

Ephesians 4:2-16

Introduction

- I. Theme: Growing up together in Christ
- II. Analogy: The body of Christ is to be a like an orchestra
 - 1. We pursue unity: learn how to play as a group
 - 2. We acknowledge diversity: we play different instruments
 - 3. The goal of all of this is maturity: learning to play beautiful music together

The Passage

I. Ephesians 4:13-15

A. Verse 13: Growing in Maturity

- 1. moving towards unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God
 - a. “faith” = the object of our faith = gospel message
= the body of truth found in Scripture focused on Christ
 - b. “knowledge of the Son of God”
Not just intellectual knowledge but also personal/relational knowledge
- 2. moving towards “the mature man”
 - a. mature (Gk: “telos”) = complete, end goal towards which something moves (Example: the telos of an acorn is a tree)
 - b. mature “man”
Together we are like one man, one body, not a bunch of individuals. V. 13 says until “we all” reach the faith. No one is to be left behind. Maturity is the goal for every Christian. There are no “second-tier Christians.”
- 3. moving towards the whole measure of the fullness of Christ
 - a. The “fullness of Christ” = all that Christ is (especially his moral character: love, joy, peace, courage, patience, etc)
 - b. So, we are to grow towards being more and more like Christ in those
 - c. We are to grow up and become like Christ in “all respects” (v. 15)
 - 1) We should have the head/mind of Christ
 - 2) We should have the heart of Christ
 - 3) We should have the hands of Christ
 - d. Orchestra Analogy
Jesus is the opus (e.g. Beethoven’s 5th) and we are the orchestra learning how to play him as well as possible.
Jesus is also the conductor teaching us how to play him

B. Verse 14: Maturity put negatively

- 1. No longer infants
 - a. Infants are unstable and easily deceived
 - b. Spiritual infants are the same
- 2. Tossed about/blown hear and there
 - a. What waves/winds of teaching are out there today that we have to contend with: prosperity gospel, relativism, materialism, spiritualism, etc

C. Verse 15: Maturity put positively

II. Cultural forces that fight against maturity and growth in Christ-likeness

A. Consumerism

1. The consumer avoids the long, hard, consistent work of real maturity, wanting only to get his/her immediate needs and cravings met.
 - a. examples: Bible reading, marriage, leaning into conflict
 - b. Instead we need to take the path of “a long obedience in the same direction” (Eugene Peterson)

B. Individualism

1. The individualist may be willing to work hard, but doesn’t have a vision for the larger community

III. Truth and Love: The Key context where authentic maturity grows

A. “Truthing in love”: Where truth is experienced in the context of loving relationships

B. Experiencing the truth about God and his purposes/desires in context of love

1. John 8: woman caught in adultery: “Neither do I condemn you. Now go and leave your life of sin.”
2. We need spiritual friends in our lives willing to say the hard truth to us but from a place of love and grace

C. Experiencing the truth of ourselves/our own brokenness in context of love

1. John 4: woman at a well: “Go call your husband.” Her brokenness was exposed but in the context of love
2. We need to have relationships where we can be totally honest and broken and be loved and accepted in the midst of our bad.

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. How did the image of the body of Christ as an orchestra strike you? How did it cause you to think differently about yourself or the community? What did it encourage you to do differently, if anything?
3. Paul encourages us to see the goal of our lives as being to grow up to be more and more like Jesus in all respects. What’s an area in your own life where you’d love to grow in maturity in this next season (for example: growing with respect to your head, heart, or hands).
4. Where do you see the mindset of consumerism influencing your faith in ways that are unhelpful to growing to be more like Christ?
5. As you consider Paul’s image of “truthing in love” (v. 15), how is your support group/ small group doing in that area? Where would you like to see growth, if at all? Talk to each other about that.