WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES:
OUR PART IN BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST
CLASS 3: OBJECT 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)

THE BODY'S GROWTH, THE HEAD'S PROVISION

- Christ → gives leaders
- Leaders → equip members
- Members → minister
- Members → build one another up
- Body → grows into the head
- Church → becomes mature and Christlike
- Body → builds itself up in love

The head gets the ultimate credit for what the body is doing and the body.

- In what way are we growing into Christ individually and corporately?
- "Delight in God's Son" ~ How do we measure how we collectively are well-connected to the Head?

Growing Up to Christ (Standard)

- We are not growing according to human standards of development
- We are not called into this body in attachment to each other without a head
- We are not led by leaders who replace the head.
- Jesus Christ is the head of the whole body.
- We have the example of Christ's full stature to attain to, becoming more and more united in the maturity **demonstrated** by Christ (v13d).

13: attain to… to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Growing Through Christ (Source of Our Growth)

- we have the goal of maturity as a corporate church to attain the "knowledge of the Son of God" (we must know Christ and the truth he **prescribed**,

13: until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God

  - Each member individually uses their gifts and abilities to edify one another (7)

7: But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift

  - The whole body corporately grows when each part is healthy in knowing Christ (12)

12: to the building up of the body of Christ;

Growing Under Christ (Sovereign Head)

- Christ is the source of the body's growth (15-16)
- Christ is the sovereign over the body, who directs/governs His church

15-16a: we are to grow up in all *aspects* **into Him** who is the **head**, *even* **Christ**, **from whom** the whole body… causes the growth of the body…

- Christ is the implied sustainer of fitting and holding together the body (16a)
- It's by the power of the head that the body does its work!

16: being fitted and held together

- In the anatomy of our physical bodies, it is from our head that the muscles know to move, the lungs to take a deeper breath, or the nose to take in a waft of cinnamon rolls.
- The body is directed by *command center*. The head holds and fits the body together.
- The body is to grow up, but it is into Him who is the Head: Christ.

Into Him: -The aim and goal of our growth is the standard of Christ's full stature/maturity. We are already "In Christ" and grow in the body in with the aim that the body would grow in all areas of spiritual life to become like Christ.
-Romans 8:39 ~ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son…

Head: -He identification of the head, the **authority** over the body:
-Ephesians 1:22-23 ~ And **He put all things in subjection under His feet**, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
-Later, a description of the body's **subjection** to the Head:
-Ephesians 5:23-24 ~ For the husband is the head of the wife, as **Christ also is the head of the church**, He Himself *being* the **Savior of the body**. 24 But as the **church is subject to Christ**, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.
-Likewise, his headship means **prominence, preeminence, and priority**:
-Colossians 1:18 ~ He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together**. 18 He is also **head of the body, the church**; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have **first place in everything**.
But in the context of Ephesians 4, his headship is one of **SOURCE** (7) and **GOAL** (15).[1] He supplies the joints that nourish one another.

Christ: The Head of the Church is the Christ.

[1] Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 567.

Hebrews 13:20-21 ~ **Now the God of peace**, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Jesus our Lord,

21 **equip you** in every good thing to do His will,
working in us that which is pleasing in His sight,
through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.

- These two verses show us He is the Savior, Shepherd, Sovereign, and Sanctifier of the church![2]
    - Identified as **the great Shepherd, Lord, and Christ**.
    - The head of the body leads, feeds, cares, protects.
    - The head of the body accomplished the church's salvation through his life-**blood**.
    - The head of the body equips us in order to do His will
    - The head of the body works in us the accomplishment of a life pleasing to Him.
    - The head of the body deserves all glory!

Summary: Jesus is the Head whom we imitate as the perfect example of maturity, and whom we submit to as our source and sovereign Lord.

We grow up to his full measure of maturity

We grow up because he supplies and enables growth.

We grow up according to his Lordship over our lives corporately and individually.

DISCUSSION

- Given last week's sermon on the task of the church to make disciples…
    - by His authority,
    - (going, baptizing, teaching),
    - and with His presence
        - …how does the church actively relate to the head?
- What are the blind spots for churches in being faithful to this task that might cause us to forget the source of our ability to grow, the standard of our growth, and his leadership?
- Are there ways MBC can grow in Delighting in God's Son?

[2] John MacArthur, chapter 4, "The Head", *The Master's Plan for the Church,* 76-82.