WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES:
OUR PART IN BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST
CLASS 2: DIRECTION OF GROWTH

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- **Ephesians 4:15-16** ~ 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.
- In a consumeristic society, we often fall into thinking that the church is for our benefit and our fellowship in the body of Christ is about what we can gain.
- Others might be tempted to measure the health of a church by numbers, budgets, and statistics (sometimes categorized by bodies, budgets, buildings).
- We must have a healthy view of the church and each of our roles in it!
- While it is vital understand the nature of the church corporately (who Christ died for globally, the assembly of believers locally), it is equally important to understand the church's functions individually (parts of the whole body, growing and serving one another)
- In the summer of 2025 at MBC, we preached on the "One Another's" with an emphasis on life in the body of Christ.
- This monthly mini-class will focus on discussions in each part of Ephesians 4:15-16 and give us greater confidence to live as active parts of the body of Christ.
- Schedule:
    - September 25: Introduction and **Means** of Growth: Speaking the Truth in Love (15a)
    - **October 18: Direction of Growth: Grow up in all aspects into Him (15b)**
    - November 15: **Object** of Growth: Christ, the head (15c)
    - December 13: The **Participants** of Growth: The church, the body (16a)
    - January-May: The **Method**, **Manner**, **Effect**, **Result** of Growth: "Every Part" (16b-e)

GROWTH DIRECTION

- The **goal** of gifted leaders equipping: **Maturity**

Ephesians 4:13 ~ 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.

- How does a church grow?
    - Not in number… though the Lord often does that as well.
    - Not in prominence, though we would hope that healthy churches would be promoted.
    - Here, the growth is in direction.
- Two ways we should view our growth.
    - In Christ (union)
    - Grow up (no longer children)

How should we evaluate whether a church is healthy?

In what ways do we FALSLY measure health and success of a church or ourselves?

Growing, No longer children

- The **results** of Maturity: **Growth**.
    - There are two results of our maturity (building up of the body of Christ, v 12, the goal of maturity, v13).
    - These are introduced by v14 "as a result…"
- FIRST: Growth <u>FROM immaturity</u> (represented by the imagery of children in danger)
- Ephesians 4:14 ~ 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.
- The intended result is spiritual maturity.
- No longer means "from this point on", or due to the <u>training</u>, <u>equipping</u>, <u>building up</u> ministries.
- Children should not stay children.
- The spiritually immature should become mature in spiritual stature (1 Cor 3:1-2; Heb 5:13-6:3)
- What kind of spiritual immaturity?
- The kind that gets tossed about by waves.
- The kind that gets carried here and there by others.

- Teaching is the main danger. Waves and winds, trickery and craftiness are goals to lead someone by instruction and teaching and philosophies. [1]
- What protects against these dangers?
- Knowledge, wisdom, discernment, conviction.
- Speaking the truth in love![2] (Our verbal ministry- truth the content, love the motive)

Growing in Christ

- SECOND: Growth TO maturity (in relationship to Christ)
- Steadfastness against the cunning false teachers is one result of our maturity; the other is the direction toward Christlikeness. We are to grow up "into Him."
- The closer we keep to Christ, the more we shall enjoy of certainty and be the less liable to be wheedled by newfanglers and their catchpenny wares. [3]
    - The body needs to grow in intimacy with the head.
        - We *are* in Christ. We grow in relationship to Christ.
    - The body needs to become more and more like Jesus by progressive growth. He is the standard (13)
- The comprehensive nature of our growth.
    - "we are to grow up in all aspects"
    - In every way, grow.
        - We grow up in every single part of our body, every single way we can grow.
    - All people, AND all ways. (simply: "in all")

[1] Andrew Lincoln: "a reference to false teaching in the guise of the various religious philosophies which threatened to assimilate, and thereby dilute or undermine, the Pauline gospel", *Ephesians,* 258.
[2] Matt Waymeyer: "Genuine love speaks the truth and a biblical commitment to truth does indeed result in love," GIBC.
[3] E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians*, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), 99.

Discussion

- Given last week's sermon, what are some doctrinal dangers we should look out for?
- What are the dangers children in the Lord face?
- What can we do to help the more prone members of our church grow and be less susceptible to danger?
- Who is responsible for children in the Lord to avoid doctrinal dangers and crafty teaching?
- What are all the ways we can grow?
- What happens if everyone isn't growing in our body?
- How can we measure the success of Maranatha Bible Church?
- What are you praying for regarding our church's future?

Summary: Leadership given to equip the saints, to minister as the saints ought to, with the goal of maturity in Christ, with the results that they are doctrinally stable and discerning, growing up into Christ.