

Building Up Christians

January 26, 2022

Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-16

Summary: Our Purpose - Building Up Christians

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In the 2nd chapter of Acts, the church in Jerusalem began on the Day of Pentecost with 3,000 members, & by the 4th chapter it had grown to 5,000 men, not counting women & children.

The Bible tells us that the Lord was adding to the church daily "those who were being saved."

It was a growing church, & they had a concern.

"How do we take care of all these new Christians?"

ILL. THE BABY; One of the most exciting times in life is when a baby is born. The parents rejoice, & we all "ooh" & "ah" over it. Then they take the baby home, & reality sets in. They're changing diapers & losing sleep & trying to figure out what's wrong with the crying child. The joy of new birth is followed by the responsibility of caring for & raising that child.

It's the same way in the church. People come to the Lord & we rejoice.

But then comes the responsibility of bringing these young Christians up in the Lord.

Who is going to nurture them?

Who is going to teach them & pray with them? Who is going to counsel them?

Who is going to encourage them?

The early church evidently did a fairly good job of that, because we read in Acts 2:42 that these early Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching & fellowship, in the breaking of bread & prayers."

You see, there is a second part to our purpose, & that is to nurture, to build up the Christians, to help them be all that they can be in this life.

B. With that in mind, listen to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ—

16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

That is an important passage, & I hope you noticed some of the key words & phrases like "service," "unity," "mature," "no longer infants," & "building each other up."

PROP. Let's talk about that, about "building each other up" & growing as Christians.

I. IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE GROW AS CHRISTIANS

A. First of all, it is vitally important that we grow as Christians because a growing Christian is less vulnerable to temptation.

Just as Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness following His baptism, when you give your heart & soul to Jesus, Satan will attack you, too.

ILL. Jesus told a parable about wheat & weeds (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). He said that a farmer went out & sowed good seed. But that night the evil one came & sowed weed seeds, & they started growing, too. At first you couldn't tell the difference. But soon it became obvious that weeds were growing among the wheat.

So a servant suggested, "Let's pull up the weeds." But the master said, "No. If we do that we'll kill the wheat also. Let them grow side by side until the harvest. Then we'll separate the wheat from the weeds."

Now that parable gives an important truth, "Until the harvest, until Jesus comes, good & evil will be growing side by side in the world." And it's true.

We live in a world where evil is growing.

No one questions that.

Now here is the point, "If Christians are going to survive; good seed must be healthy & growing in our lives. If not, the weeds will choke it out.

B. Again, it is vitally important that we grow as Christians, because growing Christians are full of joy.

If you're grumbling & complaining, if you're not joyful in the Lord, it is probably a strong indication that you're not growing in the Lord.

On the other hand, growing Christians are excited about what the Lord is doing.

Growing Christians are joyful Christians.

C. It is also important that we grow because growing Christians are willing Christians.

The growing Christian says, "Sure, I'll be an usher. Sure, I'll help set up the chairs & tables. I'll help clean up the kitchen. I'll teach the class. I'll be glad to do whatever needs to be done."

And whenever the offering comes, they contribute, not because their arms have been twisted, or because there is an insufficiency.

They give because they love God, & they're growing in their faith.

They give with a joyful heart because they're part of the most important work on the face of the earth. The Lords Work

D. Finally, we need to grow because growing Christians will have a faith that doesn't collapse in a time of crisis.

How deep is your faith?

In the parable of the sower, Jesus said that some seed fell in shallow soil. At first, the seed gave every sign of life. But then worries & troubles came, & since it had no roots it withered & died.

There are a lot of people who flirt with Christianity. They have a shallow faith, & whenever something tragic happens, their faith withers & dies.

Jesus States in Matthew 7:24-27 how we are to build on a solid foundation.

ILL. Maybe the doctor has told you that you have a terminal illness. Or maybe the one you love most in life just died. Or maybe you're having trouble in your family, or maybe you lost your job, & you're not sure what the future holds. Is your faith deep enough to see you through all that?

