

**Ephesians**  
**The One Body of Christ**  
**“Towards Christian Maturity”**  
**Ephesians 4:7-16**

I'd encourage you to open up in your Bibles to Ephesians 4:7-14 The Apostle Paul is continuing on in his admonition of the church in Ephesus, in light of the teachings that he's been giving us about the unity of the body of Christ. If you are here this evening, we are going to continue on in that Amos series, and we're reaching that point. Now, it's actually kind of the culmination of the prophecies of Amos. He's been giving his oracles against the nations, and now he's going to reach the climax of those oracles which is the oracle against Israel itself. So come if you want to see how that turns out, come by this evening. We'd love to open up the scriptures with you.

But now, turning to Ephesians chapter four seven through 16, Paul writes,

***<sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore it says,***

***“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,  
and he gave gifts to men.”<sup>[a]</sup>***

***<sup>9</sup> (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds<sup>[c]</sup> and teachers,<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,<sup>[e]</sup> to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.***

Please be seated.

Well, if you've ever coached a sports team, if you've ever led an organization, if you've ever led a congregational community, if you've ever led a Bible study, you know that success in such organizations, success in such endeavors, is never just about having the best people in the best

places, right? It's never just about having the most skilled players on the team. It's never about having the most skilled soldiers in the field. As a matter of fact, if that's all you have, is just the top people who are at the top of their game playing for you. You may be good, but you're not going to be great because every coach, every CEO, every family member, and every church leader recognizes that if those you know paragons of skill do not know how to work together as a team, then you are not going to accomplish the success that you hoped for.

I just came from a job where I was in charge of a seminary, a campus in Washington, DC, in New York City, and an extension site in Chicago and I had learned very quickly that it was not just about having the heavy hitters as faculty members. Right? It's not just about having the big names. It's a matter of fact, if all I had were big names, then we would not have succeeded as a seminary because we needed all different kinds of players to work as a part of that organization to make it succeed.

I know you've all had these experiences in your own life. You see the ability to work together for a joint purpose is crucial in the success of any organization. So notice how Paul, in the letter to the Ephesians has been building for us this idea over and over and over again to keep saying it in different ways. You are one right.

One body, one faith, one Lord of your salvation, one grace that has called you, one God, the object of your salvation, one baptism that marks all of you as being in this covenant community. You are the body of Christ. You're the dwelling place of God. You are the temple. You are united with him as he sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, far above all authority and dominion and power.

You're all sons. You're all recipients of the inheritance. No, said he just keeps telling us we're one. We're one. We're all the same. We're all a part of this group. And yet he recognizes that that group is not all the same. While we are all a part of one group, it does not mean we are all doing the same things in that body, in that sanctuary, in that that sonship, in that dwelling place of the Lord.

We're not all doing the same thing. There is a diversity within the unity. But he hasn't talked about that yet. But he's about to notice how our passage begins with Paul saying after he's just said, we are all building up towards the fullness of God, who is one and all forever, and ever, but all right, you see that chapter seven, verse seven rather of chapter four.

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Okay? We were all given grace here. He talked about this a while back when he's talking about his own apostleship. Remember how we said grace is not just how you get saved? Grace is how Paul got made as an apostle. Grace is how Paul gets sustained as an apostle. Grace is how Paul speaks the inerrant word of God in his letters. It's by grace. And notice he says that here too, we've all

received grace as well. However, we've all received grace according to the measure of Christ's gift to us. Here's the big idea of this passage. Paul wants us to know that Jesus ascended to the throne room of God so that we might receive diverse gifts, diverse gifts from the spirit that empower us to grow as a body unto Christ, Our head. Now, the way Paul does this is by laying out a careful argument that goes step by step through this section. And the first one is this. He first shows us that the gifts of grace are coming from the throne room of God. And that's in verses seven through ten. And we're going to talk about why that's important for Paul, because he wants us to make sure we understand that these are not just kind of gifts of grace that sort of emerged out of some ephemeral thing that's happening out there in the spiritual world.

