

HOW CHRIST BUILDS A MATURE CHURCH

Ephesians 4:7-16

INTRODUCTION: Spiritual maturity is not automatic, and it's not individualistic. In Ephesians 4:7–16 Paul shows how the risen Christ gives grace-gifts, raises up ministry leaders, and then uses every believer to build a strong, united, truth-grounded body. This passage answers how we move from merely gifted people to a genuinely grown church.

I. GRACE-GIFTS TO EVERY BELIEVER *vv.7-10*

A. Grace is personally measured out by Christ. *v.7*

1. Grace is extended to each one as no believer is excluded from Christ's gifting. *1 Peter 4:10*
2. Christ is the one who makes the determination as to what ministry gift is given. *v.7, Galatians 5:13*
3. These gifts flow out of Christ's abundance and generosity. *v.7*

B. Christ's victory authorizes His giving of gifts. *vv.8-9*

1. His ascension into heaven was a victorious procession. *v.8, Psalm 68:18*
2. As the conquering King, He leads those who were held captive by sin into the realm of righteousness. *Romans 6:18*
3. It is from this place of triumph that He then distributes gifts as He wills.

C. Christ's descent and ascent established His lordship. *vv.9-10*

1. When it states that He that descended into the lower regions, it is a reference to Hades. *Luke 16:23-31*
2. The ascent into heaven is a literal transport of His glorified body. *Acts 1:9, Philippians 3:20-21*
3. Christ now fills the universe with His rule, life, and presence. *Colossians 2:9-10*

II. MINISTRY LEADERS TO EQUIP THE CHURCH vv.11-12

A. Christ Himself gives the ministry gifts. v.11

1. The first gift he mentions is that of the apostles who are sent to lay the foundation of doctrine in newly planted churches.
2. He then mentions prophets who speak forth God's heart to strengthen, encourage and comfort the believers. *Acts 15:32*
3. He then mentions the evangelists who focus on sharing the gospel, while the Pastors and teachers are focused on nurturing the body of Christ. *v.11*

B. For the purpose of equipping the saints. v.12

1. The duty of the fivefold ministry is to make the church fully functional.
2. The saints are the ones who are to do the work of the ministry. *Romans 12:4-8*
3. The work of the ministry serves to build others up in their walk with Jesus. *Hebrews 10:24, Colossians 3:23*

C. The goal of building up the body of Christ. v.12

1. The church is Christ's body which is in living union with Christ as the head. *Romans 16:17-18*
2. "Building up" implies growth, not only numerically, but more importantly in spiritual maturity and stability. *1 Corinthians 11:1*
3. Every gift given contributes to the overall growth of the church. *Romans 14:19*

III. A MATURE, UNITED, TRUTH GROUNDED CHURCH vv.13-16

A. The aim is unity and maturity in Christ. v.13

1. The believers are unified in Christ through a shared trust in Jesus and growth in their relationship with Him. *John 17:23*
2. The goal is complete maturity (perfection), which flows from our right knowledge of Christ. v.13, *Philippians 3:9-11*
3. Christ is the standard and fullness we are growing into.

B. The contrast between immaturity and doctrinal stability. v.14

1. We are not to be like children who can be easily swayed and unsettled. *Hebrews 5:12-13*
2. Without solid maturity, a believer is subject to false teachings based on the latest fads. v.14
3. Paul recognizes that false teachers can often be persuasive through deceitful schemes. *Romans 16:18*

C. The process of every part working properly. vv.15-16

1. By speaking the truth in love, it will lead to growth and maturity in Christ. v.15, *Luke 6:45*
2. Emphasis is placed upon Jesus to whom we are all joined together. v.16, *Matthew 16:16-18*
3. When every part of the body is functioning properly, the church will grow. v.16

CONCLUSION: Christ Himself is building His church. He has saved us, gifted us, and set leaders in place so that every believer is equipped to serve. As each part does its work—speaking truth in love, resisting immaturity, and staying centered on Jesus—the body grows strong, united, and mature. Let's offer our gifts to Him and let Christ grow this church His way.