

Title: No Longer Tossed About!

Text: Ephesians 4:14-16

Take your Bibles, please, and turn with me to the book of Ephesians. The book of Ephesians chapter 4 beginning with Vs 14. (READ VS 14-16)

PRAYER

Now, we are studying one of the most practical and important issues that confronts the church today. And that is UNITY. Not unity in the sense of all denominations coming together ~~into~~ ^{into} one big Church. But unity within the local congregation so that our testimony to the people of Alameda will remain strong and vital.

Now, for those of you who might be visiting, today, I am not suggesting that there is dis-unity here at First Baptist Church. That is not true. We are not in dis-unity. There is a strong bond of unity and fellowship within our church. We are studying this passage so that we might know and understand the principles of God's Word as it relates to Unity. And in knowing these principles and applying these ~~our~~ ^{principles} ~~our~~ ^{our} lives and our witness will be stronger.

JR With this in mind, let me review what we have studied so far ^{about unity}

First of all, in Verses 1 thru 4 we looked at Paul's encouragement to have Unity within the church. "We need ^{to} to walk in a manner worthy of our calling."

Then, secondly, Paul discussed the ESSENTIALS OF UNITY: ^{which are} One body, one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and father of us all.

Then, last Sunday, we ^{begin} looked at the PURPOSE OF UNITY as Paul spelled that out in verses 11 through 16. Why: has God given to the church gifted leaders.

(10) WHY? ... WHAT IS THE REASON? ... TO? EQ? VS. 12--- "To equip or edify the believer for the work of ministry. SO, THE PURPOSE OF UNITY---is edification, ^{edification means "to build up"} ^{Building up} within the church. And edification is accomplished, according to Vs 13, through the "unity of the faith"(that is the Word of God), and through the "knowledge of the Son of God".

The result of edification is MATURITY (as it says-mature man) maturity in living the christian life. *Now That's where we left off last Sunday.*

(2D) Today, I want to come to Vs 14 and the problems we face in edification.

WHY DON'T PEOPLE GET BUILT UP? WHY ARE SO MANY CHRISTIAN STRUGGLING AND HAVING PROBLEMS LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE? WHY DO SOME PEOPLE SEEM LONELY AND ISOLATED; and very little growth taking place in their life?.....WHY?.....

Well, Vs 14 tells us why...."as a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, and the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming."

From this verse, let me share with you three problems we face.

(1E) First, and this is obvious, --immaturity - Immature Christians

Paul says in Vs 14, "we are no longer to be children." This word "children" refers to a young child without clear speech. It is talking about a toddler in age.

How many of you have..or remember when you had...a toddler in your home? LET'S SEE YOUR HANDS.....O.K.....

We could have a testimonial meeting here this morning. You could all come up and describe the intelligent level of a toddler.

MAN!.....Toddlers are wonderful, aren't they? I mean, they are so quick to obey!.....right!.....

And they never get into anything.....Especially after you tell them to stay out of something....

Have you ever meet a mother who has been talking with toddlers all week? Now, that is an experience.....

It reminds me of a Father of a toddler who was having trouble teaching his toddler. And when I talk with him I discovered that he had a wrong view about where his toddler was coming from. Because he was sitting his little toddler down and hoping that he would stay still for 30 minutes while he taught him the Word of God.

Well, in two minutes he was ready to do something else. That is a toddler.

And They don't have effective speech..They can't put words together into sentences. Oh, they say certain words that we all know they say...ⁿ"NO" is a good example. But, they can't put words together into sentences.

✓ You know, a lot of ^{Christians} believers are like that? They can't put it together. I mean, they know a little bit here, and a little bit there. And they speak here and they speak there. But, they can't put it together in a unified manner ^{with} and understanding. They can't see the big picture of God's plan and purpose. ^{Do you understand} ~~You see,~~ maturity and knowledge does effect our ability to build other people up. It does.

Dear friends, I encourage you. If you are a new babe in Christ don't worry. It is going to come. Just keep growing in the Word. Keep hungry and thirsting after God's Word.