SUM. You see, if we have a deep & growing faith, nothing that happens in this life will be able to uproot us. So it is vitally important that we grow as Christians. And here are 3 things that help us grow as Christians.

II. SOME WAYS THAT WE CAN GROW AS CHRISTIANS

A. #1 We can grow by studying God's Word together. If you've been a Christian for 5 or 10 years, & all you know about the Bible is John 3:16, then you're still a spiritual baby, drinking milk, & it's time for you to grow up.

That is why we offer all kinds of opportunities to study the Word of God. We have Sunday Morning Service, Wednesday Night Bible Study, Women's fellowship & a variety of other studies from time to time. And more to come as we Grow

B. Secondly, we grow through close fellowship with other Christians.

The Word of God tells us many things to do for one another.

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We are to "bear one another's burdens."

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One of the dangers in a church is that people sometimes think that they're not needed.

There are opportunities to serve, & we encourage you to do that.

SOME OF THE EVIDENCE FOR GROWTH

Finally, how can you know whether or not you're a growing Christian?

What are some of the evidences of growth?

A. #1, Non-reliance on clergy. I almost didn't use that word. I didn't want you to think I'm something I'm not. Non-reliance on clergy.

Do you realize that a parent's responsibility when a child is born, is to help that child grow up, so that it can cope with life?

Finally, the day comes when that child leaves home & the parents, through tear-filled eyes, wave "good-bye." But they realize that this is what God called them to do.

It is the same way in the church.

If a church is going to grow, then there must be many ministries taking place, & the Christian leader's responsibility, according to what Paul said in the words that we read tonight, is to "build one another up, so that each can do his or her part."

We're mature when we can worship the Lord, regardless who the preachers or leaders are,

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If there aren't any other conflicts - then we'll be in God's house.

But it is not a top priority. It's only something we do if it doesn't inconvenience us.

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We've failed to grasp the importance of this place & the One who meets us here,

What's going to happen when we come in His name? This is God's Sanctuary,

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I'm going to be here because this is a top priority in my life.

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Building Up Christians

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Summary: Our Purpose - Building Up Christians

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But then comes the responsibility of bringing these young Christians up in the Lord.

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You see, there is a second part to our purpose, & that is to nurture, to build up the Christians, to help them be all that they can be in this life.

B. With that in mind, listen to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

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PROP. Let's talk about that, about "building each other up" & growing as Christians.

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B. With that in mind, listen to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

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Building Up Christians

January 26, 2022

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Summary: Our Purpose - Building Up Christians

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But then comes the responsibility of bringing these young Christians up in the Lord.

Who is going to nurture them?

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The early church evidently did a fairly good job of that, because we read in Acts 2:42 that these early Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching & fellowship, in the breaking of bread & prayers."

You see, there is a second part to our purpose, & that is to nurture, to build up the Christians, to help them be all that they can be in this life.

B. With that in mind, listen to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

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That is an important passage, & I hope you noticed some of the key words & phrases like "service," "unity," "mature," "no longer infants," & "building each other up."

PROP. Let's talk about that, about "building each other up" & growing as Christians.

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A. First of all, it is vitally important that we grow as Christians because a growing Christian is less vulnerable to temptation.

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Now here is the point, "If Christians are going to survive; good seed must be healthy & growing in our lives. If not, the weeds will choke it out.

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If you're grumbling & complaining, if you're not joyful in the Lord, it is probably a strong indication that you're not growing in the Lord.

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C. It is also important that we grow because growing Christians are willing Christians.

The growing Christian says, "Sure, I'll be an usher. Sure, I'll help set up the chairs & tables. I'll help clean up the kitchen. I'll teach the class. I'll be glad to do whatever needs to be done."

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But then comes the responsibility of bringing these young Christians up in the Lord.

Who is going to nurture them?