These are because Jesus Christ is in the throne room of God, giving us the gifts that he has received. There. Secondly, diverse callings. These gifts lead to diverse callings for members of the church. You can be a member of the church, the one body of Christ. And yet we have diverse callings. He says verses 11 through 13. And what is the goal of these diverse callings for maturity, unity and growth in.

And then see how I do that with the parentheses in and in into Christ, verses 14 through 16. In other words, he's saying this we all have gifts. This is where they come from. That's section one. This is what they are. Section two. And then this is what they're for. Section three. So let's start with verses seven through ten.

And let's try to get a sense of Paul's mind as he's thinking about the diversity of gifts that we have within the church. You see, he recognizes that grace. It's by grace that each of these gifts are given to us by the measure of Christ's gift. Now, what does he mean by that? And it's interesting because as soon as he says that, he goes right into this discussion about how Jesus is both one who has descended and ascended since we want to understand why we receive these gifts, we have to recognize that Jesus both descended and ascended.

And as a result, we have been given these gifts. And if you just read it quickly, you might say, I'm not sure exactly why the descent of Jesus and the ascent of Jesus are so important to Paul. Well, when we talk about Christ's descent and his ascent, we have to recognize we're talking about a thing that in Christian history, we've talked about as the humiliation of Jesus and the exaltation of Jesus.

That's what we call this in Christian theology, that Jesus was humiliated. Now, that doesn't mean that he was embarrassed, you know, without, you know, having any control in the matter, but rather he humbled himself. The language that we find in Philippians two is Jesus emptied himself. He was he was a second. He is the second person of the Trinity.

He's enjoying the fellowship of the Trinity in heaven. And yet he doesn't consider it something to be, Paul says, grasped. You know another way of saying it would be hoarded to himself. He

didn't cling to it at all costs. But what did he do? He emptied himself, taking on the form of a man. He was humiliated willfully. He was humiliated.

And that doesn't just talk. That's not just talking about his persecution or his death on the cross. That's talking about his incarnation as having a human body. His death on the cross, which is the culmination of it, him having to suffer at the hands of men who he created, right, who were in justly accusing him of sins he did not commit.

That's his humiliation. And, you know, we've always recognized in the church you can't just talk about his humiliation. You have to talk about his exaltation, his ascension. You've heard me say before that whenever Christians say death and resurrection, we should hyphenate that, right? It's never just the death of Christ. It's the death hyphen and hyphen resurrection. Right? These go together, according to Paul here in Ephesians four, we should actually hyphenate this even longer.

We should say the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. And those should be hyphenated. Because if you just do death and you just your resurrection, but you missed a missed ascension, then you miss understanding why it is that we have these gifts.

We see that this was a concern of Jesus himself and that story in the Gospel of John, where Mary is, in the garden looking for her Savior. She's yearning for him. As a matter of fact, she's the only one looking for the Savior. It seems like she's looking for him with all of her heart, all of her desire.

And she sees the gardener and he doesn't quite. She doesn't recognize him because there's a discontinuity between the old body and the resurrected body. But then she hears his voice and she recognizes him. So there's continuity also between the old and the new with Jesus. And she runs up and she clings to him. And you remember what he says?

He says, don't cling to me. I'm not yet done. It's not over at the resurrection, I still must ascend to the father and send the helper, the Paraclete, the advocate, the spirit himself. You see, the redemptive work of Christ is not over until the spirit is sent to give rise to the diversity of the church's many gifts. And our understanding of Christ's work is deficient.

If we don't recognize that it's death, resurrection, and ascension, and that he's brings there now at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Now, some scholars have pointed out, it seems like Paul has an apparent problem here in the way that he's using Psalm 68. As a matter of fact, if you noticed that in our call to worship when we read it this morning, do you notice that the Psalm 68 is a little different?

