

# From diversity to abundance

April 2024 (#2)

\* Praise with joy : Hymn 94 "I'd rather have Jesus.", Fullness

\* Bible verse : Ephesians 4 : 7-10

\* Focusing on Words : Paul urges us to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit. In order to emphasize the true meaning of unity, Paul explains about the church that is abundant with the Spirit by the diversity of spiritual gifts. He emphasizes again that the purpose of the diverse gifts is to keep the unity of the Spirit and the direction of diverse gifts is to build the strong church community.

\* Understanding the background : Paul wants the Ephesian church to go forward for the unity of the Spirit in Christ. Paul urges and guides the Ephesian church which he ministered for 3 years as if a parent faces a child with compassion and love. The news from the Ephesian church to Paul was precarious. The Ephesian church community was in crisis to be divided by the unresolving wall. Paul's urge was very earnest.

\* Sharing the Words

1. #. Observing & Contemplating : Read Ephesians 4 : 7-10

1) How does it say God gave each one of us grace? (verse 7)

: As Christ apportioned it.

The grace and the gifts given to us are not in the same amount. God apportions us things we need according to our abilities to handle them.

2) Read 1 Corinthians 12 : 4-6. What is different and what is the same?

: The Spirit, the Lord and God are the same. The gifts, service and working are different. 1 Corinthians 12 : 8-11 says different kinds of gifts. The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 : 22-23 is different because the gifts are different. The diversity in the church community makes the abundance of the Spirit. Therefore, there are different kinds of services in the church and we have to do our best to build a strong church community in all things.

There are also different kinds of working in the church. Working for things that each of the members need, the healings, the education, the training and the worship are the foundation of the strong church.

3) What does God want to accomplish with the different kinds of gifts, service and working? (verse 10)

: In order to fill the whole universe.

The abundance means the stage in which things overflow out of the fullness. It doesn't have the meaning of lacking. The purpose God gave us the gifts, grace, service and working is to have the abundance and the overflowing without lacking in his church. When God created heaven and the earth, the garden of Eden was represented by the abundance of his creations. Adam and Eve lived walking with God and experienced the abundance of all things without lacking anything. Due to the sin the abundance failed and the lacking started. In order to resolve the shortage they started to be jealous, dispute, fight, rob and even kill. The purpose Jesus came to this world is to fulfill the shortage. Without resolving the problem of the sin, the fulfillment can't be satisfied. Therefore, Jesus died on the cross and resurrected to forgive our sin. As a result we are completely satisfied with Jesus only and live in abundance.

#. Applying & Sharing

1) What do you think the gifts the Lord apportioned you are?

: God gave us the gifts we need. You may or may not know what gifts you have received. Help each other to find out what kind of gifts your co-members have received by telling what you saw.

2) Jesus died on the cross for your sin and forgive your sin to make you feel the abundance of his love. What are the things you felt abundance about after you believed in Jesus and saved?

: Please share the grace you have abundantly received and no one can steal from you by believing in Jesus.

\* Conclusion : If you remember God apportioned you the gifts and service, you must use them for the church only. We hope your effort and devotion can build the church community strong and united. We hope you enjoy the abundance of God's grace everyday by your effort and devotion.

\* Prayer to reflect on Words

1. Let me make every effort to keep the unity of the church and to make the church community full of grace by using the gifts that are given to me.
2. Let every family of the ranches be the Christian family. Let the spouses, children and parents who don't believe in Jesus finally have the belief by the grace of the Lord.
3. Wars, crises and fights are everywhere in the world. Let the peace of the Lord be proclaimed to end the wars and to fulfill the world with love and peace.