

Sunday March 8<sup>th</sup> 2009  
To the Church of Ephesus – Part Seven

1). Eph 4:11 *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.*

a). As we saw last week the resurrection and ascension of Christ are inextricably connected with the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom and therefore directly contingent upon making possible the ‘so great a salvation’ – the salvation of the soul thereby providing our inheritance as a joint heir with Christ.

b). 1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

c). But as we would see from continuing in our Peter scripture, the incorruptible inheritance is for a specific group of the redeemed - 1Pe 1:5 *who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

d). It is for those ‘who are kept by the power of God through faith’ - those who would be faithfully obedient, those who are ‘faithful in Christ Jesus’, those who will have works of gold, silver and precious stones.

e). And it is with a view to producing the faithful obedience that is necessary in the redeemed, through the process of maturing spiritually, that Christ, upon His ascension, gave apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors and teachers to the church – in order that they might rightly divide the word of truth, thus enabling the Holy Spirit to take that word to guide us into all truth and to bring about the metamorphosis that will result in our adoption as firstborn sons at the Judgment Seat.

f). The giving of these ministries to the Church cannot under any circumstances be separated from God’s ultimate purpose – that of His Son, ruling with His wife/co-heirs, during the 7<sup>th</sup> Day. All ‘ministry’ in the Church beyond that

detailed here in Ephesians must have the same end in view, as there is no other end toward which the purpose of God is moving.

g). This would be true for our music, for our children's ministry, for the prison ministry, for the college and young people's ministry, cd/dvd ministry, the Men's Dinner, Bible study and all counseling – all is with a view to our appearance at the Judgment Seat of Christ - Col 1:27 *To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.*

g). And so with this broad overview in place let's now look at the specific details of verse 12 – 16.

2). Firstly, the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry.

a). Equipping = Greek – 'katartismos' = from 2675; complete furnishing (objectively):--perfecting. This is for the purpose of bringing to completion. The process that produces spiritual maturity.

b). The work of ministry can be understood in two ways, depending on whether we choose to put a comma after the word 'saints' in v12 or not – If we do then it would be the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers who do the work of ministry and if not then it is the saints.

c). And to be honest wherever we put the comma makes little difference as both of these options are true. That the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are engaged in the work of ministry is quite an obvious one, but in order to understand what this would mean for the saints we would need to compare scripture with scripture - Heb 6:10 *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

c). Ministered/minister = Greek – 'diakoneo' = from 1249; to be an attendant, i.e. wait upon (mentally or as a host, friend, or (figuratively) teacher); technically, to act as a Christian deacon:--(ad-)minister (unto), serve, use the office of a deacon.

d). So then what we are seeing here – the work of ministry is 'to the saints', those who are of the household of God – and specifically it is the idea of us serving one another within this fellowship and our extended family, taking care of one another in a practical and spiritual way. It is this very idea that is fully explained in v16, *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.*

Now we are going to spend some time looking at this verse, but before we can get there we have to look at the verses in between – verses that talk about spiritual maturity, as paradoxically, our ability to minister to one another comes out of our spiritual maturity, and our ministry to one another is part of the process that would get us there.

3). So secondly, also from v12, there is the edifying of the body, the literal idea of house building. And according to our scripture this happens in two interconnected ways – through the work of the pastor/teacher and through the ‘edifying of [the body] itself in love’. It is faithful obedience to that which comes from the ministry of the pastor/teacher that enables the body to edify itself in love.

a). And of course the ministry of the pastor/teacher is about the presentation of the gospel of the glories of Christ, that which would be the whole counsel of God – Just as we have already seen in - Eph 2:19 *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

b). 1Co 3:10 *According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 ¶ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.*

c). 2Ti 4:1 ¶ *I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*

d). The edifying of the body itself in love we shall come back to when we look at v16.

4). Thirdly, in v13 we see - *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;*

a). We have the ministry of the apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers set within a specific time frame – [un]till – with specific goals in view.

b). As we have already noted these ministries were specifically given for the purpose of preparing the ‘church’ for their appearance at the Judgment Seat.

