

## Acts 14:23 / Ephesians 4:11-16 The Church is Essential

During the Covid lockdown - one of the arguments that circulated throughout society was on what was deemed as Essential

A) One of the arguments for the church gathering was the conviction that THE CHURCH is essential -

B) That conviction was one thing that motivated us as a church to start meeting in person fairly early in the Pandemic -

1) Outside on May 31<sup>st</sup> - Inside by August. Too hot

C) Now The reason we made the decision to meet in Person had nothing to do with that as a Pastor I didn't like preaching to a Camera - empty room.

In fact when we first started doing the recorded services, we would pre-record on Thursdays -

A) So like you I would be at home on Sundays in my PJ's watching me preach to me - really weird

B) So I started just coming here on Sundays and preaching to the camera in an empty room -

1) Didn't enjoy - You were missed

C) Most of you sit in the same place every Sunday - I could picture your faces

But the reason our conviction grew that the church was and is essential

A) and that we needed to be meeting in person

B) Took place after a conversation with a local sheriff 1) who told us that the calls for Domestic violence was up Dramatically

C) We were also told that the calls for attempted Suicide - were on the rise

D) So it was very evident to us that people in our community were hurting / struggling

E) Then we began to hear reports of people in our body who were struggling too.

So our conviction was then and still is today - that the church is essential to help people get through difficult times.

A) I think Paul and Barnabas would fully agree with that conviction

B) That is why we saw in our last study that Paul and Barnabas at the end of their first missionary journey

1) They were headed back to Antioch in Syria - Sending church

C) Instead of taking a direct route home - through Tarsus - they circled back around to go through the cities from which they came

Cities where they had faced much opposition -

A) they were ran out of Antioch Pisidia

B) They were threatened with death in Iconium and had to eventually leave there

C) In Lystra Paul was dragged out of the city and stoned with rocks and left for dead.

D) So Why would they go back to those places where they received so much opposition. 2 reasons

1) To establish the Disciples and to Establish Churches

<sup>21</sup> And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, <sup>22</sup> strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." <sup>23</sup> So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Acts 14:21-23

Note They appointed Elders in every Church -

A) Church = Ekklesia - People who are called out and who are called together.

B) Jesus first introduced the idea of the church in Matthew 16:18 - when he declared **that he would build his church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it**

C) The word Church or Ekklesia is mentioned 111 times in the NT scriptures

D) And when Paul and Barnabas set out on their 1<sup>st</sup> missionary Journey

1) they set out with a goal of establishing churches

E) They knew that the best way to reach the lost and to fulfill the great commission - **to Go** .....**make disciples** was through the local church

**So they set out to establish churches in all the cities and villages -**

A) **Appoint Elders - Leaders in churches to teach, and train and tend to or care for the Believers**

B) Now last week we looked at what I would call the General goal of ministry for a church - Pastors goal -

C) Colossians 1:28,29 Paul framed it this way; <sup>28</sup> **Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.** <sup>29</sup> **To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily. Colossians 1:28-29**

**Today we are going to look at that goal in Detail -**

A) **Detailed look at what it means to make Disciples -**

B) **turn to Ephesians 4**

<sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; <sup>14</sup> that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, <sup>15</sup> but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

**So Paul is giving us insight here in Ephesians 4 that the establishing of the church involved establishing leadership.**

A) **When God was establishing the first church he picked certain men to lead the way.**

B) **the 12 Disciples and a few others like Paul - Key roles**

1) Identified as Apostles, Prophets, Evangelist - Pastors/ teachers

**C) In some previous studies in the book of Ephesians 2019 - 2004 -**

1) We went into great detail to discuss that history of the beginning of the church

**How the Apostles, Prophets were given special authority and calling**

A) **To be used in establishing the early church and bringing us the NT scriptures**

B) **Although there are not leaders in the church today who have the same kind of Authority that the first Apostles did**

C) **The ministry of Apostles, prophets, Evangelist and Pastor/ teachers is still very much alive in the church today**

**Apostles - sent ones - church planters missionaries - Guys who start things**

A) **Apostles have a governing ministry - they oversee - Key Elders and leaders**

B) **Prophets have a guiding ministry - they give direction and insight**

1) **Men who at certain times will get a Word for the church - In our church Rick Barsh/ Myself /others**

C) **Apostles a governing ministry, Prophets a guiding ministry**

**Evangelist have a gathering ministry -**

A) **They share the gospel with results - Some from Pulpits and platforms - others in their day to day life**

