

## How Jesus Builds His Church – Ephesians 4:11-16

- 1) **What does it mean to be a “mature Christian”? What are some things that are held up as essential to getting there?**

As we wrap this section in the first part of Ephesians 4, we get to see how the Holy Spirit uses the unity and diversity of the church to grow us into maturity.

*<sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

Paul begins by focusing us on those gifted and entrusted with ministering His Word to the church.

- 2) **Why does God equip and give teachers to the church in addition to the gift of his Word itself? What do they do and how do they serve the church well?**
- 3) **Why is Paul so concerned about false teaching? Why are we so vulnerable to it?**
- 4) **For most of the church’s existence, the only access believers had to the word was through the teaching of the gathered church. Having the access we do now is such a gift, but we can sometimes think this means the church’s ministry of the Word is less essential. How might this be dangerous?**

In v15, Paul envisions a church, having been equipped by the ministry of the word in the church, that functions properly. It grows up into Christ, who empowers this growth through the means of the church operating together: speaking truth in love and using their gifts to care for and build up one another.

- 5) **In light of what Paul says here, what should we say characterizes Christian maturity? How is this different than you may have thought about it before?**
- 6) **Paul sees growing into maturity as a corporate rather than individual reality. How does that change the way we think about things like discipleship and what matters in the Christian life?**

One of the ways corporate discipleship happens is through prayer. It allows us to acknowledge that we are needy – of both God and the ministry of His church. It is a place where we can take what is private and individual and make corporate and common. It is a place we can actively seek the growth and care of others as if it was our own.

### Prayer:

- What can we praise God for?
- What sin do you need to confess?
- What cares or burdens can we help carry?