

Ephesians 4:13-16

Our lesson for the day will focus on v. 13-14 but before we turn our attention to these two verses, I would like to briefly mention the connection between v. 15-16 with v. 1-6. The theme of unity in Christ is clear and abundant in chapter 4. Paul grounds his commands and his expectations in this conviction that Jesus has died so that we can be reconciled to God and one another. The result of this reconciliation is a deep-seated, unceasing unity. Which means that the ideas presented in v. 13-14 are given in the context of unity!

I bring this up because I want to try to help us dispel this odd belief that doctrine divides the body. Doctrine DOES divide the body from the world. The Gospel of Christ demands a response, those who confess Him as Lord will experience alienation from a world that refuses Him. Nevertheless, within the body of Christ, the effect of faithful, biblical and doctrinal teaching is unity.

1. The desired personal effect

- a. Notice here that Paul says that the consequence of faithful teaching is maturity
- b. Using the language of Hebrews 5, solid teaching serves as “solid food” which helps mature us in the faith
- c. The primary reason why so many believers are immature in our world today can be directly tied to poor, “Bible light” preaching and teaching!
- d. What passes as profound or “encouraging” or “relevant” in our moment in culture is often nothing but trivial and surface level
 - i. Just as a person who does not eat will not physically mature, so a Christian who is not regularly brought to the pantry of God will not be spiritually mature

2. The beautiful result

- a. Why does maturity matter? One reason is that we must be anchored in a stormy world
- b. Paul says that those who are rooted in the truth will not be “tossed to and fro” by every wave of doctrine
 - i. Notice that the great enemy here is not emotion but “doctrine”
 - ii. What does this mean?
 1. What Paul is highlighting here is that all society is undergirded by some belief system
 2. The doctrine of the world takes on several forms
 - a. Materialism
 - b. Hedonism

- c. Fame
- d. Sensuality
- e. Legalism

3. These worldviews are not devoid of doctrine, they are full of poor, unbiblical doctrine!

- c. Paul calls our attention to the fact that these doctrines can knock us for a loop!
 - i. They can captivate our minds and hearts and lead us to actions and pursuits that will veer us further and further off course
- d. The effect of faithful, doctrinal teaching is realized in a person who is immovable in the face of these doctrines
 - i. The world may try to shake us, and it often makes such advances, but the healthy church is not fazed
 - 1. In our world today, the world has attempted to motivate the church to:
 - a. Political activism
 - b. Woke ideology
 - c. Charitable pursuits without the proclamation of the truth
 - d. Self-help seminars and the like
 - ii. The only antidote we have to such nonsense is the abiding and enduring presence of the Word
- e. This leads to a very important observation about our practice here at Smyrna...
 - i. Some might wonder why we preach and teach through books of the Bible
 - ii. The answer is that we desire conversion and maturity and that development only comes through the preached Word of God
 - 1. You don't need a contrived word from Aaron or Robert, you need the unadulterated, pure, nourishing Word of God
 - 2. The effect of this Word is realized all around you
 - 3. Our church is far from perfect, but many of her members are maturing and this bodes well for the spread of the Gospel, the unity of the saints and, therefore, the glory of God