It's talking about a god or a king. It's kind of blurry. The king and God seem to be identified. God is having the victory, and so we're praising him. But he's also depicted as a king who's having

victory over his enemies, and he's ascending up to the heights to mark his victory, to mark his utter defeat of all of his enemies.

And he goes up there to receive the tribute among men. And notice what it says there, in essence, 68, that you ascended on to the heights, and you received gifts among men, and you didn't know what. Notice what Paul says in his citation of Psalm 68. He says, he ascended to the heights, and he gave gifts among men.

It's kind of interesting. It's a little different. It's not received. It's gained. And that's cause some people, some particularly skeptical scholars who say, oh, see, here's another example. Okay, another example of Paul making a mistake. He must not remember the psalm correctly. Or maybe, maybe even worse, he's willfully twisting the scripture to make a point that he wants to make.

And if you're a skeptic, then that seems like a nice ready made answer to deal with such a problem. And yet, like a lot of these skeptical complaints about Scripture, if you think about it, just, you know, five minutes longer and you actually sit down with what Paul is doing with the text, how people were reading the text in those days and understanding the text.

You might actually come to a different conclusion. For instance, it had long been accepted that when the King is going up on to his heights to receive his tribute in Psalm 68, he's receiving the tribute. He and those who are in his entourage write those who are in his army, maybe even the captives who he is ascending with, right?

Go back and read Psalm 68. So he goes up and he takes the captives with him. And if they're all receiving the gifts or the tribute. Matter of fact, in the Second Temple, Jewish interpretations of this text, they said, this is like Moses going up on Sinai, right? To receive his tribute, not his tribute, but his reward from the Lord.

And what does he receive? He receives the law. For what purpose? To distribute it to others. And that even maybe in this sense, Jesus is being depicted by Paul as a second Moses, ascending up to receive what the Holy Spirit that he might want, distributed amongst the people. As a matter of fact, this theology is not only in Paul, but we find this also in Peter himself.

If we turn to acts chapter two, verse 33, that Pentecost event where the spirit has come down, there are tongues of fire. There's a whooshing sound of wind, and the apostles are preaching and there's a bunch of people who only speak different languages, from Latin to Etruscan to all the different languages you can imagine. And even though all those people are there from different parts of the world, as the apostles speak, they all can understand the apostles.

And Peter says, I have to explain this. And so he explains it like this. This is Acts chapter two, verse 33. He says, being, he's talking about Jesus. And he says, being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he, Jesus Christ, has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

That is what he's saying, that he is ascended to the heavens. He's received his reward. That is his spirit. Here it is right here. Jesus receives the spirit. Why? So that he might pour it out amongst his people. Or to put it another way, maybe in a more Pauline way. Paul's been telling us that if you are in Christ by faith and you are truly united with Christ, if he ascends the hill, if he ascends to the heights and receives his inheritance as tribute, guess what?

Go all the way back to Ephesians one. You get the inheritance to. For Christ to receive the gifts is for the church to receive the gifts. And well, the church is one in Christ. Each member is also uniquely gifted in Christ. See, what Paul is doing with Psalm 68 is that he is translating it for his audience, but in his translation he is applying it in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ and our union with him.

If you are in Christ, when the King ascends the hill and he receives the tribute, the tribute is given to you. And then he says, let us now consider the diverse gifts that we have been given. Verses 11 through 13 the diverse callings for the members of the church. This is what Paul is saying here. He's saying the church is bound together by various gifts and callings that act like joints and ligaments.

Now I know I'm jumping ahead here to verse 16, and that's not in the section that we're dealing with right now. But I just love that image. Okay. So I'm going to pull it back because it's so vivid. All right. We are given various gifts and callings that act like joints and ligaments so that the body of Christ might thrive.

Paul here is closely connecting Christ to the Holy Spirit as he does elsewhere, sometimes even calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Christ, as he does in Romans eight nine, where the spirit of the Son in Galatians four six, or Peter does this as well in first Peter 110 through 11, calling him the Spirit of Christ. You see, you can't separate the second and the third person of the Trinity much.

