

Series: A Healthy Church

“The Process of Perfection”

Ephesians 4:11 – 16

Big Idea: All believers in Christ should be involved in the process of growing up spiritually.

How does this work? Looking today at the process in Eph. 4:11 - 16

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

12 Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.

15 No! Speaking the truth with love, we will grow up in every way into Christ, who is the head.

16 The whole body depends on Christ, and all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part does its own work to make the whole body grow and be strong with love.

Notice the progression

1. The Progress of Perfection/Equipping/Maturing

Preachers perfect the people who are believers

NT says that there are 4 tools God uses to perfect His people: Trials or Tests, Suffering, the Word of God and prayer.

It’s the responsibility of Pastors and Teachers to use the Word of God and prayer to help equip, perfect, train people so they grow up.

Saw this in 2 Timothy 3:16 last week. quote: also...

The apostles...said, *“It is not right for us to stop our work of teaching God’s word in order to run a food program. So choose seven of your own men who are good, full of the Spirit and full of wisdom.to put in charge of this work. Then we can continue to pray and to teach the word of God,” Acts 6:2 – 4*

“Christ in you, the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect or mature in Christ Jesus.” Colossians 1:28

Notice Epaphras’ work of prayer for them to be mature and grow.

“Epaphras, a servant of Jesus Christ, from your fellowship ... always prays for you that you will grow to be spiritually mature and have everything God wants for you.” Colossians 4:12

Believers do the work of ministry/service

The word “ministry” in vs. 12 is Gk. work diakonia which mean service.

In Acts 6 who did the leaders of the church say should run the food program for the widows?

More ministry work gets done when all the believers do something.

The body of Christ will be built up and grow

Paul says this results in the church being built up and growing spiritually and also numerically. Spiritually as believers mature and numerically by evangelism.

The church is supposed to gather for edification and scatter or go out into the world for evangelism.

13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Ephesians 4:13-14

2. The Purposes of Perfection

Unity of the body

Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. Ephesians 4:3

We share the same faith in Christ so that we are not divided by all the peripheral things that divide churches – personalities, preferences...

We are united in our common mission to evangelize lost people who desperately need to know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Knowing Jesus Christ deeply

The “knowledge of the Son of God” does not refer to salvation, but a deeper intimate knowledge of Christ like Paul spoke of in Philippians

I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. Philippians 3:10a

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts.” Ephesians 3:17

Same word used of intimacy existing between husband and wife – in OT it says that Cain “knew” his wife and she conceived and bore a son.

If you and I really “know” Christ, we’ll conceive spiritual children

Becoming more like Christ

Our Measuring Stick?

How far from childish behavior we are

(PHOTO OF MAN SUCKING HIS THUMB HERE)

Stability should mark a mature person's life

How close to Christ-like behavior we are

Understanding sound Bible teaching

Those tossed about with every wind of doctrine or false teaching, don't know sound Bible doctrine.

Truth speaking in love

Evangelism done correctly will be spoken, and spoken in love.

Truth without love destroys. Love without truth deceives.

Now how in the world can all this happen? Where does it get the power to perform and the glue to hold it all together?

3. The Power of Perfection

Christ

The whole body depends on Christ, and all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part does its own work to make the whole body grow and be strong with love. Ephesians 4:16

15 God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love—like Christ in everything. We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do.

16 He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love. Ephesians 4:15-16 (MSG)