

Connection to Ephesians 4

Paul gave examples of the gifts that Christ gave to the church to undergird the unity with greater knowledge, discernment, and love. The Christian life requires growth, even growing up, and the Lord has given to His church just what we need for maturity and for ministry.

Introduction/Opening

One of the most stinging criticisms that a young person can receive is when someone says, “Oh, grow up!” No one wants to hear that. Even for someone who wants to stay young and who thinks adulthood seems like it would be no fun, being stuck at a certain stage of development and never maturing is not a good option. Think of the opposite of mature: immature, underdeveloped, or childish. These qualities describe a lot of people, unfortunately, and they can cause a lot of damage to relationships at school, at work, or in families. They can also cause a lot of damage to churches and to an individual’s personal relationship with God. God is serious about maturity, and we should be too when it comes to our spiritual lives. Who wants to be an immature, underdeveloped, childish Christian? God certainly doesn’t want us to remain immature, and He has a plan in place to prevent that.

Outline

1. The Plan for Maturity (Eph. 4:11-12)
 - a) Ministers who equip the saints
 - i. The titles: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers
 - ii. The task: equip the saints for the work of ministry
 - b) Saints who Are equipped to minister
 - i. Maturity always entails work
 - ii. Maturity always entails ministering to others

2. The Picture of Maturity (Eph. 4:13)
 - a) Unity in the faith
 - b) Knowledge of God’s Son
 - c) Likeness to Christ
 - i. The stature that we are measured by is the fullness of Christ (the highest possible standard)
 - ii. This is for “all.” Everyone is needed, and no one is exempt.

3. The Purpose of Maturity (Eph. 4:14-16)
 - a) That we will have stability in the faith
 - b) That we will be able to speak the truth in love
 - c) That we, in every way, will fulfill the function of the body of Christ
 - d) That we will each find our indispensable place in the body of Christ

Conclusion

Do you need to grow up? It may seem like a personal insult to be told to grow up, but what if that really is a proper spiritual diagnosis? Maybe what we need is spiritual maturity. In this passage alone, look at all that is offered: being equipped for the work of ministry, unity with the people of faith, a deep understanding of Jesus Christ, a character that reflects His character, a stability in our faith, the ability to speak the truth in love, and a feeling of significance that comes from doing our part in God's great work in this world. Then consider the opposite of all that: being underdeveloped spiritually, not well-equipped to do ministry, at odds with the people of faith, lack of an understanding of who Jesus is, blown around by every wind of teaching, and continually searching for a meaningful place. Maturity is so much better than the alternative. First come to Christ, and then let Him develop you into a picture of maturity.

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