**Jesus’ Perspective on the Church**

**The Word**

Read together Ephesians 4:1-16

**The Big Picture**

Jesus loves and cares for his church, which he considers his own body. We want to acknowledge our own expectations and feelings about the church and consider how they are aligned (or not aligned) with Jesus expectations, feelings and plans for his church.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. As you consider your own relationship to the church, what key expectations, emotions, and/or experiences do you bring to your view of the church?

2. On Sunday we discussed how Jesus formed his church, how he provides for his church, and what his hopes for the church are. What in that conversation was most helpful or impactful for you?

3. Verses 7-10 are initially tough to understand. Discuss together the meaning of those verses as articulated on Sunday. What is being said about the victory Jesus has achieved and the impact that has for his church (how his church enjoys the fruits of his victory)?

4. As you consider Jesus' perspective on his church, as Paul articulates it in Ephesians 4, is there an area where you are feeling led to change or at least reassess your own posture towards the church?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. We are starting a new series on life together as a church family

B. What expectations and emotions do you bring to church?

 1. We all bring expectations based on our experience of the church

2. There are cultural forces impacted how we engage in the church: individualism and consumerism

C. Today we consider: what are Jesus’ expectations for the church? What are his thoughts and feelings and goals for the church?

II. The Passage

 A. The church is the body of Christ (v. 4, 12, 16)

 1. Jesus feels a deep connection and identification with his people

 2. “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (Acts 9)

B. How does Jesus form his body?

1. He gave himself for his body (Ephesians 5:2, 5:25-27)

 2. His sacrifice is portrayed as a great victory in Ephesians 4:7-10

a. Paul quotes Psalm 68 which is a victory psalm celebrating God’s journey with Israel through the wilderness and into the promised land where he is crowned king in Jerusalem

b. Likewise, Jesus descended to earth and to the cross and grave and won the victory and then ascended to a throne in heaven where he has been crowned king

c. He formed his people by winning a victory for us, and he invites us into this victory

C. How does Jesus provide for his body?

1. He gives gifts to his church (v. 8) that are evidences of his victory

 2. He gives spiritual gifts to each one of us (v. 7)

3. He gives leaders to the church who prepare/equip the members to use their spiritual gifts (v. 11-12)

4. The body builds itself up as each person/part does its work (v. 16)

5. So Jesus provides for his church by providing each member of the church and giving them the unique gifts they have for the sake of the whole

C. What is Jesus’ goal for his body?

1. Unity (see v. 3-5, 13, and John 17:20-23)

2. Maturity (see v. 12-13 and 15-16)

3. The idea is that Jesus is the head and he has attached himself to a body that is initially frail and weak, but he intends for it to grow in unity and maturity until the day he returns

4. And maturity is a group project, not an individual journey