

Maple Springs Baptist Church

Series: Searching for a Better Life

Week 1: Grow Up

INTRO: Aren't we all looking for a better life?

Paul has just given (Eph 1–2) one of the clearest explanations of what it means to know God. Now he's saying that if you get that, if you really understand it, you're going to be involved, actively, in the church. Can you grow in Christ and be a good Christian apart from active involvement in the church? The answer from Scripture, w/o exception, is no! **Believing always leads to belonging.**

Ephesians 4:1— Worthy of the calling... in other words, in a way that is a proper response to what God has done in you. **Live as a proper response to the Gospel.**

In **Ephesians 4:2**, he expounds on what that looks like:

If you get the Gospel at all you won't look down on other people with feelings of superiority or self-righteousness.

Ephesians 4:3—If you get the Gospel, you'll be eager to see peace; you will not love controversy and seeing division and strife and hatred. The Gospel creates the unity, and when we lose unity between each other, it's because we have lost the Gospel.

Ephesians 4:4a—The unity and love of Christians for one another is a natural, organic response created by the Gospel. It's when we forget the Gospel that we start to tear apart or neglect the body.

If you relish a fight; you don't know the Gospel. If you enjoy gossip; you don't know the Gospel. If you don't naturally want to connect with others and be involved in their lives and minister to them, you don't know the Gospel. **Ephesians 4:4b-6**

4:7, Paul starts to talk about what God living inside of you means: **Ephesians 4:7-16**

God's purpose in salvation was not just to save you and bring you to heaven. His purpose was to fill you with Himself. ... to let you experience Him moving inside of you... to love the world like He does to be a conduit of His great power. **He fills you and gives you spiritual gifts, so you experience Him not just working for you and in you but also through you.**

Sadly, many don't know anything about it, or have never experienced this ... Jesus saved you, but there is so much more. God wants to do some things through you that would blow your mind...

Spiritual gifts are an experience, or an ability God has given to you that He uses to build up others.

Ephesians 4:7a, 12-13.

You come to know God better through your gift. Ephesians 4:16

1 Corinthians 12 calls spiritual gifts a "manifestation" of Christ: a "manifestation" is when something invisible is made visible. Christ is made manifest: His character, His beauty, and His body are known in the gifts He has given to His church.

Why is it crucial that I know what mine is?

- Because there are certain ways only you can reveal Christ, and certain people that only you can influence to come to Christ.
- Because you'll never really experience fulfillment until you find your gifting. **God saved you so that you could be filled by the Holy Spirit and used by Him.**

Many feel unfulfilled and bored spiritually because they've never experienced the power of Christ surging through them.

When we are united in the body, we beautifully reflect the unity of God to a world that is divided on so many things.

And **unity in the gospel shapes WHO WE ARE and HOW WE LIVE.**

There are parts of Jesus I will only know by knowing you, because certain dimensions of His beauty have been revealed in your life that haven't been revealed in mine.

The power of God flows through the church. So, if you want the power of God to be at work in your life, you have to be involved in the church.

People pray to God and ask Him to help them with something ... But the church is God's plan. That's where God put His power and where He lives. **How does God do His work in your life? Through His body!**

You have no right asking for the power of God if you have separated yourself from the means of that power, the church.

How much do you want to Christ to be a part of your life? How much do you want to know Him? That's how much you should be involved in the church.

What does this mean?

1. **The Gospel creates changed people.** Remember, who's writing this? Paul, who is also called...Saul ... 1st Century Jihadist.
2. **The gospel equips for life's journey.** If you don't know what your spiritual gifts are, you can't really know what God wants you to be doing.
3. **The gospel calls you to grow up.** What Paul is after here in Ephesians 4 is a common theme throughout Scripture...to see the body of Christ, the people of God, grow into maturity.
4. **The gospel changes people who change the world.** You see, the set up for Ephesians 4:1-16 is found in **Ephesians 3:20-21.**

Discipleship is teaching people to be like Jesus; Being like Jesus means being involved in people's lives and bringing heaven's healing.

CHALLENGE: Grow up! The great truth about salvation is that this great God we serve has put all of Himself and all His redemptive power in you... so, unleash Him!

So, if you're a disciple of Christ, get active in community and in a ministry. Listen, there is a part of Jesus you can only know by serving Him.

If you're not a Christ-follower, realize this is what you are created for. What you have been looking for, what you always feel like you've been missing, is a relationship with the God of the Universe. It starts with the Gospel ... the good news of knowing Jesus.