Beyond the resurrection/rapture there is no more possibility for preparation therefore these ministries are automatically redundant at this point. But between now and then through what has been presented by the apostles and prophets in the scriptures and through the message of the evangelist and pastor/teacher based on those same scriptures we should come to the unity of the faith – the unity that comes from each of us individually striving for the prize - and to the ‘epignosis’ knowledge of the Son of God. And if we have received the message after the correct fashion - Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

c). And then act upon it - Jas 1:22 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

d). Then in that Day we will find ourselves ‘a perfect [complete] man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’.

e). Col 1:21 *And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard,*

f). 2Co 11:2 *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

g). Jude 1:24 *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,*

h). And again throughout these verses we are seeing the process of maturing spiritually – remember - Eph 5:26 *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

i). This is a process by which, if we allow it to do its proper work in us, will result in us being presented faultless ‘before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy’ – ‘not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing’ – thereby receiving our inheritance as a co-heir with Christ.

j). But for this to become a reality we must allow the process, we must actively pursue the Kingdom and hold fast to that which God has revealed to us and promised us.

5). And the reason for this is found in our fourth detail in v14 - *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*

a). The picture here is that those who are ‘children’ spiritually, those who are not maturing will be ‘tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine’ – they will be unstable and unsure about the truth and connectivity of scripture. All of the hoop-la over eternal salvation, the Kingdom being here now, the pre/mid or post millennial rapture, are all testimony to this.

b). Those who are children are also susceptible to the ‘trickery of men’ – those who for their own ends would exploit the vulnerable - 2Pe 2:1 ¶ *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 ¶ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;*

c). And they would be easily overcome by the deceitfulness of the enemy of our soul - 1Ti 4:1 ¶ *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,*

d). Now according to our scripture we are to grow up so as to no longer be children who are sidetracked by anything that has the name ‘Christian’ attached to it. But instead of that we are to speak the truth in love - 15 *but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ*

e). So that in all things we may grow up ‘into Him who is the head – Christ’

f). Ga 4:19 ¶ *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*

g). Col 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

h). Now speaking the truth in love is not a reference to being honest with one another, although clearly we should be, but rather, contextually, this has to do with being sincere or being true concerning the hope that is set before us – the way of truth that we saw in our 2 Peter scripture.

i). Speak the truth = Greek – ‘aletheuo’ = from 227; to be true (in doctrine and profession):--speak (tell) the truth.

j). This is exactly the same thought that we find in - Eph 6:14 *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth,*

k). In Chapter 4 we see truth in relation to doctrine and in Chapter 6 in relation to preparation for entering the spiritual warfare, and these would really be one and the same thing. Our growing to spiritual maturity and our ability to stand in the spiritual warfare must be predicated by us having sincerity towards what God has said to us concerning His plans and purposes. If we don’t take seriously what scripture reveals concerning the coming 7<sup>th</sup> Day we would find ourselves like

Israel at Kadesh Barnea, not believing what God had said - Heb 3:19 *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

l). We have a personal responsibility towards being sincere with regards to our hope, and that sincerity is not just an inward thing, but something we are to demonstrate towards each other - Heb 3:12 *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

m). Heb 10:23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

n). And when necessary the sincerity that we have will also be spoken audibly - 1Pe 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*

6). And so as we allow the process towards spiritual maturity to take place in our lives so we will be moving towards ‘completion’ and therefore able to minister to and receive ministry from one another, which will result in us being built into a spiritual house – we will find that we have unity through the faith as we actively pursue the Kingdom together and grow in our understanding of what it means that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We will not be blown ‘to and fro by every wind of doctrine’ but will have sincerity with respect to being found worthy at the Judgment Seat and able to articulate the reason for the hope that is in us. And in all of this we will be growing up in all things into Him who is the head of the Church – the Lord Jesus Christ.

