

Series: A Healthy Church

“Perfecting the Church”

Eph. 4:11, 12

Big Idea – God wants the church, the body of Christ, to be growing up and maturing and serving others.

1. What does the Bible mean by perfection?

Matthew 5:48 So you must be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

katartizo – Greek word means fully equipped, mature, complete, full grown. Does not mean sinless perfection.

Positional Perfection – our standing before God.

Hebrews 10:14 With one sacrifice he made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Ultimate Perfection – when we die and are with the Lord

1 John 3:2 ...when He shall appear we shall be like Him...

Practical Perfection – living here and now, with our life practices matching our position in Christ. Not staying baby Christians.

Ephesians 4:14 Then we will no longer be babies. We will not be tossed about like a ship that the waves carry one way and then another. We will not be influenced by every new teaching we hear from people who are trying to fool us. They make plans and try any kind of trick to fool people into following the wrong path.

What our text is talking about, how we grow up as believers from babies in Christ, to mature, full grown believers who are equipped to serve.

How do we know this is so important?

2. Is perfection important to God?

2 Corinthians 13:11 Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words: Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.

Hebrews 13:21 Now may the God of peace...make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

1 Peter 5:10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

3. Who is the Agent of perfection? - the Holy Spirit

Galatians 3:3 How foolish can you be? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?

2 Corinthians 3:18 ...and the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

4. What are the tools of perfection?

Trials or tests

James 1:2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles and trials come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

Suffering

1 Peter 5:10b ... after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

1 Peter 2:2 As infant babies desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow by it.

5. Who are the preachers of perfection?

Ephesians 4:11 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

Apostles – men who Eph. 2:20 says were the foundation of the church. They were personally appointed by Christ, so the 12 disciples, Matthias, and then the Apostle Paul. They received revelation from God (wrote the NT).

Prophets – they followed the Apostles preaching the Word, not foretelling, but telling forth the Gospel. They too were foundational and disappeared.

Evangelists – Paul told Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5) “do the work of an evangelist.” Basically were church planters, who preached the Gospel, got people saved, established a church, ordained elders and then moved on to a new territory.

Pastor-Teachers – literally “teaching shepherds” whose job was to lead and feed

Acts 20:28 “So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.

1 Peter 5:1 And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you:

2 Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.

3 Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example.

Leadership involves 2 things:

Principle – must know the principles of God's Word

Pattern – must model the principles of the Word (Phil 4:9)

Feeding the flock has 2 aspects to it:

Warning – what not to do

Teaching – what to do.