

The Maturity of the Body Ephesians 4:11-16

We have seen in this series how the Lord gives gifts to people in the church - for the profit of all.

A) So the body can be built up - so it can grow and mature.

B) In this final study in our series we are going to look at Ephesians 4:11-16

1) Where we are given a great picture of what that maturity is supposed to look like.

¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ 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; ¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ 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.

When the Lord was setting up His church – He picked certain people to function in certain roles

A) Leadership roles Paul describes in V. 11 as Apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors and teachers

B) If we were talking human anatomy - we might describe these roles as the Skeletal structure.

C) These are what hold everything together.

I want to quickly describe the purpose that these roles played in establishing of the early church and the way these roles function today.

The Apostles had a GOVERNING MINISTRY.

A) The basic meaning of the word Apostle means one who is sent out on a mission! - Jesus Chose 12 - Disciples Mission to Change the World !

B) Now the 1st 12 apostles who were sent out by Jesus had a unique place in the history of the church!

1) They were used by the Lord in the birthing of His Church & in the putting together of God's word! (Inspired!)

C) They laid the foundation through their preaching ministries, and through the inspired writings that they sent to the churches,

1) the inspired writings that remain with us to this very day.

D) Paul was later classified in this group of original apostles { Met Criteria according to Acts 1:22-24 need to have seen Rez. Jesus / sent out by Him

Now Because of that criteria I do not believe there are apostles today in that Primary way / same type of authority as 12 apostles

A) Reason I mention that is there are men today who claim to be Apostles on an equal level w/ the originals / their words above scripture !

B) That idea is not supported at all by Scripture – if you run into someone who makes that claim – get away from them as fast as you can.

1) We do not any longer have men with that same kind of calling or gifting.

C) There's no one today that has that same kind of authority to let's say sit down and pen another chapter to the Bible.

1) That all ended with the death of the last apostle. But their ministry is perpetuated. It's carried on through the written record in the NT

So in the Primary sense this office of the Apostle ended when the last apostle died

A) But in a secondary sense there are still those in the Church who have an apostolic like ministry – Apostle means sent one

B) Throughout the History of the Church there have been those whom the Lord has sent out to preach the gospel and plant churches in new areas

C) So In a secondary sense they would be considered apostles – Men like William Carey –

1) left England took gospel to India

D) **Hudson Taylor** who went into China – Apostle to the Chinese people

E) In the Context of the CC movement – **Pastor Chuck definitely has an apostolic type ministry** –

1) Pioneer / Example & Leader

Next: Prophets

A) Prophets in the New Testament **HAD A GUIDING MINISTRY.**

1) They were men who were given, as were the apostles, particular insight into the doctrines of the faith

B) See Believers in the NT churches did not possess Bibles, and the NT wasn't written or completed Yet –

C) How, then, would these local assemblies discover God's will?

1) The Holy Spirit would share God's truth with **those possessing the gift of prophecy.**

A prophet is essentially a man who speaks for God, who unfolds the mind of God.

A) Many of the apostles were also prophets – although the giftings differs from that of an apostle-

B) The apostle gives an authoritative declaration of the whole body of truth concerning Jesus Christ;

1) While the prophet **interprets that authoritative word and explains** the truth so that it becomes very clear!

C) **Are there Prophets today in that Secondary sense** {The answer is yes in the History of the Church there have been those men God raised up

1) **A voice for the nation** / a voice for the Church at a particular time – Called out by God to Proclaim Truth

D) IN England – **Spurgeon / Campell Morgan / Lyold Jones**

1) Today in America: **Jack Hibbs - Franklin Graham**

Next is the Evangelist

The Evangelist has a *Gathering ministry*

A) Taking that which is not a part of the body and making it a part of the Body –

B) By bringing people to faith in Christ

C) Now all of us are called to evangelize - make disciples

But the person with the gift of Evangelize is gifted in sharing the gospel with results

A) Peter was the first Evangelist – Stephen / Phillip / Paul

B) Today we might Think of people like **Greg Laurie**

C) But there are others who are never going to preach at a Crusade

1) that God uses w/ this gift to grow the body of Christ –

D) Able to share the gospel with effectiveness and results

1) Always leading others to Christ

Finally there is the Pastor/teacher

A) The pastor/teacher is one role - they have a grounding and a guarding ministry

B) In John Chapter 21 we see Jesus commissioning Peter to this ministry.

C) Jesus admonishes Peter to feed the sheep and to tend the sheep.

Feeding speaks of teaching the Word and helping others get fed and grounded in the Lord

A) Tending speaks of guarding and caring for the sheep - kept them out of harm's way

B) Protect them from Wolves and predators

So God places these four offices in his church to oversee and take care of the church.

A) And there is a specific goal in mind that is describe in v.12 ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

B) Here the Lord is letting us in on a very important truth -

1) in the Church the work of ministry is not reserved for special people with a calling

C) The whole church is called to the work of ministry!

1) Purpose of talking about the gifts - God has given us gifts - need to use them.

D) Yesterday I met with two gals in our church that our taking over the ministry of memorial services

1) Talking care of families who have lost a loved one

E) These two ladies - recognize that God has given them the gift of mercy

1) The gift of Mercy is one of the gifts need to serve in that ministry.

But understand the church is not supposed to resemble a sporting event

A) Professionals on the field of court - playing the game

B) The audience in the stands - watching and cheering on!! - No all of us are in the game!!

The goal of Discipleship is we are trying to help everyone in the church discover their place/function

A) Discover their giftings and how the Lord wants to use them.