They are all one God, right? Multiple persons, one God. Jesus is the revelation of the father and the spirit. Right is the presence of the son with you. See, Jesus receives the spirit and he distributes the Spirit himself because he is concerned with his church being diversely gifted. These are the giftings that he lays out here that Paul lays out.

Now, this is not an exhaustive list. He has. Other lists will include things like elders, orders and comforters and deacons. But here, this is who he highlights here to talk about the work of the church, to equip the saints. Look at what he says. And he gave the apostles notice. He didn't give to the apostles a gift. The apostles themselves are the gift, right?

Jesus distributing according to his grace through the spirit he distributes what apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ. Now these are key callings. Some of these are formal offices in the church. But notice he's speaking more generally here. He's not just speaking about the offices of the church.

He's talking about the ways in which the members of the church are gifted. And each of these has kind of a narrow, specific meaning in a more general meaning. Right. Think about the apostles. Who are the apostles? They are those who have been sent out by Christ by name. Okay, so we don't have the apostles in the church in that way now.

And yet all of us, in a way, are apostles, and that we have been sent out by the Great Commission. We are ambassadors of the Kingdom of God. We are representatives of his temple. Why? Because we are a temple. So there's kind of a capital A apostles, and then there's a lowercase a, an ordinary way of being an apostle.

As a matter of fact, when we gather together, we say we hold to the apostolic faith. We recite the Apostles Creed because we are of those people, the apostles, and we're sent out like them. He also mentions prophets. And of course, there's also a narrow definition of prophets. Profits are those who are covenant advocates in the Old Testament.

They speak the word of God. The author of Hebrews says, you used to have prophets. Now we have the Son of God Himself, but we used to have prophets. So there's not prophets like that today. We don't have new texts of Scripture being written today, but we do have what we call a lowercase p prophecy, an ordinary working out of the work of prophecy.

As a matter of fact, in our Presbyterian tradition, we talk about this happening right now as you're listening to the preached word. This is an ordinary gifting or office of prophecy in the church, a person is set aside to speak the words of the Scripture to a people. Now, this is not an errand. It's a matter of fact.

I have no authority unless I speak rightly. The Word of God only all authority that I might have is founded in the Word of God, not in some kind of special gifting. So you see, we have pastors who are set aside to do the work of prophecy. We have evangelists who also share the gospel with the world, those who do not yet follow Christ.

They're meant to communicate the gospel to them. This would include apologists who are both publicly and privately making an intellectual or cultural defense of the gospel. This would include church planters as well. Do you know, in our church government we refer to church planners at times as evangelists. They're going out and building churches where there were no churches before, or there was not a church.

In the tradition that we are proclaiming before a brother, would we have a high view of evangelism. We even have a time that is specially set aside to do the work of evangelism. That's on Wednesday nights. And if you'd like to do that and be equipped in that way, I'd invite you to come on Wednesday night and be a part of our evangelistic ministry.

But don't think that that's the only time. Like, if you missed it on Wednesday, then you can't do evangelism. But evangelism is for all of us. We are all supposed to be proclaiming and presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ to those around us. And yet some are. Trust me, I've been in the church long enough. Some are more gifted than others in these kinds of things.

We also have shepherds, pastors. That's what literally pastor means. It just means shepherd those who are set aside for the work of preaching the word, ministering the means of grace, as we're about to do here this morning, to speak on behalf of the church, something that we really lay hold of when we're installing a person or ordaining a person, we lay hands on them.

What are we saying? We're saying the elders of this church, of this denomination, of this presbytery, are laying hands on you, and you can now speak on behalf of the church in a way, and yet you'll be held accountable to that as part of the thing about being a pastor, okay, you have a certain authority in certain settings.

