

Eph 4 12-14 Body building-pt 2

Good morning and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn in your bibles to Ephesians 4? Last week if you recall we began to study Jesus' body building plan for His church. How there are giftings for the body of Christ, His church. If you remember, Ephesians 4 is all about unity within the body of Christ. And as we talked about last week, God is bigger than Calvary Chapel.

This morning, we're only going to study 3 verses, verses 12-14 of Ephesians 4. I don't know if there's a more passionate section of scripture for me personally, as a pastor. I probably taught 5 different messages in my mind over the last week on this section.

I get very emotional and passionate about this but I'm gonna try to keep it all in check. Kim used to call me disgustingly calm, but when we get on this subject of false teachers and I see what others going on out there I wanna just lose my mind.

Not gonna do that this morning.

Now to make sure we're not taking these verses out of context, lets read v 11-14

Eph 4 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,

The title of this mornings message is Body Building, part 2
Lets pray

SHOW PIC If you've ever been to Haiti, you know that the primary means of public transportation is called a tap tap. It's a covered pickup truck that is filled with any number of passengers riding in the back. When someone wants to get let off at a particular spot, they tap the side or top of the truck, the driver knows to stop, and the passenger is on their way.

A Tap-Tap is colorful and crowded. It's a cross between a carnival bus, a taxi, and a paddy-wagon. **CLOSE PIC**

And if you ride a tap tap for any length of time, you will see this constant flow of passengers coming and going. All kinds of people are onboard, hanging onto its sides. And you don't measure the usefulness of a Tap-Tap by counting the people in the seats at any one time. You watch it travel its route...

People tap-on here and tap-off there. Passengers are always coming and going. And I've found that the church is like a Tap-Tap!

At times, you wonder about someone. Did they jump off too early? Did they stay on long enough? But that's not my issue. Jesus is Lord! I'm just the Tap-Tap driver. While people are onboard here, I'll love 'em and teach 'em the best I can.

As is the case with any tap tap driver, there are very few people who will stay on board for the whole time.

This of course happens in churches doesn't it? Folks move on because of job opportunities, or new adventures, or a sense of God calling them to something new. They tap the side to hop off, and are off to their next adventure.

But I hope you know so long as you're a passenger on this tap tap, you can rest assured we're gonna go through the Bible verse by verse.

How important is God's word? **Psalm 138:2 I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.**

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

This is why we, Calvary Chapel, and I as your Pastor, put so much emphasis on the Word of God.

Let's look at verses 11 & 12...

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, The word for "equip" means to make right, like the setting of a broken bone, or to bring to completion by training or restoring.

This may come as a shock to you, but the primary purpose of the church is NOT evangelism, although evangelism is important.

The primary purpose of the church is NOT to implement necessary social changes, although social changes are needed.

No, the purpose of the church is told clearly in verse 12-equipping and edifying the saints. The purpose of the church is the building up of believers.

Folks this is why I'm not concerned with, nor emphasize growth this way (width). I'm concerned with growth that's deep.

When people ask I tell them we're growing every day!! And it's not just cuz we ordered more chairs. No, we're growing deeper in our walk with Jesus!

See that's the issue-most folks, pastors included, look at growth the wrong way-they look at it from a width perspective. How many people today versus how many people last week or month.

But we look at growth from a different perspective, a deeper dimension. We measure growth in depth. Sinking roots deeper into Jesus Christ, knowing Him more, loving Him more, following Him more. So that way when the storms come, we're rooted in what we know and Who we know. When the storms come we're not blown away.

It's wisely been said and I fully concur, I'd rather our fellowship be an inch wide and mile deep, than a mile wide and an inch deep.

As each of us grow and mature in Christ, each of our lives become a witness to the world around us. When that happens, evangelism is the result.

You see the word saint. Remember if you're a Christian, you're a saint. If you're not a Christian, you're an ain't. It's one or the other! So if you want to call me Saint Brian...

Let's read verse 12 again

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, pause here

Notice ministry is work!!!! It's hard work, it's selfless, sacrificial work.

But what exactly does that word ministry mean?

I've heard a lot of definitions, but this is the best definition of ministry I've ever found by Warren Weirsbe:

SHOW PIC Ministry is when Divine Resources meet human needs, through loving channels, for the glory of God. **CLOSE PIC**

And here's the shocker you may not know-every saint-that means every Christian- has a ministry!

If you come from a church background, the tendency is to think that ministry happens primarily at church. And although there is a lot of ministry that takes place here, the reality is that most ministry happens outside of church. It happens when you're on the job, or at school, or with your buddies, or at the gym, or raising your kids in a Godly home.

In the Book of Acts, we see the early church hearing the apostles teach, and then going out to turn the world upside down.

And that's the model of church for Calvary Chapel. We equip you through the word of God, to go do the work of ministry. It's not about trying to get people to come here, no it's equipping you to go out there!