**B) Pastor/teachers have a grounding and guarding ministry -**

1) **they faithful teach the word of God**

C) **Paul shared these words to the Elders in the church of Ephesus**

<sup>28</sup> **Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. Acts 20:28**

**Today when a church is starting – being planted**

A)The pastor is often expected to fulfill all of the roles - Apostle, Prophet the Evangelist - the Pastor/ teacher

B)But as the church grows you often see more people fulfilling those roles as the Lord raises them up

C)In the Hay day of Calvary Chapel - Pastor Chuck - was Obviously the Apostle - sent one -  
1)Main overseer - the movement

D)He was the clear Pastor/ Teacher of CCCM

**But there were others who served in the role of Prophets Guys with the prophetic gift -**

A)teach sometimes - A word for the church

**B)You probably wouldn't want to listen to them all the time - but always a stirring word -**

C)There was always had someone who was functioning as an evangelist

1)Monday nights – Saturday nights - Greg Laurie - Tom Stipe - Joey B - Garrid Beeler

D)Come Sundays/ Wednesday where Pastor Chuck would teach - Discipled

**E)Beautiful expression of this in Zimbabwe - Bullwayo - Langworthy Basil**

**So here in Ephesians Paul is saying - the Holy Spirit appoints Elders key leaders in the Church**

A)What is the purpose of the Leaders in the church? Why do they exist?

B)Why were Paul and Barnabas so focused on appointing elders in the churches? -

C)This is the Purpose of church leadership - the Specific task that the church is here for:

1)found in V.12 - This is what Discipleship is about

<sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

**The Word edify = to build up strengthen and develop**

A)It is a word that is taken from the world of architecture and construction

B)It literally speaks of seeing a building become established

C)In this CONTEXT it speaks of seeing believers in Jesus being established in their faith

**The word Equip or equipping is a little different**

A)This verb, in the original language, is *katar/tismon*,

B)from which we get our English word, *artisan -- artist or craftsman, a mechanic*,

C)It describes someone who works with his hands and accomplishes things.

**The word first appears in the New Testament in connection with the calling of the disciples.**

A)In Matthew 4 When Jesus walked out along the Sea of Galilee, he saw the two brothers fishing -

B)James and John, sitting in a boat, They were mending their nets.

C)The word "mending" is the word translated here "equipping."

**D) Those nets would get stretched / torn and dirty**

1)they need to be mended so they could be used again.

**So think about this: they were mending, their nets - they were equipping their nets;**

A)They were getting them ready; they were fixing them up, preparing them.

B)That is the job of the Church – you see people are like those nets – have been torn by life /

1)stretched by stressful circumstances - Some have been dirtied by others

C)Jesus working thru His Church to mend and to fix – broken and stretched people –

1)Equipping them to become useful to God !

**It is interesting how our culture wants to discard and get rid of broken things - Goodwill or the trash can**

A)God our father puts a premium on broken things -

B)He loves to take broken people and mend them - fix them - equip them to be his vessels -

### GOD STORIES

C)So The purpose of the church is to take broken things and make them useful again.

### Notice it says V.12 Equipped for Ministry

A)Diakonia = rendering help and assistance to others

B)The local church is supposed to be a place where everyone is seeking to help and serve each other

### C)Paul expressed it this way to the church in Corinth

<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:58

### Now it is interesting that in the Greek culture they had a negative view of Diakonia -

A)They saw service as degrading and dishonorable

B)In the Greek culture you sought to be a person who had servants - who served you.

1)You didn't want to be considered a servant

C)That same mentality still exist in our culture today.

1)In the professional world - you want to be the Boss - other work for you

D)People want to climb the ladder in Business where they have a personal assistant who works for them.

1)Very few aspire to be the Personal assistant

### But in the Body of Christ - Being a Servant to others is the highest aspiration.

A)Because Jesus our Lord modeled that - **"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."** Mark 10:41

### B)In the church we are admonished- Philippians 2

<sup>3</sup> Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out

not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus Philippians 2:3-5

C)And again in Hebrews

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

### So the job of the Elders - leaders is to model that mindset of Jesus

A)To create a culture of Jesus followers who are following the example of King Jesus in serving each other

B)To create a culture of Jesus minded people who are more concerned about the needs of others

1)than they are their own

C)This is what Jesus meant when he said that **the world will know that we are his disciples by our love for one another**

D)Our love for one another and for the world around us is to be our defining mark

### So that is why we are here - this is why we gather -

A)everything is connected to that - everything is aiming at that - **Edify - Build up - Equip**

B)Paul reveals here that the equipping and edifying will become evident in 3 ways