7). And it is with Christ at the center of our thoughts that we come to v16 Eph 4:16 *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.*

a). Grammatically here it is what we receive from Christ that enables the whole body to cause growth of that same body for the edifying of itself in love.

b). And what we receive from Christ is the effective working of the Spirit, the very same power we read about in - Eph 3:7 *of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.*

c). Also please notice two other things here – the body is joined and knit together by what every joint supplies – and – because of the effective working of His power each part does its share.

d). The phrases ‘every joint’ and ‘each part’ refer to us in our capacity as individual members of the body.

e). And we will remember what we read concerning the body in –  
1Co 12:12 ¶ *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.*

*21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 ¶ Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*

f). Our natural body is made up of many parts the proper function of which is necessary for us to be well and healthy – Paul uses this very analogy to describe the Body of Christ – every born again believer is a member in the body and we are all important to the wellbeing of the Body as a whole. We are all interdependent one upon another.

g). For too long Christians have been lied to, believing that the only value they have is determined by the jobs they do ‘in church’. So what would this mean if we were unable to do a job? It would mean that we were not worth much and that those who did do all the jobs would be so much more valuable than us – and what would go with this? Guilt, shame and insecurity – the setting of a bar over which we could never jump.

h). But what does the scripture say? It says the whole body is *joined and knit together by what every joint supplies*.

i). A joint is the place where two or more pieces come together, and as members of the body we are being joined and knit together.

i/ Joined = Greek – ‘sunarmologeō’ = from 4862 and a derivative of a compound of 719 and 3004 (in its original sense of laying); to render close-jointed together, i.e. organize compactly:--be fitly framed (joined) together.

ii/ Knit = Greek – ‘sumbibazo’ = from 4862 and bibazo (to force; causative (by reduplication) of the base of 939); to drive together, i.e. unite (in association or affection), (mentally) to infer, show, teach:--compact, assuredly gather, intrust, knit together, prove.

j). In Peter this same thing is described using the analogy of building a house 1Pe 2:5 *you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

k). As this house is built so each stone is fitted to the stones that surround it. I am sure you get the picture.

l). Now here is something to think on – when you weld two pieces of metal together the two pieces joined become stronger than the two pieces individually and the place of the greatest strength is the weld, the joint.

i/ In the same way, when a husband and wife are joined together and become one flesh, they are stronger together than they were as individuals.

m). In the same way each one of us has a point of contact, of joining together with those around us – the only question is, ‘what do we provide to that joint that will give the body strength?’ Because right here at this joining together is where we find our individual importance to the body as a whole.

n). Are you an encourager? As you come into the room you encourage someone who is feeling down. As a result of your encouragement the other person is now feeling stronger, and as a result of that the body as a whole becomes stronger.

o). What do you bring that others see, take note of and are ministered to by? - patience / faithfulness / openness / compassion / challenge / lowliness of mind / gentleness / service / kindness / humility - and so the list would go on.

p). Clearly then it is the relational interaction that we have with each other in faithful obedience as we allow the process of maturity to work in us that demonstrates our individual importance in the body – not the job we do.

q). So never again think, ‘I don’t do anything in the ‘church’’, ‘I just make up the numbers’ – what you bring here as a result of the process towards spiritual maturity is a treasure beyond compare.

r). What we will notice is that what we bring that makes the body as a whole stronger is that which comes out of walking after the spirit not walking after the flesh.

s). If our flesh tries to provide the weld it can only bring weakness and fracture, never strength - we would see this in - selfish ambition, conceit, complaining, criticizing, condemning, anger, bitterness, resentment and the like –

Paul admonished the church of Corinth for this very thing - 1Co 3:3 *for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*

t). Each part has to do its share, each one of us through the effective working of the Spirit in our lives, has to do our share of dying to the flesh and walking in the Spirit – inevitably this will cause growth of the body – the body as a whole will grow spiritually moving from infancy to maturity – which will result in the edifying of itself in love.

u). As we provide that spiritual weld between us as a result of the death of our flesh so we shall walk in love towards one another after the fashion we have seen in - 1Co 13:4 ¶ *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 ¶ Love never fails.*

v). Can we see just how important we are to each other and how important each one of us is individually to God's plans and purpose?

w). Can we see how our own choice to die to our flesh has an impact on others?

x). Can we see how the example we bring through the changes in our lives can inspire and strengthen others?

y). Let's remember the exhortation of scripture - Heb 10:24 *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*