Please notice verse 12 is all about equipping the saints for ministry, not entertaining saints. It doesn't say 'amuse them'. It doesn't say 'get them in and have a positive mental attitude with the saints' does it?

The problem with much of the church in America is they think they're making "good people better". Not so. It's about equipping the saints to make spiritually dead people alive.

The church isn't called to be entertainers. Some people want the lights and the smoke and the super loud worship and you know what fine, we talked last week about unity didn't we? I recognize

there are different styles, and tastes and preferences. If someone wants to do those things fine, so long as the people are being fed the word of God to equip them.

But tragically, what you see MOST of the time is a direct correlation of those things that look like the world in the church, and they also neglect the word of God.

SHOW PIC Crossroads- super bowl. I don't know what that nonsense is, but it's not equipping the saints! It may be entertaining, but it's not equipping. **CLOSE PIC**

When we sent out pastor Jim to plant CCFF it's because there is such a lack of Bible teaching churches. To be clear, we don't need more churches, we need churches that will return to the Word. But until that happens, our vision is to send out church planters to teach the word of God.

We find ourselves in the days of

**Amos 8:11 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD,
"That I will send a famine on the land,
Not a famine of bread,
Nor a thirst for water,
But of hearing the words of the LORD.**

Hey if and when the time comes for you to jump off this tap-tap, make sure you find a fellowship that is more focused on equipping than they are entertaining.

Over the years I've gotten multiple requests from folks who wanna guest speak here at our church. A couple different fellas have the entire book of Revelation memorized, and want to share it with you.

And I think to myself, what's really their motivation? So we can sit back and ooh and ahhh? Listen, that doesn't impress me. You may know how to read Greek and Hebrew-great-doesn't impress me in the slightest.

In my travels I've had a couple instances where guys started to gloat and brag- I've literally walked away mid sentence. I know it's rude-pray for me!!

We're not running a circus here, we're not trying to entertain. We're equipping you for the work of ministry because it's a war out there with eternal life and death at stake.

You wanna kick a bible across the stage when parents are abusing kids, when addicts are roaming the streets, when people are going to hell. That's what you wanna do?

Listen I'm gonna let the goats entertain the goats. And let them do it out there in goat land. You can't turn goats into sheep by pandering to their godlessness. It doesn't work like that.

I have complete confidence in the book. It's the word of God.

The only way to be fully equipped for ministry is not to read the latest and greatest book. It's not what the Driven Life looks like.

You need to do this for 40 days. You need to do this for seven days.

Can those books be helpful sometimes-maybe-I'm skeptical of many of them. Some should have their pages glued together and set on fire-best thing for 'em. You gotta decide that with the Lord.

Why didn't I spend time talking about covid and vaccines?

Why not talk about Biden or Trump?

Why not spend more time addressing abortion, or immigration, or racism, or the legalization of drugs?

How come you don't talk about the tv series the Chosen?

You have access to all the same information I do. If you are in the word yourself, the Lord will direct you how to vote and how to act.

Listen you're not following a pastor, you're not following a church, you're called to be a follower of Jesus Christ. And if you follow Christ, He'll guide you in every area of life. But to follow Jesus, you have to know Him.

These are all important topics. Listen I'm not afraid to, nor am I ignorant or uninformed.

I try to keep my teachings at 45 mins. So if you attend church here twice a week, that's 90 mins a week out of 168 hours.

Mathematically that's .9%-less than 1% of your week. That's all I have!

So, I have a choice as a pastor. I can try to persuade you to align with my thinking on these topics, or, I can recognize that you are in a spiritual war just like I am, and we need to be equipped!

Some churches spend lots of time on these topics and I say great-if that's what the Lord has called them to do-do it.

See I have my marching orders from my commander and they echo that of young Timothy!

2 Timothy 4 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at[fn] His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

We're at that time today aren't we?

My final point on verse 12 involves a little detour regarding Ephesus.

If we're not careful, you and I can begin to walk around with a haughty spirit about our church. And listen, the Lord is doing some incredible, wonderful things here. But there's a warning for us, even as we go verse by verse through the Bible, even as we fight the good fight of faith.

Do you Bible students remember what happened to the church Ephesus 30 years later?

Revelation 2 1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

Ephesus looked like the perfect church. Working hard-they labored. They were patient, they refused evil. They rebuked false doctrine. They kept working for the sake of the gospel!!!

But look what Jesus says!

4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent

Brothers and sisters, I plead with you, do not leave your first love!!!

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; That word knowledge there is Ginosko-it's not intellectual knowledge, it's experiential knowledge.

None of us have arrived theologically or spiritually. No one has flawless doctrine, or a monopoly on the truth - we're all learning, and growing, and moving toward "the unity of the faith." None of us have arrived.

