

Signs of Maturity

Ephesians 4:14-16 Sunday AM, October 8, 2023

Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 4:7-16 (NASB95) But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.⁸ Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."⁹ (Now this *expression*, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?¹⁰ He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called. God calls to His wayward creation. Amazing! But even more amazing is that we hear and respond to God. The distractions and deception of the world, our flesh, and the devil speak loudly not merely to those apart from God, but also to those indwelt by the Spirit of God, seeking to submit to His Lordship. Those who hear God's call are to take their place with the others God has called to Himself ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. How do we practically work on these attitudes and goals? In part, by focusing the 7 Ones of Unity Pastor preached a few weeks ago. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. Energy directed toward living THIS unity leads to God's goals being paramount. And God graciously gives what is needed to accomplish those goals. ⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. The more you look to God, the more you see not only how unlike Him you are, but also how glorious He is. Paul uses a reference to Psalm 68 to root the glory of Christ's defeating death and the devil as He called a diverse people to Himself. He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things! Worship the glory of God in the saving work of Christ.

*Hymn #227: Thine is the Glory

Christ is both the source of the gifts of grace and their goal. ¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, positions we equate with leadership, but these titles also speak of a message and a mission. God's goals require listening to His words and submitting to the process of adherence to these words. Hence, God's grace gives these authoritative roles NOT merely for your personal sense of accomplishment or so you would appreciate them, but they focus on God's goal of equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. Is this goal front and center in your mind? It is not unrealistic or impossible. Submit to the One who took you captive—Christ, the Living Head of the church. He through the Spirit of God works in His own to bring us to this mature unity of the faith. We sang it a few weeks ago—keep learning it so you can live it.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): I Am Not My Own *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Holy is He Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:4-27

(NASB95) Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.⁴ And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.⁵ There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.⁶ But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.⁷ For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;⁸ to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,⁹ and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.¹⁰ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.¹¹ For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.¹² For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.¹³ For the body is not one member, but many.¹⁴ If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.¹⁵ And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.¹⁶ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?¹⁷ But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.¹⁸ If they were all one member, where would the body be?¹⁹ But now there are many members, but one body.²⁰ And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."²¹ On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;²² and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable,²³ whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked,²⁴ so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.²⁵ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.²⁶ Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

Offering: *Doxology:

IF we submit to the Spirit and use the gifts given us to accomplish the goal of our passage, Pastor will preach today about a maturing church—defined how? no longer tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* This is exciting! Real growth. Stability—NOT tossed, not floundering. And we grow into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, He is our joy—NOT just serving Him, using gifts, becoming a better ME, NOT figuring it all out, NOT being self-sufficient. HE is the joy, the treasure hid in the field which, when discovered, is worth selling ALL to buy that field. Sing the right response to the gospel. Perhaps 2-3 together, then chorus

*Hymn #446 (Red): Satisfied

While we ALL are saved to work together, we all have different gifts and abilities—grace given us in different ways. All needed, all a part as you heard from I Corinthians 12, all being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part. Do you know your part in the building up of the whole? Don't worry about your differences. You belong and are to be an integral part of the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. Find your part AND tie yourself with the other parts by owning them as part of the whole. Together we are to grow in all aspects into Him who is the head, *even* Christ. So together, let's follow Christ. Do you have His compassion? His care? His goals for those around you? Think of these words as Pastor preaches.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): The Compassion Hymn

Message: Signs of Maturity Ephesians 4:14-16

*Hymn #455: Come, All Christians, Be Committed

*Prayer