with the **rip-n-dip** method this time. Intinction.
  - iii. So you'll come up and rip a piece of the bread and dip it into the cup of grape juice.
  - iv. Form 2 lines and come up to the two tables. Then exit around the outside.
  - v. **Then you can eat on your way back or at your seat.** Remembering that you're celebrating God's provision for you, taking into and making it a part of yourself.
  - vi. Your new self is provided for and given by God himself through Jesus.
  - vii. It's a time of **reflection**, remembering His death on our behalf.
  - viii. But also a time of **profound celebration** – that what I could never do for myself, Christ did for me!
  - ix. As you have **extra time** whether in line or at your seat, I encourage you **to focus on** an aspect or two of your **new self in Christ**, and **thank him** for making you new.