

“Building the Body Through Faith!”

1 Corinthians 13:13; Ephesians 4:11-16

Intro. – Our Lord wants the Church of Christ at Eaton to grow – to be a thriving church in this area intent upon doing nothing more AND nothing less than His will. Gimmicks are not in the game plan. We must desire Biblical principles whereby we can be assured the Body of Christ will be built up!

In our text Paul states the work of the church’s leadership to be that of “equipping” the saints. This word comes from the Greek word *καταρτῖδω* – a word used in medicine today for “setting a broken limb or putting a joint back into place.” Elsewhere in the New Testament, the same word is used to describe the mending of nets (Mark 1:19), and the discipling of an offender until they are ready to take their place within the work and fellowship of the church (Galatians 6:1). Thus, the basic thrust of this word is the putting of a thing or a person into the condition in which they OUGHT to be!

It is the purpose and function of leadership then to educate, guide, care for and to seek after those who have gone astray. In short, the leadership is to *equip* the local church through *the faith!* The *one faith* Paul talks about earlier in our Ephesians text. *The faith* that Hebrew 11:6 tells us is absolutely necessary in order to please God. *The faith* Jude 3 tells us we are to *earnestly contend for!*

Brethren, if we’re going to build up the Body of Christ here at Christ’s Church in Eaton, we must do it by equipping ourselves with *faith!*

Purpose: to see how we are to build up the Body through faith

We’ll accomplish this by looking at what I would like to refer to as the “Triangle of Faith”. I believe we can build the Body through faith in the following three areas:

- I By Studying the Source of Faith
- II By Looking to the Object of Faith
- III By Using the Expression of Faith

I BY STUDYING THE SOURCE OF FAITH

A. What is that Source?

1. What it is not -- it is not an emotional experience... or gift instilled by God... or by living “naturally” (living close to nature)...
2. What it is
 - a. Romans 10:17 *“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”*
 - b. 2 Timothy 3:16,17 *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”*
 - 1) originates with God...
 - 2) profitable for all...
 - 3) adequate and equipped for all good works...

Thus, the source of faith is the WORD OF GOD. It is our sole source of authority. Where it speaks we must speak! Where it is silent, we must be silent!

B. What Will it Do?

1. Provide “unity of the faith”
 - a. not by overlooking one another’s differences or sins...
 - b. not by being more tolerant or politically active...
 - c. but by being equipped through God’s Word...
2. Provide knowledge of Jesus Christ...
3. Provide “mature men – a “complete man” is the main thrust...
4. Provide ability to detect/identify false doctrine...
 - a. there are so many “false teachers” about... best way know falsehood is to know TRUTH...

b. God's Word (alone!) is truth!!
Knowing this and more brethren we can't afford to treat the Bible lightly...

C. How Are We to Study?

- Illus. – backslidden member being called upon by the elders. Elders failed to bring their Bibles on purpose. After visiting awhile, the elders asked if they could use the people's Bible... Little boy told to bring "that book that Mommy adores." Boy returned with that book, Sears catalogue.
- fear this illustration is all too true – lack of knowing the Bible affects one in direct proportion in the application of the Bible to one's life. There is a great need of growing in Biblical knowledge!
- 1. Study together – Bible School... Bible Study... Youth Meetings... seize the opportunities!!
- 2. Study privately – an hour or two a week of study together is not going to be enough to grow as we should... count it a privilege to search the Scriptures on one's own!
 - 2 Timothy 2:15 "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*"

Thus, I present to you the source of faith in order to build up the Body of Christ here! The Bible!!

II BY LOOKING TO THE OBJECT OF FAITH

- in short this is not a wooden idol, nor is it a being that has come and gone. The object of faith, is the living Christ! Our text says we are to grow in all aspects unto Him. Why? Following will explain:
- A. His Life is Our Example
 - 1. He alone is the standard by which we must measure... if we're going to do the comparison thing it better be with Christ and not with one another...
 - 2. It must be realized that "None has or will live as He lived!"
- B. His Death is Our Redemption
 - 1. Roman 5:9 "*Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*"
 - 2. 1 Peter 2:24 "*He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by his wounds you were healed.*"
 - 3. It must be realized that "None died or will die as He died!"
- C. His Resurrection is Our Hope
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 15:16,17 "*For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.*"
 - 2. 1 Peter 1:3-5 "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*"
 - 3. Because of His resurrection we are promised the future is ours!

In view of these facts, we can't afford to take lightly the Lordship of Christ. We can't substitute anything (work... pleasure... family...) to take the place of Christ as Head? Hebrews 12:1-2 says, "...let us also lay aside the sin that encumbers us and run the race before us looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." If we're going to build up the Body here we must look unto the object of faith – Christ alone!!

III BY USING THE EXPRESSION OF FAITH

- in short our text and other passages speak of *the church* as being the expression of faith. This should come as no surprise in view of the importance of the Church to Christ (loved her dying for her); thus, we must better learn to use the expression of faith!
- A. In Worship

1. We need to meet about the Lord's Table – present consistently and partaking *worthy manner*...
2. Our singing – songs express our faith... one way you can personally participate... we certainly can grow in this area of our corporate worship...
3. Our praying – whether publicly giving or listening we need to be more involved...
4. Our giving – expressing our confidence and desire to see the gospel proclaimed not only here but around the world!... i.e. practice faithful stewardship – barometer of our growth in Christ...
5. Consistent, daily living – worship is a verb and it always active not passive in Scripture!

B. In Fellowship

1. Vital part of our faith in Christ involves are urging one another on to love and good works!
1. Far more than sharing meal and having recreation time together – fellowship is learned and appreciated by serving the Lord together in the trenches...

C. In Service

- our Ephesians text states the church is to function as a whole body with Christ as Head... James 2 speaks of faith without works being dead; thus, a church without faith *that* works is like a dead body – there may be a lot of parts but nothing is getting accomplished:
 1. The need is there – a sin affected and torn world desperately needs *the truth*
 2. The commitment has already been made – upon becoming a Christian = live not unto self but X!
 2. The opportunities are here – the ways we can express our faith in Christ through the local church are endless!

Conclusion: On December 31, 1977, an Eastern Airlines Boeing 727 landed with the nose gear up. All on board narrowly escaped death. At fault was one little pin which holds the latch locking the nose gear in place.

Let this illustrate what Paul meant in our text (v 16), when he states growth of the Body comes when each part is properly working. Brethren, I present to you, unless we're growing and developing in *the faith* we as a Body of Christ cannot be working properly. How then can we build up the body? We can through faith!

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