B) A Leaders ministry is to equip the saints - YOU Light shines through

1) So A leaders ministry is to equip others for the work of ministry.

C) Consider that word Equipping - **it is an interesting word in the Greek**

This verb, in the original language, is *katar/tismon*, from which we get our English word, *artisan*

A) Used to describe an artist or craftsman, a mechanic,

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

C) When Jesus walked out along the Sea of Galilee, he saw the two pairs of brothers,

1) Peter and Andrew and James and John, sitting in their boats,

D) They were mending their nets. The word "mending" is the word translated here "equipping."

E) Those nets would get stretched / torn and dirty – 1) they need to be fixed 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) The Job of the Church { Jesus working thru His Church } is to mend and to fix –

1) broken and stretched people – Equipping them to become useful to God !!!

We all come here broken

A) Our world discards broken things – but God puts a premium on broken things

B) Earthen Vessels who the light shines through

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

1) Equipping them for the work of ministry

D) The goal of that ministry is for the edifying or the building up of the body of Christ

1) Make the Church Stronger and more usable

Then Paul proceeds to give us a 3 fold picture of what being built up looks like

A) Involve three things

13 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;

15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

B) #1 Growth means we are starting to collectively resemble Jesus more and more = Maturity

C) Unity of faith - a Unity in our Knowledge and knowing of Jesus

This is what it looks like: We are growing up in all things - We are growing in our spiritual stature

A) We are growing into the fullness of Jesus

B) Growing into the head who is Christ!

C) A Child - My Son - the body needs to grow into the head.

1) The Body fits with the head

D) That is the Mark of Maturity - We start to resemble Jesus.

E) Now we have all been to the Carnivals - Wooden cut outs - strong man - put your head in - doesn't match

I wonder how often that happens to us the church

A) We have this Biblical picture of Jesus - who he is

B) But the way that we are living, speaking, handling things - doesn't match

C) The best thing that anyone can say about us collectively - That place reminds me of Jesus

1) Individually - they can tell they have been with Jesus

So the first mark of our growth is going to be - a maturity that resembles Jesus

A) The 2nd mark will be stability

1⁴ 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,

B) We are grounded doctrinally - not chasing fads

C) A lot of Christians chase fads - what's happening over here - what is happening over there

1) They never get grounded in their faith

D) Never discover their gifts

E) Growth is measured in Stability - not driven by our emotions

Emotions are wonderful! But they are fleeting - up and down

A) I think when we first get saved - we experience a lot of emotion - can't believe God loves us

B) Blown away that Jesus died for us! - Emotionally moves us.

C) But there comes a point where God wants us to stand on truth - not emotions

1) This is the Victory that has overcome the world - YOUR FAITH

D) We walk by faith - not by sight or emotions

First time I experienced this: Shocker

A) Time to walk by faith!

B) The Goal of the church - is to help everyone become mature and stable in their walks

C) #3 The third mark of growth is Usability

V.16 ¹⁶ 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.

We become a functioning member of the Body.

A) Paul paints a cool picture here of the body - of joints and tendons - being knit together

B) Notice the terms that Paul uses that convey the idea of team work and partnership

C) Joined together or fitted together - speaks of an intimate union - closeness

1) United by blood - family - bros/sisters

He uses the term Supplies = to give generously

A) It is the opposite of holding back - being reserved

Furnishing abundantly and not in a stingy manner

B) In the Greek world they were really into plays

C) The plays would be sponsored by a financial backer who would lavishly give to supply the play

1) Staging and costumes - props

The picture that Paul is pointing to here is one of the Giving generously of myself and my gifts to others

A) Not holding back - not doing the bare minimum

B) One part of the body is supplying the other part of the body

1) Helping it function

C) Tendons support joints that in turn help muscles do things.

1) Tear a tendon in your Knee - hinder your leg from functioning properly

Then he uses the phrase according to the effective working by which every part does its share

A) Literally "with power proportioned to the need of each individual part, so as to build itself up in a spirit of love."

B) This phrase highlights the contribution of each member to the life and development of the body as a whole.

C) Each member is doing his/her share = each part of the body has a role to play -

1) a share to accomplish.

So this is what the church is supposed to look like.

A) NOT a kitchen - where you have a stove and a fridge - toaster - blender - coffee maker

B) Each has a specific use - and each is not needed of the other.

C) The Coffee maker doesn't need the stove to make coffee

1) The toaster doesn't need the blender to make toast

D) That is not the church

The Church is a body- where every part is connected and useful to the other.

A) Bones connected by tendons - tendons connected by muscles - veins running through

B) Housing all these vital organs

C) When the body is functioning the way it is supposed to it can do things like

Surfing

Ok we can't all do that but when the body is functioning the way it supposed to it can things like - DUNK

A) Obviously we can't all do that either - but when a body is functioning Running

B) Two hip replacements - Can't run anymore

C) But when the body is functioning properly it can definitely do this:

D) Takes some great coordination to maneuver that fork in that way.

Seriously - You are a part of the body here - God wants you to function in way he designed you.

A) You doing your Share

B) If you are still wondering - What your gifts are how God has designed you

C) Pick an area to sign up in - **Usher or greeter**

D) **Parking Lot** - Coffee House

E) **Maintenance during the week**

Media

Kids Ministry

Gifted in Music - Kids worship

Teaching - Teach kids - Pastor Chuck - teach 3rd graders and you can teach anyone

Try something and you just might discover - that it is God's role for you in this season.