But, if you are kind-off past the baby stage, but tossing around a little bit, I encourage you, again, to go back to God's Word. Get into it daily in your life. Recognize that you can't really minister to people until you get your own act together. If you are unsettled, and you are not really persecuted about key principles and key doctrines in the Christiana life, HOW WILL YOU EVER CARE FOR SOMEONE ELSE? ^{Contact others if you don't know how to} You will be giving off wrong advise and wrong opinions. Instead of sharing what God's Word really says.

It doesn't take a Bible school or a theological understanding. It doesn't take many, many years. But it takes a discipline that stays with it for awhile. That really gets it together. That really seeks to know what God is saying. What are the principles of growth? How can I really begin to grow in the Lord? How can I understand what God wants me to be to others?

IMMATURITY IS A BIG PROBLEM. ^{in the church today}

(2) There is a second problem that we face. This problem deals with instability in dealing with false teaching. He describes it with a nautical term: the word "tossed." Any sailor knew what this meant. "Tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine."

The phrase "carried about" is our word for "hurricanes." It means "carried about in circles."

So, what Paul is staying is: that if you listen to false teaching it will cause you to run around in circles. And you don't really know what is right and what is wrong.

When we are not strong in the Lord...when we are not ministering to ~~each other~~, it is easy for a ~~babe~~ ^{Christian} to get lost under the false teaching that is coming hot and heavy. Whether it is over the T.V., or over the radio, or what he reads, or what some ~~friend~~ ^{person} shares with him. It is easy to be misled by false teaching. Because, dear friends, it is every where.

You cannot go through a week of normal life, here in the Bay area, without being exposed, constantly, to false teaching.

Sometimes when I see it and I try to absorb the content ~~intendence~~ and the extent of it, I often say in my heart with a certain grief, "HOW IN THE WORLD ARE THE BABES IN THE LORD GOING TO SURVIVE THIS?"

And again, the answer is, because Christians who love the Lord and are growing in their faith know that they have a responsibility to other brothers and sisters. Until we involve ourselves in other people's lives, we will not be the built in protection that God has designed against ~~all~~ false teaching. Until a brother who is confronted with false teaching can get a whole of a friend who loves Christ and find out what is this, if he has to fend for himself, he is open prey to false teaching. (Phase)

I cannot begin to tell you of the case histories of people who have been lost to cultic and false teaching because there was no believer ministering to them.

OH, the common answer is: "Way don't you go and ask the Pastor!" Dear friends, that is unrealistic. Growth will never happen in the body of Christ if that is the way we handle it...

If we believe that only the few Pastors that we have ministering to the multitude of people that some how are going to do the job of building us all up, we are going to have a weak, unhealthy, church in reaching people for Christ. I believe that.

True, the Pastor ^{should} who dedicated himself to teaching God's Word and never gets away from it. He must offer spiritual smorgasbord every Sunday. And you pick what you need.

But, my dear friends, edification, according to these verses, happens because the believers, themselves, having been equipped in hearing God's Word start to minister.

People need you, whether you know it or not. And you need people, whether you accept that or not.

Much of the reason as to why we ~~don't grow and why~~ people are easily persuaded by false teaching is because we have not bound our hearts together to minister and help each other in times of need. And this has got to happen, dear friends, to a greater extend then it is. If it doesn't happen our grow ⁱⁿ individual and corporately, will be hurt. Our maturity ^{is thus} will be limited. Our being what Jesus wants us to be will be stopped. And we will cease to function.

INSTABILITY? Are we like that? Every wind of doctrine blowing our way causes us to be tossed here and there by wavaes. Are we still questioning basic doctrines? Q Still questioning baisic christian living. The mature Christian can handle it.

But, there are many babes in the Lord. And there are those growing in the Lord who are not sure of all of this. ..ARE WE SURE? Or, our we like the Lady who siad recently to a new Christian..."WELL, DON"T WORRY, IN TIME YOU WILL UNDERSTAND."

OH, my friend, don't you ever say that to someone. If you don't know, then direct them to some mataure believer who does. There is false teaching on every hand. And we need to know what the Bible says.