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The early church evidently did a fairly good job of that, because we read in Acts 2:42 that these early Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching & fellowship, in the breaking of bread & prayers."

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B. With that in mind, listen to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

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Building Up Christians

January 26, 2022

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Summary: Our Purpose - Building Up Christians

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But then comes the responsibility of bringing these young Christians up in the Lord.

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B. With that in mind, listen to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

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That is an important passage, & I hope you noticed some of the key words & phrases like "service," "unity," "mature," "no longer infants," & "building each other up."

PROP. Let's talk about that, about "building each other up" & growing as Christians.

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A. First of all, it is vitally important that we grow as Christians because a growing Christian is less vulnerable to temptation.

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So a servant suggested, "Let's pull up the weeds." But the master said, "No. If we do that we'll kill the wheat also. Let them grow side by side until the harvest. Then we'll separate the wheat from the weeds."

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Now here is the point, "If Christians are going to survive; good seed must be healthy & growing in our lives. If not, the weeds will choke it out.

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The growing Christian says, "Sure, I'll be an usher. Sure, I'll help set up the chairs & tables. I'll help clean up the kitchen. I'll teach the class. I'll be glad to do whatever needs to be done."

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How deep is your faith?

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But then comes the responsibility of bringing these young Christians up in the Lord.

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B. With that in mind, listen to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

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& the more you look at Him, the more you read His Word, the more you'll grow to be like Him."

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Building Up Christians

January 26, 2022

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Summary: Our Purpose - Building Up Christians

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But then comes the responsibility of bringing these young Christians up in the Lord.

Who is going to nurture them?

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B. With that in mind, listen to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

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PROP. Let's talk about that, about "building each other up" & growing as Christians.

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Now here is the point, "If Christians are going to survive; good seed must be healthy & growing in our lives. If not, the weeds will choke it out.

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If you're grumbling & complaining, if you're not joyful in the Lord, it is probably a strong indication that you're not growing in the Lord.

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How deep is your faith?

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But then comes the responsibility of bringing these young Christians up in the Lord.

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The early church evidently did a fairly good job of that, because we read in Acts 2:42 that these early Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching & fellowship, in the breaking of bread & prayers."

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B. With that in mind, listen to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

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PROP. Let's talk about that, about "building each other up" & growing as Christians.

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B. With that in mind, listen to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16.

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& another to have that personal time every day where you get together with God & open His Word & talk with Him & allow Him to talk to you.

That's critical for your growth.

D. Finally, you will have an effective Christian witness if you're growing in your faith.

God needs lots of mature Christians, ministers, ambassadors who aren't ashamed of their faith & who are willing to share that faith at work, play, school and church - wherever they are.

ILL. The story is told about a king who longed for a son. Years passed, & finally God answered his prayers & a boy was born. The whole kingdom rejoiced.

He was such a perfect child & everybody was so happy. Then when he was 6 years old the little boy fell off a horse & was injured to the point of being partially paralyzed. The king & the entire kingdom mourned.

Then the king did a strange thing. He instructed the royal sculptor to make a statue of a man standing strong & straight. And every day they wheeled the

boy out to the courtyard where the statue had been erected, & the little boy looked at the statue of that man.

The story says that gradually the boy's spine started to straighten. Strength came back to his muscles & bones. Finally the day arrived when that boy stood up in the shadow of that statue. And as the kingdom looked, lo & behold, they saw that the boy bore the likeness of the statue. He had become what he had been looking at every day.

CONCL. You know, God placed before us His only Son. He says,

"Look at Him. Become like Him,

& the more you look at Him, the more you read His Word, the more you'll grow to be like Him."

The church's purpose is to win the lost & build up the saved.

We don't want anybody lost. We want to make sure that everybody is involved in the Word & prayer & growing every day.

Maybe you have a decision that you need to make.

Maybe there is something that you need to allow God to do in your life, let Him help you to get back on course again in a certain area in your life,

Make sure that you're growing in your faith. Amen