Here's the goal of all spiritual growth - to be as much like Jesus as we can.

That's our goal isn't it? And as you read the scriptures you quickly see that Jesus didn't spend His life hanging out in the temple. He was out among people, impacting the world. We're gonna end our study in verse 14.

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, Listen, the church have been here for 2000 years. Jesus said the gates of hell will not prevail against the church. And all kinds of false doctrine has blown through the church.

And like you, I've seen it come and go. The word of faith movement, prosperity gospel, now young folks are trying to manifest things with their positive thoughts and all that nonsense. Crystals are huge nowadays. And this stuff creeps into churches.

It's tragic, rather than mature and grow, many believers remain little children.

They don't know what they believe - let alone, why they believe what they believe. And as a result they get tossed by the winds of heresy.

SHOW PIC Like a tiny rowboat on a rowdy sea - they rise and fall with every wave. Every pitch of the sea threatens to capsize their faith. They're up and down - in and out. **CLOSE PIC**

When believers aren't taught the Bible and in the bible themselves, they don't know what to believe, and end up vulnerable to every smooth-sounding doctrine that comes around. They don't know God's word enough to call out lies from God's truth.

These false doctrines always sound new, but there's nothing ever new. This is another reason why we teach the Bible verse by verse. When you can point to chapter and verse, then you've got truth you can count on. It's backed up by the Book

For 2,000 years there's been folks who draw people after themselves to their own little studies, their own little special teacher with their own little special book that the rest of us peons don't know about.

We just have our own special book with our own special author, and His name is God. But they'll always advertise they've got the better thing, the greater insight.

Look, One of the reasons I'm hard on this is that I understand sinners. I am one. I understand somebody who falls or gets mad or does something stupid.

I don't understand the person who tears apart the body of Christ. I don't understand somebody who thinks they have the entitlement to put their hands onto the bride of Christ.

Jesus is returning for His bride. She's not beautiful by performance. She's beautiful because she's washed in the blood. She's clean and spotless and He's coming for her.

And anybody who thinks they have a right to section a little group off for themselves is carnal and divisive. BTW when that scenario plays out in the human body we have a name for it-it's called cancer.

Here's what I know. The time is coming when wolves in sheep's clothing will come into this fellowship, and try to convince some of you to follow them. I want to be clear, I'm not talking about preferences in worship or teaching style, or even non essentials like the timing of the rapture. No I'm talking about someone who is dividing the bride of Christ.

Please know when, not if, when that day comes I will SWIFTLY AND IMMEDIATELY remove them from this fellowship and unless they repent they will not return.

And some people will say oh that's so insensitive, so unkind. I won't make a big deal of it, they'll just be gone. Because you

don't parade a wolf around to the sheep-you simply get rid of the wolf. Sadly I know that day is coming here.

BTW, this is how the Vineyard started. John Wimber was a CC pastor for several years, until 1982. Started doing real weird things with the gifts of the HS, and Pastor Chuck talked to John who wanted to do the barking like a dog in the spirit, holy laughter, slain in the spirit. Wimber said Calvary was too restrictive of the gifts of the HS. So Chuck said to John go do your thing, but you're not calvary chapel. Don't go away mad, just go away.

But I do want to let you know how often I hear from people, whether it's a guest or a visitor who comes in here. They are always blown away about the love that takes place in this fellowship.

I'm always amazed at the stories I hear of this fellowship loving one another, giving to one another, taking meals, driving to doctors appointments, encouraging, it's incredible. There's a word for it. It's ministry.

I'm pleading with you, don't ever stop. Look, we get people who come in, they're beat up, they got the snot beat out of them in the world. Abusive homes, abusive situations, post traumatic stress, suicidal thoughts, addictions, broken homes, broken marriages you name it.

We welcome them because we were all like that and some of us still are. And the Lord does miraculous work in their lives.

And the majority of the time God does it because you are His hands and you are His feet, and He uses your mouth to speak life into that person's soul.

Whatever ministry the Lord has given you, whether it's in this fellowship, at your home, in your neighborhood, at your job, in the grocery store, whatever it is. GIVE IT ALL YOU GOT.

Remember, Paul had pastored the church at Ephesus for 3 years.

Later, in Acts 20, Paul is traveling, and he can't see everyone at Ephesus because he's trying to make it to Jerusalem in time for the feast. So he summons the elders of the church of Ephesus to meet him on the island of Miletus, where he delivers his final sermon to the Ephesians.

Acts 20 17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself,[fn] so that I may finish my race with joy, and the

ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God^[fn] which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Listen, I'm gonna preach the word. I'm not gonna get caught up in all the politics and all that stuff. And if you decide it's time to bang on the side of that tap-tap, wonderful. Go somewhere the Lord is calling you that's teaching the word.

But no matter where the Lord has you, fulfill your ministry.

Give it all you got!!!