



Sermon Notes — Pastor Thomas Keys, SRMBC

Ephesians: The Christian's Owners Manual VI—Jesus: The Difference That Makes A Difference Scriptures Ephesians 4:1 – 15, 25 – 27, 32

INTRODUCTION

"Have you heard of Ted Williams (not the baseball player)? He was the homeless man living on the streets – suffering from the bad choices he made with drugs and relationships. Yet he had what was called a "Golden Voice" He was discovered on YouTube and was cleaned up and now look at him. He does radio announcing and TV voice – overs for commercials.

Ted credits his faith in Jesus Christ as the difference in his life, that made and continues to make a difference for him and his family. O, beloved as we see all of the injustice and the resulting anger and destruction – we need Jesus to make the difference. O do you remember what it was like when Jesus came into your life? If He has made a difference in your life – give Him a shout of praise...

SERMON POINTS

In this letter, we see the pattern of his pastoral epistles. He first starts with doctrine (Chapters 1 – 3). As we look at chapter 4, Paul after laying the foundations for our faith – it is Christ, who He is and what He has done and who we are in Him. Now he says I beseech you, I beg you, I implore you to walk worthy of your calling. In other words, Paul says that know that you have been saved, healed now that you know who He is, now that you have been empowered by Jesus – now live like you know. As disciples of Christ, we are called to live in such a way that we can see, and that people can see that Jesus makes a difference in your life.

In this time where people are taking sides, drawing battle lines, the world needs to see a unified, spirit-filled group of people from every tribe, every race, every language praising God in order to show how Jesus makes all the difference in this world and the next. So, what I want to in this message, is to look at Chapter 4 and discover how knowing Jesus gives us a difference in our that makes a difference.

I. A Difference In Our Mission/Vocation (vv. 1 – 6)

As you look at that 1st verse in chapter 4 – do you see the emphasis, and the passion in Paul's voice – As the prisoner of the Lord – I beseech, I beg you...? Now make no mistake, it is a command we need to obey – but it is given as an encouragement, an exhortation, a loving, and passionate push if you will (I want to help our married folk – a loving passionate push sometimes is better than anger and yelling). When Jesus comes into our lives, He changes our purpose, our goals as well as our attitudes. Once we've accepted Christ He gives our mission and vocation are different pointed not to our things – but to the things of Christ. Walking together in unity – praying together, serving together, ministering, and worshipping together in the unity of Spirit of the Living God. God is calling us to walk worthy of the calling – we are the Sons and Daughters of God.

Have you ever watched a football game – where one team (The Eagles for example) are really pounding another team (The Cowboys for example) Despite the score the cheerleaders on both sides root their teams on – "You can do it, You can do it, You can, you can!!!" even though one team clearly can't. No matter the score, both teams still play the entire game – because that's what they have called and commissioned to do. And beloved, as the Church, saved by Jesus, called by Jesus, empowered by Jesus – we have been called to mission and to a vocation – regardless of what the score looks – even though it looks like the devil might be winning – at the End of the Book/Battle we will be on the winning side!!

II. A Difference In Our Possession/Position (vv. 7 – 13)

In vv. 1 – 6, Paul talks about the difference Jesus makes in us collectively – but that collective difference is all based on the difference Jesus makes in us individually. You see Jesus has done a lot just to bring you into His family (His death, burial and resurrection) and now that He is ascended, He has rained down spiritual gifts on you and I His people. Beloved, the church is His, the gifts He has given you to use in His Name are His and the church is His. In this passage – Paul lays a list of some gifts in the church gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. (There are other lists of spiritual gifts for believers (Rom. 12:6–8, 1 Cor. 12:4–1, 28).

Not all of us have the same gifts and calling (stop trying to be like somebody else or worrying about what somebody else is doing or not doing and be and do what the Lord has called gifted you to do). Listen, you are not serving me as your Pastor you are serving Christ and if He is your Lord and Your Savior you ought to use you time, talents and treasure to serve and honor Him. When God's people have the mindset that we are serving Christ by serving and loving one another it makes all the difference.

In my house, I have a toaster - oven, a can opener, a microwave, and a refrigerator. They are all different appliances, but they all work from the same power source Each appliance, though different, lives up to its manufactured specifications because each appliance is receiving the same power source. Even though I am different from you and you are different from me, all of us have the equal potential of living up to God's manufacturer's specifications. Listen, knowing what spiritual gifts you have and putting them to work in your church, to build Christ's church – will make all the difference ...

III. A Difference In Our Actions/Reactions (vv. 14 – 15; 25 – 27, 32)

Jesus makes a difference in our mission and vocation, in our position and possession – but here finally is whole point of Jesus being in our lives and the reason for why we are left here on the earth' To make a difference in our actions and reactions Beloved, the enemy of our souls uses the media, worldly narratives, and half-truths to get us to react in certain ways to get focus off the Lord so we can fight against each other inside and outside the church. That's why he is called to prince and the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). As believers we must filter every issue through the Word of the Living God.

As we speak to one another, people who are different than us (even with different political views) we must do so with truth and in love. As God's people, who follow Jesus Christ we need to make difference – not ignoring the pain, guilt, and injustices of the present or the past, but forgiving one another – and if you have trouble doing that – remember how much God, in Christ has forgiven you.

As I close, there's a story of the boy who was in his Grandma's backyard one day shooting rocks with a slingshot. On impulse he took aim and let fly. Amazingly the stone hit and killed Grandma's pet duck. The boy panicked and hid the bird under some leaves, only to look up and see his sister watching.

After lunch that day, Grandma told Sally to help with the dishes. Sally responded, "Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen today. Didn't you Johnny?" And she whispered to him, "Remember the duck!" So, Johnny did the dishes. What choice did he have? After a while Johnny got tired of her wearing him out, so he decided that any punishment would be better than washing more dishes, so he confessed to killing duck.

"I know, Johnny," his Grandma said, after hearing his confession, giving him a hug. "I was standing at the window and saw the whole thing. But because I love you, I forgave you. I wondered how long you would let Sally make a slave out of you." John had been pardoned, but he thought he was guilty. Why? Because he listened to the words of his accuser.

And Jesus came to deal our sin and our accuser

- ♦ He died on the Cross for our sins and the sin of the whole world
- ♦ He rose from grave and Stone remove rocked Satan His Kingdom
- ♦ So, when someone brings up your past – Remember the Cross
- ♦ When the devil tries to accuse you – Remember the Cross
- ♦ When you feel unloved and that your life doesn't matter – Remember the Cross

In these difficult times – when you heart is troubled and overwhelmed - Remember who Jesus is – It is the difference that makes all the difference.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- ♦ Since you've accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, what changes have you seen in your life?
- ♦ What are your spiritual gift(s)? How are you using your gifts to build and edify your church?
- ♦ How would you use the Word of God to guide you understanding of current events?
- ♦ If you don't know or are not sure of your Spiritual Gifts, ask the Lord in prayer and get to work.