(3 E) And a third problem is the inability to discern motives and deceitful practices in False Teachers

"I have heard folks tell me about people that I know are nothing more than false teachers. They proclaim their praises. They fall down and worship them and say "NO! THAT COULD NOT BE TRUE OF THEM."

OH, my friends, listen. The Bible says "have no confidence in the flesh." PERIOD! The UNITY of this church is not what this preacher says. IF IT IS NOT THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE, IT IS NOT IMPORTANT WHAT THIS PREACHER SAYS OBPOSED TO WHAT SOME OTHER PREACHER SAYS.

The important thing is the BIBLE, ITSELF. It is a maturity which is a maturity of "The Faith" and the knowledge of the Son of God. We will all be deceived, if we follow people. Our loyalty and our dedication is to be to Jesus Christ and ^{his word} ~~this book~~. We ought to be like the Berean Christians ever time we hear somebody teach--"to search the Scriptures daily to see if those things are so."

People says.. "Doesn't this threaten your position?" Are you kidding.. Listen, folks, Pastors come and go and they die and they move on. But the body of Christ stays here ministering to one another and this community. And ^{you} ~~they~~ must learn that the maturity, the unity that we have is in THE WORD OF GOD, AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR. That is our protection...We cannot just follow people. We know the trackadies of that in our day, don't we?

The Bible says in verse 14 that it is by "the trickery of men." That is the Greek word for our English word "dice". And it is referring to "dice cubes". What he is saying is: that some people play the dice. Like the well dressed gambler who can take the immature young gambler to the clearners. Because he doesn't know what he is doing.

What he is saying here is that these false teachers and teachings come by diece playing...trackery. of men..They are smarter then you are. They are able to persuade you and to make you think that they are all right.

He says that it is "by craftiness in deceitful scheming." The word "scheming" is our english word "method." It points out that they are not doing this just accidentally. It is by direct plan and direct methods of deceitf.

Dear friends, did you know that there are all kinds of methods to make the average person respond? There are people who can program you to respond anyway they want you to. They offer us things...They tell emotional stories.. And make it sound good...

People ^{love} told me that my invitations should be more emotional...make people feel guilty...then they will come forward and join the church.

Listen, freinds,...it is God who brings a person to himself. And when God brings that person to himself --then he will be truly saved...He ^{will} not ~~fall~~ away...He will not just be a name on the church rolls. It is ~~just~~ The Holy Spirit who brings people unto Jesus.

Friends, I think we need to wake up to what this text is saying. Many are being led astray and influenced by the trickery and the craftiness of men who are scheming and playing to deceive us.

By the way, they always look good. @ Corinthians tells us that they can even transform themselves as though they were apostles of Christ and angels of light

I warn you, dear friends, in christian love, we had better ^{remember} find out what the purpose ^{of} edification is : And that is unity and maturity in the Word of God and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, And wholed on to it. And never lose our ^{service} ~~deserve~~ to learn God's truth. And to know Jesus more today than I knew him yesterday.

To keep our eyes off of people. Oh, we need to thank God for our leaders if they are loyal to the Word. But, boy, if they get away from the Word, then ^{we} ought to draw the line. No matter how wonderful they are...no matter how sweet sounding or loving, if they do not believe God's Word, that is where we draw the line. The devil is a ~~very~~ master of deceit. And he can deceive us with sweet sounding words.

As 2 Peter 2 so beautifully describes...(read it some time).

3D) Let's look, now, at the process of edification. How does edification really happen within the church?

We know we need gifted leaders to equip us. We know we must ^{minister to} use ~~our gifts~~. in order that we all maybe built up. ^{dedicated} But, what is the process?

(1E)

Vs 15 gives us the main ingredient. And ~~Paul is not a trickster.~~

After telling us about the trickery and craftiness of men and the problem of being immature. It is interesting in Vs 15 that ^{Paul} starts with the word "BUT"....You see, it is a word of contrast to Vs 14.

"BUT" here is how real christian edification takes place. Not smooth words...not deceitful methods...not false teaching. But here is how edification really takes place: SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

And dear friends, I was really strick by that. That is the heart and soul of HOW TO DO GOOD EDIFICATION.