And yet also remember, you'll be held accountable for that authority that you've been given. So we have pastors and shepherds, and we have teachers, those who are meant to explicate, to explain, maybe not to be articulating the covenant all the time as the pastor is typically doing on a Sunday morning, but rather helping us understand the depths, the details, the cultural realities, the linguistic realities.

Learning Hebrew, learning Greek, learning how to read an ancient text, studying the history, the culture of the times.

Teachers do not necessarily exhort. And though all good biblical teaching is exhortation, all but we should recognize there's a difference between preaching and teaching. Any time you're leading a Bible study, any time you're involved in congregational community, anytime you're doing discipleship, you're in a way doing that gift of teaching.

And you, what are all of these gifts that he's listing here? What's the purpose of them all? Notice this is a very clearly these are all meant to equip and build up the body. The point of these gifts. And this is just in God's good pleasure, according to Christ's, good pleasure. His good plan for us is that we would be united in our differences, in our different callings.

He chose not to make just people who do it all right and all good, right? He chose to make us dependent on one another. Why? For the purpose of service in the building up of the church.



See, these are these gifts are gifts of grace, and they're intended for the purpose of service. You're meant to be asking yourself, what are my giftings?

Where is the Lord called me? And how am I using these giftings to build up to church to make it a stronger, more mature, more unified? To use the language that Paul used last week in last week's passage, more patient, more humble, more gentle. As a community pointed to Christ. So the point here is that the whole of Jesus ministry, from his descending to earth so that he might save us, to his ascending to heaven, that he might send the spirit, is all directed so that the church might receive the gifts that are required for the church itself to thrive.

By the way, I want to point this out as we're talking about this. Notice what this means is we ask the question, what is the church means? The church is not just the temple of the Lord. It's not. It's not just the body of Christ. It's not just a group of people who hold to the doctrines of faith, to cling to the confession.

It's not merely those things, but rather the church is a community that has been empowered by the work of the Holy Spirit to use its gifts to expand the kingdom of Jesus Christ over the face of the earth. We can be confident in that gifting. We can be confident in it, and we should be motivated and hopeful in it so that when we go out, we can be bold in it.

See, this was Jesus concern. This is why he rose up to the heavenly throne room, where he now sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, so that he might empower you as a church to serve him, to seek him, and to draw others to him. We have received the spirit, and as a result, our community ought to bear the fruit of the spirit that we have received.

We want to see members who are about the work of service, building up the church. You might remember that I've said before, Paul uses this language of sooner going right to work, ergo or ergo rather, and soon with to work with one another as translated fellow workers co laborers in the gospel. The Latin term that says the very same thing is the word community.

I used to think, well, it must come. Unity means with oneness, right? Unity and then come with, okay, but notice it's two hymns and there it's actually come munis. It's with munis, which is where we get words like municipal. What does munis mean to mean service with service together. Why are we a community? Because we are serving together in oneness, right? In the oneness of the spirit. But what is the goal? The goal is maturity, unity and growth in and into Christ. Let's look at verses 14 through 16.

This is what Paul wants us to understand in this passage. For Paul, Christianity or Christian maturity is synonymous with the church growing together toward Christ in Christ so that it can be like Christ. For Paul, Christian maturity is synonymous with the church, growing together toward Christ in Christ so that it can be like Christ. Let us what Paul says here.

He says, attain, seek, and strive to attain right this unity that we have in Christ. This maturity. Now it raises a question here, doesn't it? Because we've been reading Paul and we know that he's already told us you already have unity. You've already been united with the son through the spirit. You already are made temple. You're already the dwelling place of God on earth.

You're already made heirs. It was done by Christ. It's not done by you. You have it. So what does he mean to attain it? What does he mean by that? Well, when Paul talks about ethics. Okay, now just bear with me here. When Paul talks about ethics, when he talks about what we are supposed to do, how we're supposed to act in the world around us, notice he does something that's very different than the world around us. Actually believes in art in today's culture. You see, in today's culture, the view is this I make who I am by what I do right. I go do a thing. And because I'm the person who does that thing, that means I now become the kind of person who does those things. This is called existentialism. For those of you who remember your college philosophy classes, okay, it's still very present today.

