

CHURCH LIFE: MOVING TOWARD MATURITY & HEALTH

Sunday, May 5, 2024 -- Pastor Andrew Coleman

EPHESIANS 4:11-16

English Standard Version (ESV)

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 **to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ**, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, **when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**

OUR CURRENT CONTEXT:

Our world is increasingly rejecting maturity.

Our world is increasingly embracing immaturity.

Maturity is marked by:

selflessness,
restraint,
discipline,
responsibility,
knowledge,
wisdom,
humility,
godliness.

Immaturity is marked by:

selfishness,
impulsiveness/hostility,
negligence/laziness,
irresponsibility,
ignorance,
foolishness,
pride,
ungodliness.

Maturity leads to:

purpose,
productivity,
contentment,
joy.

Immaturity leads to:

confusion/chaos,
dissipation,
misery,
despair.

It is God's intent that His people -- His Church -- grow up into MATURITY.

Both individually and corporately (or collectively)

1 PETER 2:2

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation

1 CORINTHIANS 3:2

I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for solid food. In fact, you are still not ready,

1 CORINTHIANS 14:20 (controversy over speaking in tongues)

Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up **the body of Christ**, 13 **until we all** attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom **the whole body**, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Ephesians chapters 1-3 Our **POSITION** in Christ

(Our new identity of being forgiven and empowered through Christ's salvation.)

Ephesians chapters 4-6 Our **PRACTICE** in Christ

(Our new behavior is to reflect our new identity in Christ.)

1) Notice that this passage focuses on **growing up in Christ... TOGETHER!** vs 12-16

- Christ didn't save you to leave you where you are.
- Christ saved you to make you like Him.
- We do this by growing in knowledge of Him, faith in Him and faithfulness to Him.
- We do this together! vs 12 *the body* vs 13 *until we all...* vs 16 *the whole body*
- This means you increasingly believe and you increasingly do.
- And we do this both individually AND corporately as a local church.
- As the members of a church mature, so does the church... AND vice versa!

2) Notice that God gives evangelists, shepherds and teachers to **equip us for growth.** vs 11

- Apostles & Prophets were instrumental until the New Testament was complete.
- Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers continue equipping based on OT & NT Scriptures.
 - Emphasis is on declaring, explaining and modeling God's Word.
 - Equipping the church to ACTIVELY SERVE in the work of God's kingdom.

3) The '**work of the ministry**' is **intricately related to 'the building up of the body of Christ'**. vs 12

- When we involve ourselves in the work of the ministry the body of Christ grows up.
- Strong ministry work usually results in strong spiritual growth.
- No ministry work usually results in negative spiritual growth.

Do you want to grow in faith and joy and nearness to God?

Stop wandering around wondering what's wrong.

Serve God and His people!

4) Notice this involves **REAL spiritual growth.** vs 13-14

- *the unity of the faith* -- you embrace the full message of the Gospel
- *the knowledge of the Son of God* -- you come to the mind and heart of Christ
- *to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*, -- you come into maturity
- see 14 -- no longer like children -- unstable and susceptible to false doctrine, teachers and demons.

Start servicing, start learning, start praying ➡ start **GROWING!**