HOW DO I DO IT? The word "speaking the truth" is simple the word "PROVE" in Greek. We would say.."proving in love."

The emphases is not on my ~~speaking~~ ^{word},..You see, a lot of us say, "Well, I don't speak very well, so how can I share with my friends."

He doesn't even use that. He says "proving in love." *"Doing in love"*

How, dose edification take place? Well, not by tricking people and lieing to them and being decietful. That isn't building anyone up. WE BUILD ONE ANOTHER UP BY SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE. - *Encourage them - using words of Praise*

Look at Vs 25 of this 4th chapter of Ephesians .."Speak truth, each one of you, with His neighbor. WHY?...FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER."

You see, we are all in this ball game together. And when we lie to another brother or siser, we are really lieing to ourselves. SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE....I see two great dangers here.

(1) One, some people refuse to speak the truth. Maybe because of the fear of rejection. Insecurity in their own life. You don't really want to tell people what the truth is. You keep hiding behind that mask. We all put mask on at times, don't we?

A person ask.."What do I have to do to come to your church?" I thought he was pulling my leg or something. He was talking about how he should dress.

And I said..."Just like you are. You look fine."

How do we handle a situation when we know a barother or sister is wrong. And we hesitate to tell the truth because of a fear of rejection. Fear of what jpeople will think of us.

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And yet God says "prove always in love." Proving in love. Speak the truth. And there is a danger of not confronting people.

Proverbs 27 says "better is open revuke than love that is concealed." ?Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy."

We can some times be deceitful and not really build each other up. By giving a warm embrass and a kiss on the check. But in reality ^{we} have deceitful motives in our heart. Because we refuse to deal with an issue.

Confront! Not much of it going on. Iron sharpens iron as a man's friend does his countenance. The ability to say to someone "it is not right what you are doing." But to say it with a compassionite heart that really wants jto save that person, not destroy him or shame him. That is why it must be in private, not in public. You go in private to brothers and sisters. Protecting them. For love covers a mulitude of sins. But we must also be willing to deal with it. And not to shar it with other people. "A wispher will separate close friends."

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Do we want to grow together? Do we want to see lives built in the Lord? Do we want to see our growth expand greater than we have ever seen in the history of our church? THEN WE MUST HAVE THE MAIN INGREDIENT. WE MUST SPEAK THE TRUTH---BUT IN LOVE.

If there is a danger of not confronting--there is a greater danger of not doing it in love.

There are some people who just love telling others the truth. And they love to do it in public/ You know..someone walks up and ask: "HOW DO YOU LIKE MY NEW DRESS?" "That is the wrost thing that I have ever seen in my life."

Perhaps you are right. But it wasn't said in love. And it hurts. Some times you can tell people what they need to hear. But there is no love there. And thus it doesn't minister and it doesn't build up. YOU MUST LOVE PEOPLE. AND YOU MUST EARN THE RIGHT TO TELL THEM WHAT YOU TELL THEM. We have not right to tear someone down with our words.

2 ED

Do you speak the truth in love? Do you really love people? That is the main ingredient. AND THE MAIN ILLUSTRATION IS THE BODY, AGAIN.

This is something that Paul uses throughout Ephesians. And I want you to notice it again. Vs 15.. "Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, ^{the} ~~the~~ being fitted and held together by that which 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.

I want you to notice two things here...about this illustration of the body. (1^F) First, the position of the head. You can't really minister to people until Jesus is number one in your life.....DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Everything you say is weak, if Jesus is not Lord of your life. Is he Lord of everything you are and have? HE IS HEAD. It is a standard. Because Vs 15 says .."WE ARE TO GROW UP IN ALL ASPECTS(or with respect to the head."

You see, he is the standard of our growth. Do you want to know how you are growing. Then always measure ~~the~~ yourself in relationship to Christ. And that principle takes you back to Vs 13 again.

~~But~~ ^{Jesus} is also the source from whom all growth takes place. Vs 16 says.. "From whom"...literally..."out of whom the whole body" functions. You cannot function, believer to believer, without Jesus...