C)Maturity, Stability and functionality

### #1 Maturity

**Ever have one of your kids try to appear more grown up than they really were**

A)I remember back when our youngest my Daughter Amanda – turned 3 we celebrated her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday

B)Next day I found her in our bathroom - standing in front of the **mirror putting on Denise's Mascara:**

C)Wand in one hand / bottle in the other very careful – **Actually did a good Job –**

1)but she so much wanted to be a grownup –

**D)Now she is grown up and has a daughter of her own -**

1)and there are probably days she wishes she could be that little girl again

**Our Spiritual Maturity is going to be seen in 2 ways- Defining marks**

A)#1 We are becoming clear on our understanding of Jesus 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith "

B)The unity of the faith is the shared understanding, in the church,

1)of the great truths revealed in the Scriptures

C)Approximately one-half of the 38 occurrences of the specific phrase "the faith"

1)refer not to the ACT of believing but rather to WHAT is believed,

D)The faith is the content of the gospel in its most complete form.

**And the central focus of what we believe has to do with Jesus - and of the knowledge of the Son of God,**

A)Who He is, God in Human flesh -

B)what he did - he was the only one who could redeem lost humanity -

1)He left, He died and he rose again.

C)We don't believe in the resurrection because the Bible said it happened.

1)We believe in the Bible because the Resurrection happened -

**D)all the evidence of the empty tomb points to The Resurrection.**

**Everything hinges on that.**

A)Validates everything Jesus did and said

B)We believe in Divine Creation - Jesus said God created the world - Mark 13:19

1)Science has only validated what Jesus said

C)We believe in a worldwide flood -Jesus said the earth was flooded - Matthew 24:38-39

D)We believe in the Bible's view of Gender - Because Jesus said God made them male and female Matt 19:4

**We believe in the Biblical view of Marriage -**

A)Between a man and a woman Jesus said that is the way that God created marriage - Matthew 19:5

**A male (the man) shall leave.... Joined to his wife. (the female)**

B)Jesus can't be wrong about all of that and still be God

C)The Resurrection Validates Jesus is who he said he was

1)And His words are true

**So Growing in the faith and the Knowledge of Jesus is growing in our understanding of who He is**

A)But note this: growing in the Knowledge of Jesus isn't just about growing in our head knowledge -

**B)But it is growing in our experiential Knowledge of Jesus - that is what this word Knowledge speaks of**

C)This refers to a growing encounter with the Lord Jesus Himself,

1)so that we come to know Him more and more--

2)not just know about Him, but know Him, directly and personally.

D)This is what led Paul to write in Phil 3 after 30 years of walking with Jesus to say - **I am still laying aside all things - that I might know Him**

1)Power of Resurrection - Fellowship of suffering

E)Paul understood the more we come to know Jesus - the more we become like him!

**That is the 2nd glorious component of a maturing faith-**

A)We are individually and collectively becoming more like Christ

B) Paul describes this V.13 as becoming a perfect or complete man or woman **growing in the stature of the fullness of Christ**

C) Paul Adds this is V.15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

**Paul mixes two metaphors here that we are familiar with.**

A) 1<sup>st</sup> Growing in Stature: How many of you do or did the line mark on the wall with your kids

B) A wall in the home - Dad line - Mom line - Kids lines

C) Each year the mom and dad line stayed the same - Kids were catching up to mom and dad - 1) growing in their stature

D) As we grow spiritually in both our head knowledge of Jesus

1) Also our experiential knowledge - how to apply what we are learning about Jesus - **We grow in Stature.**

**Then In V.15 Paul uses this picture of growing into the head**

A) Ever seen a baby with an enormous head - too big for their body

B) Our Son Aaron was that way at first - how does he hold that thing up

1) Big brain he had to grow into

C) As a Child matures – grows into it's head –

D) Jesus is the head of the Church – as we grow – we are growing into him.

**As we grow - the body starts to fit the head -**

A) We start to resemble Jesus – reflect Jesus

B) Here is how we measure growth - it is by asking ourselves these type of questions:

1) Are we becoming more & more **others centered & less self-centered?**

C) Are our lives being marked by a desire to **serve others & to sacrifice** for others

1) Are we becoming givers or are we just takers?

**D) Are we seeing people w/ His eyes - dealing w/ People w/ his heart ?**

1) When they hear our voice is it a reflection of His voice

Mark Thompson of Faribault, Minnesota, suffered a terrible knife wound when someone broke into his home. One of the consequences of his difficult recovery was being forced to miss watching his son Chris run in the state cross-country championship meet. So **Mark asked his brother Merv to go in his place.**

According to the account in the St. Paul Pioneer Press / Mark told his brother, *"I can't be there to see Chris run. So I want you there at the beginning of the race. Holler a lot. ... Then at the end, I want you to really cheer loudly. And I want you to make your voice sound like my voice.*

**Merv heeded the advice, and Chris ran a strong race, finishing second.**

Merv, discerned a deep theological truth in the process.

