

January 18, 2026

"The New Humanity" – Bobby Warrenburg

Ephesians 4:1-16

Understanding the Picture: Unity in Diversity

1. Bobby began with Leslie Newbigin's observation that Jesus left behind a community rather than just a book. What strikes you about this? How does thinking of the church as Jesus' primary gift to the world shape your view of gathered Christian community?
2. Paul emphasizes unity seven times in verses 4-6 (one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father). Yet he immediately shifts to celebrating diversity and different gifts. How do you see this unity-in-diversity playing out in our church? Where do we do this well? Where might we grow?
3. Bobby used the mosaic image where Christ holds together both order (on his right) and multiplicity (on his left), with each creature reflecting colors found in Jesus himself. What does it mean that "you will become more of yourselves to the extent your life is an extension of Christ"? How does this challenge individualistic views of spiritual growth?

Living the Pattern: Power Under, Not Power Over

4. The sermon emphasized that Christ's pattern (descending to lift others up) must shape how we use our gifts. Bobby said leaders are called to exercise "power under people in order to elevate them into the fullness of participation in the body."
 - When have you experienced this kind of leadership, either receiving it or offering it?
 - How does this contrast with leadership patterns we typically see in the world?
5. Paul tells us to be "completely humble and gentle...bearing with one another in love" (v. 2). Bobby noted these instructions exist precisely because church life will be hard.
 - Why is it important to acknowledge that Christian community is difficult?
 - How does remembering that our gifts and roles are all grace (not achievement) help us bear with one another?

Embracing the Purpose: Making Christ Visible

6. The purpose of all these gifts and this unity is "to equip his people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up" (v. 12). The church becomes the place where God is encountered in the world "the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."
 - Does this vision of the church's purpose inspire you? Challenge you? Overwhelm you?
 - What might it look like for our small group to be a place where people encounter Christ?

7. Bobby closed with the story of the Kibera slum church, people with nothing materially, yet who "knew that in Christ, they had everything." He said, "What I saw in that little shack was a glimpse of the same power that will one day renew all creation."
 - When have you witnessed this kind of kingdom breaking through in unlikely places?
 - How does this vision of the church's mission "making visible the power that will one day renew all creation" shape what we do together?

Personal Application

8. Bobby mentioned that just as a hand separated from the body is dysfunctional, so Christians separated from the body cannot experience the fullness of who they're meant to be.
 - How have you experienced the necessity of being connected to Christ's body?
 - Is there an area where you're tempted toward isolation rather than connection?
9. Looking at verses 11-13, which gifts or roles do you see operating in our church community? How might you participate in "equipping the saints for works of ministry" this week—either through your own gifts or by encouraging someone else in theirs?

Closing Prayer

Spend time praying for one another and for our church:

- That we would grow in unity while celebrating our diversity
- That we would use our gifts according to Christ's pattern of descending to lift others up
- That our community would make Christ visible in Beverly and beyond
- For specific needs and challenges members are facing in living out the body of Christ