You cannot do it. A lot of us think we can. A lot of people think they can minister and counselor others without ever using the Word of God or mentioning Jesus. And that is nothing more then ^{humanist} ~~humanitarian~~ interest.

Listen, without Jesus there is no real spiritual growth. No real edification takes place. THE POSITION OF THE HEAD. That simply means that Jesus is number one. In relationship to the opinions of a thousand people, Jesus is our standard. THE QUESTION IS: What does Jesus think of what I am doing? That dear friends, is the key issue.

(2^F) And the second thing that I want you to notice is the place of every individual part in ministry. Nobody is unimportant. Every body is needed. One is missing..there is something missing in the process.

Don't say as a believer. "I don't have any gifts. I am not needed." That is not true. You may not have come to realize what your gifts are, but you are needed. The Bible already states that. So I can say it strongly.

YOU ARE NEEDED...The place of every joint in every part of the body. Think of your human body. Every joint..every bone..every muscel...all fitted together properly so that your human body functions correctly.

That is also true of the church. Every member of this church has a place and a functiogn. And Christ is trying to fit us together so that we function correctly....And when we permit that to happen, Oh, dear friends, you are going to see growth like you have never seen it before.

Do we want this to happen? If you say Yes.... Then count yourself important and need and start functioning.....

And the key to this happening is developing a NEW ATTITUDE. Do you know what your attitude should be?....

I WILL SEEK TO MINISTER TO OTHER...LIKE JESUS MINISTERED TO OTHERS...That will be my goal. NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO....BUT TO MINISTER TO OTHERS. And dear friends, each of us will do a beter job for the Lord, when we have the ministry of others in our lives. We start ministering to one anothe... We care for the sick....We do not forget our SHUT-INS...WE CARE WHEN PEOPLE STOP COMING...WE FIND OUT WAY...WE PRAY SINCERELY FOR THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF ONE ANOTHER...IF OUR NEEDS ARE NOT BEING MET, SO WHAT, WE SEEK TO MET OTHERS...~~When~~ you try to live the christian life adone, thinking that you can handle life by yourself, you are wrong. And you are in trouble. WE ALL NEED ONE ANOTHER. Everyone is important.

(4D) And this brings us to the intent behind ^{edificator} ~~all of this~~. IT IS GROWTH-- certainly. Vs 16 says, "it causes the growth of the body" When everyone is functioning...everyone is properly related to Jesus as Lord of all...everyone is unitfied around the Word of God and the knowledge of Jesus Christ...everyone is dealing with problem correctly based on maturity and speaking the truth in love...WHEN WE ARE ALL FUNCTIONING TOGETHER__WHAT HAPPENS? We Grow!
~~WE BUILD UP OURSELVES~~..."IN...LOVE.."

out The intent! Is it love or growth? Well, it is both! Growth and love.

I think this teaches us something. Do you know what the greatest thing of all is in your life? Oh, you can search all your life for what you believe is the big deal.....

But, God has already told us what the greatest thing in life is...
The greatest thing of all.....LOVE.....

Now, you have it! Certainly it is the greatest if you know the Lord.
If you don't know the Lord, you haven't got it. But once you know the Lord,
WHAT IS THE GREATEST THING OF ALL? WHAT IS THE HIGH POINT..WHAT IS THE
HIGHEST POINT IN GROWTH AND MATURITY? It is love.

And isn't it interesting that the growth process is in love. Knowledge
is important. But knowledge makes us arrogant says I Corinthians 8:1. But
Only love edifies.

You see, you cannot love without knowledge. Did you notice how Paul connects
the two? But if you have the knowledge without the Love ~~there~~ ^{there} is no edification
You are not built up.

Truth..Yes..We need to know. But if it is not in love, it doesn't happen.
We are not encouraged, we are not built up. ^{and} We don't become the people that
God wants us to be.

WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING? Paul wrote that the greatest thing of all is LOVE.
And he said to a carnal church seeking spiritual gifts to seek the greatest
gift which is LOVE. *I hope that is your desire - To Love even as*

Shall we close in prayer

Christ loves you.