

Edification

Ephesians 4:11-16

Introduction: The church is the single greatest institution ever to appear among mortal men. It is divinely created by Almighty God. The world today does not think the church is all that great. Even folks in denominational churches do not think the church they are members of are all that great. They would rather affirm that Christ is great, but the church is not so great. Of course, when churches have long removed themselves from allegiance to the word of God they will likewise find themselves removed from what God's word teaches about the church.

What does the New Testament say about this?

1. Christ built the church (***Matt. 16:18***).
2. He died for the church (***Eph. 5:25***).
3. He is the Savior of the body (***Eph. 5:23***).
4. All the saved are in the church (***Acts 2:47***).
5. The church is the body (***Eph. 1:22-23***).
6. The body is the church (***Col. 1:18***).
7. Jesus is the head of the body/church (***Eph. 5:23***).
8. Notice a comparison in regard to the persecution by Saul of Tarsus:
 - a. "...a great persecution arose against the church" (***Acts 8:1***).
 - b. "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (***Acts 9:4***).

I am willing to affirm that these passages from the New Testament, as well as others, show the greatness of the church of our Lord.

I. God Gave Gifts (*Eph. 4:11*).

- A. These are in human form.
 1. Apostles were eyewitnesses (***Acts 4:20***).
 2. Prophets were "forth-tellers" (***1 Cor. 14:31***).
 3. Evangelists preach good news (***2 Tim. 4:1-5***).
 4. Pastors and teachers shepherd the flock (***Acts 20:28***).
- B. I have deliberately chosen these passages so we can see that the role of each one is to instruct (teach) the word of the truth of the gospel.

II. With A Reason (Eph. 4:12).

- A. Perfecting of the saints.
 - 1. “the word is used in surgery for setting a broken limb or for putting a joint back into place” (Barclay).
 - 2. NIV has “...to prepare God’s people...”
- B. The work of the ministry.
 - 1. Service rendered to others.
 - 2. Every Christian’s responsibility (**2 Tim. 2:2**).
- C. Edify the body.
 - 1. A building up or strengthening.
 - 2. “**Edifying of itself**” (v. 16).

III. For A Purpose (Eph. 4:13-16).

- A. Be full-grown, steadfast, no longer children (**Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 3:1-3**).
- B. Growth enjoined (**2 Peter 3:18**).
- C. Accomplished by each one doing his share (**1 Cor. 14:26**).

IV. How Growth Is Achieved.

- A. Not by:
 - 1. Social Gospel and its emphasis on activity—fun, games, parties, trips. Little, if any, emphasis on the word.
 - 2. Dale Carnegie tactics. Always positive, never negative.
 - 3. Gimmicks.
 - 4. Wisdom of the world.
- B. By:
 - 1. The word of His grace (**Acts 20:32**).
 - 2. Our focus is to be upon sound doctrine (**Titus 2:1**).
 - a. Preaching.
 - b. Bulletins.
 - c. Newspaper.
 - d. Radio.
 - e. Classes.

Conclusion: Let us demand that the church be edified. Let each of us also be prepared and willing to do our part in seeing that the church is edified.