"That's what Jesus wants us to do." he thought **"Make our voice sound like HIS."** TONE / HEART

**Parents when our kids are listening to our voice – how much of what they are hearing for us is reflective of the voice of Christ?**

A) As the Kids in Children's are ministry learning about Jesus

B) Are they thinking That sounds like my mom, dad, grandpa/ grandma

**Now I know that there is not a person in this room who is going to ever truly reflect Christ**

A) None of us is perfect – we are all **Flawed sinners**

B) We fail / we blow it – we mess up often – myself included

C) But I think that the Lord would have us today – consider – really ponder this reality:

1) **That is the goal – that is the mark of MATURITY**

D) Jesus is the head of the Church - and are we growing into the Head!

1) **First individually – second collectively**

**E) That is what we are aiming at here - why we gather together -**

**1) Not to play church - but to be learning and growing - become more like Jesus**

**Goal #2 Stability That we would become grounded**

**-<sup>14</sup> that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,**

**A) This is why we spend so much time studying the word of God so that you can be grounded**

**B) Know the truth - and stand in the truth - Know Jesus and lean upon your savior**

**C) Not swayed by false doctrine. - Some new popular teaching -**

**D) People who are grounded in the truth - recognize error - they know how to examine something in the full context of scripture**

**E) Hear something - that doesn't sound right - I need to check that out**

**But the goal is also for Stability in the storms that life throws at us**

**A) Parable of the Builder - One stable - one that wasn't won Built on the Rock - the other the sand**

**B) Difference was application - The Stable life is the one who takes what Jesus says and applies to his life**

**C) The unstable life - only hears - doesn't do**

**Listen we can teach truth all day - but it is up to you to apply it**

**A) Turn to the Lord in surrender -**

**B) That is the difference between a believer and a disciple**

**C) A built up and stable believer - Knows the Word and lives the word**

**Goal #3 Functionality - We become a functioning member of the Body.**

**V.16<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its**

**share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**

**A) The Church is like the Human body - made up of many members - all different functions**

**B) Joined and knit together is like tendons and muscles - connected together**

**C) The Human body is this masterpiece of design - when it is functioning right**

**1) All the parts are doing its Job**

**Like the Human body - the Body of Christ the church is made up of different parts -**

**A) every part - person has a function**

**B) If this is your home church - you are a part of this Local Ekklesia - this church family.**

**C) YOU have a role and function - not just here to sit in a chair**

**D) You are here to Grow - Yes - also here to Give - 1) you are here to be Poured into - but also to be Poured out**

**E) You are here to be Blessed - but also to be a Blessing**

**Many of you get this: why you are connected**

**A) You are in a community group - Home group**

**B) Plugged into Men's or Women's studies**

**C) When I get a call that someone in the body is in the Hospital - going through difficulty**

**1) I show up at the Hospital or the Home - and there are already 6-7 of you there - Love that**

**Many of you are using your time, talents, treasures to serve - You are being poured out**

**A) Over 200 volunteers in the body -**

**B) 90% of the ministry that happens here at CV and in our community - happens through You guys**

**1) Awesome**

**C) Some of you are in a place in life - where you can't serve like you once did - YOU PRAY**

**D)OTHERS your biggest contribution is that you give -**

**E)Both are behind the scenes stuff - no one sees - but your prayers and giving go a long way.**

**Note again how Paul refers to it V.16b every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**

**A)We are being built up - and built together in Love**

**B)That is how we reflect Jesus - His love seen in our lives.**

**C)But Some of you are a part of the body - but you are not engaged - not in community**

1)Not in a Small group - never go out to the courtyard

**D)No one knows you- You are missing out on the Lord having a chance to use your life**

1)We are missing out - we don't get to experience your gifts

**Today as your Pastor -I want to encourage you to consider that.**

**A)Pray - Lord I want to be used - I want to be a part of the body**

**B)Talk to one of our Pastors / Leaders - about getting plugged in somewhere -**

**C)We would love to Help you figure out what your gifts are and how you fit in to the body.**

**D)This is the goal - this is what we are aiming at - this is our Pursuit of Discipleship - Graphic**

**Celebrate:**

**Connect:**

**Contribute:**

**Confident:**