I go out and do the thing that I want to be. But if you notice, in both the Old Testament and in Paul, it's a different dynamic. The dynamic is this who I am, right is the wellspring. It's the core. It's the it's the motivation for what I do. My identity precedes my action, not my action makes my identity.

And notice Paul is saying that you're two. He's saying you are one. In Christ. You are recipients of his grace. You are the children of God. You are temple. Now go live like those who have been unified. Who? Those who are temple. Those who are the body of Christ, those who have been saved. Go live like that. Go attain the thing that is already yours.

This, by the way, is also the distinction between the law and the gospel. Never wondered about this before. I keep talking about law and gospel. What is the distinction really? Because I am both tell me I should do a thing. But here's what the law does. The law says go and do it, but it does not empower you to follow it, to obey it.

And so what is it? It's unto death because you fail. Inevitably, the law is your enemy because God is your enemy. But what is the gospel? The gospel is this. It has now been accomplished for you, the thing that you are trying to attain by honoring the law. It has now been accomplished for you on your own behalf, on Christ's behalf.

Christ has done it for you. The spirit now indwells you. You are now made righteous in him. You are justified. So now go out and do the things that the law requires you to do, not out of a sphere or a sense of condemnation, or out of a scarcity model, but rather because it's all been given to you already.

You can do it in joy. You can do it in gladness. You can do it in laughter. When you fail, you can go and repent and you can repent in confidence. That's the gospel, okay? Jesus has made you

righteous, so go be righteous. Paul is saying to the church, you are one in Christ. Now go be one. Go attain it.

Go strive for it. Repent unto maturity, repent unto unity, repent unto fulness, repent. Unto holiness. See, the new man that Christ has made has a collective aspect to it. It is true that if you are in Christ, behold, you yourself individually are new creation, as Paul tells us, right? And yet there's also a sense in which we are filling out the whole body of Christ.

Right? To use Paul's metaphor here, we're filling out the whole body of Christ as we gather together as church, as ekklesia, as the body. Yeah, there's an analogy, an analogy between this and what it means for us to be the image of God. Herman Botvinnik, who's a 19th century theologian, makes a very strong point about the image of God.

He says this you are all, all humans individually, image bearers, right? You are all image of God. So you, you, Bill, Tom, Nancy, Cheryl, you're all image of God. And yet you're not merely or you're not the wholeness of the image of God because you also have male and female, right? So God, the image of God is shown in what both the maleness and the femaleness of creation of humanity.

He made them in his image, male and female. He made them in his image. He made them okay. He tells us it twice, so we don't miss it. As a matter of fact, as each one of us, as the, you know, the community of humanity grows.

The image of God grows in its complexity and its richness as it reflects back who God is. You ever thought about humanity that way? Look how vast it is. Imagine if you could see all the faces of all the people who ever lived, this rich collage that you would see starts to help us understand the richness and the vastness of the God who is imaged and humanity.

But then. But then goes here. And this is where I think he's just brilliant, he says. Therefore it follows that the image of God is not complete until the last human is born. You see, what Paul is saying here is something analogous to this. He's saying the body of Christ is not complete until the last of the elect are called in.

Why should we be unified? Is it because we just like unity in the midst of diversity? No, this is not unity at all costs. This is not diversity just for the sake of diversity. What is it is because we as the body of Christ are reflecting. We are building out the body of our Lord and Savior. And so why do we work together?

Paul says, therefore do not yearn for spiritual infancy, but yearn for maturity in these things. Infancy has a time. There's a time when it's good to be an infant. There's a time when you don't expect adult behavior right?

I remember when one of our daughters was young and she was about 3 or 4 years old, and Jen and I were putting her to bed one night. Is that sweet time? Just the bad times can be sweet times. I know they're not always sweet times, but they can be sweet times. And this was a sweet time. And I remember she turned to us and we were singing a song, I think, where we were calling her baby, and she said, I'm a little anxious, I, I want to stay a baby. I don't want to grow up. I want to stay just like this. And of course, I was a bit conflicted because I also shared the feeling I wanted her to stay a baby. I wanted her to never grow up. And then as I thought about it more, I thought, yeah, I think it would be good. She needs to grow up too. Well, we told her that night that she can be a baby as long as you need to be our baby. I asked her years later. Do you still feel that way? Do you still want to be a baby? And she's like, no, I want to grow up. I need to grow. I need to move on.

You see, our goal should never be to return to infancy, but to mature in the full reliance on Christ. For Paul, the spiritual infancy is a state of being helpless against the attacks of deceitful people who mix the valid gospel message with their own selfish intentions. If you want to know what a spiritual infancy look like, this is what Paul's tells us in verse 14.

You are. If you are a spiritual infant, that means that you are tossed to and fro by the waves. Notice this is how James describes the double minded man in James one. If you're interested, it's interesting to see them using similar language to spiritual. Infancy means you are tossed to and fro by the waves, and carried about by the every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

You know anybody like this? Maybe you struggle with this. Do you ever ask yourself after the after the thing is over, do you ever go, why am I so easily duped? Why do I get sucked into every bandwagon thing where there's a persuasive voice out there? It may be that the spirit is convicting you, that you ought to seek spiritual maturity.

What is spiritual maturity look like? Look at, he says here. This is in verses 15 through 16. If you are spiritually mature, that means you ought to speak the truth and love. We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ, from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly together, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Do you speak the truth and love? Do you seek to build up the church? Do you marvel at all of the different gifts? People who do things so much better than you, people who do things differently from you because they've been given a different calling? By the way, does that sound boring to you? What I just said speaking the truth and love and building up the church.

If that sounds like a boring endeavor to you, you might being convicted of a spiritual infancy because that's the least boring thing in the world. For the church to work together as one body

unto the proclamation of the gospel in the world around it. Now, as I said, Paul is not afraid to torture a metaphor for our benefit so he can.

He continues his language about the body that he began earlier in the letter by saying, were held together by the joints and ligaments. I love that language. The joints and ligaments, his gifts. Okay, being an apostle, being a prophet, being an evangelist, being a pastor, being a teacher. These are ligaments. Okay? Kind of move your fingers around. You can feel between your digits in your hand.

What's holding it all together so that it can work and do this amazing thing that it does? How does the church work in such a way? Because it's bound together by these different giftings and callings. Holding it together like a body is held together by its joints and its ligaments, so that it can thrive.

You see, Jesus plan for the church is that it would expand his kingdom through humble, gentle and patient operation of the gifts of grace that he had distributed to its members. We only succeed in this endeavor when we strive to attain the unity of the mission that he has set before us.

In this church's documents and I love this. We have this language that every member be a minister and a missionary. You see, we recognize in this church that it's not just for a select few, but that all of us are called to use the gifts that we have been given to the service of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

If you're not sure how to get equipped, I want to encourage you to go grab your nearest shepherding elder and say, hey, I need to get equipped. I want to discern how the Lord is gifting me. And if you can't find a shepherding elder, one of our pastors and if you can't find a pastor, come grab me.

I'd love to talk to you and help me get you into some of our equipping ministries so that you can be equipped for the work of the gospel. You are all gifted. It is Christ who sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty for you all, each one of you to be gifted for this work.

We want to help you steward those gifts so that this church can also thrive towards the unity of the Body of Christ, and towards the Christian maturity that we have because of the work of the spirit.

Let's close in prayer.

Heavenly father, we do lift up this time to you. I pray that as we consider these things that you would strengthen us in the spirit, that we would celebrate the different giftings and callings that we find in this church. And we pray that you would continue to richly gift and call the members

of this church that we might grow up as one in Christ through the power of the spirit. So in Christ's name we pray. Amen.