

Our Part in Edifying the Body of Christ

Ephesians 4:11-16

This morning, as we open to Ephesians 4, we are Christ's church; and, as a member of Christ's Church, we each need to understand what God expects from us.

Christ's plan for each of us is to focus on our part of the mending/equipping, and building up/edifying of other believers in His Church. To clarify God's plan, we need to ask and answer some simple questions:

- Why do we come to this same building each week called Calvary Bible on Drake?
- Why do we go through all the hoops to join this fellowship of believers formally, and become members of CBC?
- Why do we submit to the direction of the elders and seek to follow what they prayerfully present as God's plan for this church?
- Why are we celebrating these past 80 years and wearing these nametags?

Because Christ's church is not a building—Christ's church is a family of believers who share life together.

And Jesus Christ, Lord of His Church is challenging each of us to jump in and celebrate our spiritual life with the family God has given to us. First we must remember that:

God Ordained Local Churches

The New Testament church was made up of a universal body of redeemed saints. But all of those saints located in identifiable, local, geographic gatherings that were deeply connected at every level: spiritually, emotionally, financially, and relationally.

The New Testament believers were not taught to drift around to find the best program for their kids, or for the one church that fit their schedules, or for a church that better matched their music tastes.

New Testament believers were taught that God wanted them to stay put in their local church, and pour out their lives into one group of people day after day, and week after week. Next, we need to realize:

What God Did Not Plan

If Christ had only wanted us to only be a part of the universal church then we could all just drive around each Sunday and visit a different church.

We could all be well rested, never exhausted by ministry, never in a hurry to get everything done that needs to be accomplished, and just come at the posted time, take in the service, get blessed, and leave. That form of detached, uninvolved, "free as the wind" type of church going was never a part of Christ's plan!

By the way, if being anonymous, dropping in, and staying detached has become your habit to it is a BAD habit, and an ungodly one.

If staying uninvolved with the lives of the people who are sitting around you is what you choose to do—then you do not really know or obey what God expects from your life He purchased by Christ's own blood.

Detached, uninvolved believers are not in step with God's Spirit, or with His plan.

An unattached believer is a disobedient, unrewarded, and unspiritual part of Christ's church. God wants us equipping/mending others so that they can be edified/built up in God's Word.

Hitting a Bible study during the week, or being a part of some non-local church but Bible-based ministry is NOT the same as being a partaker of Christ's plan for His Church. Jesus sent out His apostles to start local, visible groups of believers that lived life together as Christ's family.

God did not design the drive-in-theater type of church that has a parking lot of unconnected individuals all watching the same show. He designed Christ's family as a group that shares life.

Let me remind you again, so that you can be sure that you have noted these twin-truths in your Bibles. This is what we are to be doing as we share life each day of each week that God gives us.

God looks to each one of us to do our part in His Church that He is building; and each of us is a unique tools in His Hands; and each of us can do something God designed only for us to do.

In other words:

Our Job Description Is Local Church Based

When we were saved we each became a vital part of Christ's Church, with a specific job description. Please listen with me to the voice of Jesus from Ephesians 4:11-16.

Paul is here sharing with us the plan Jesus gave him, to keep His saints all doing what He designed them to do. Our theme this year is Our Shared Life. Our goal is to each individually see if we are employed doing what Jesus Christ left us here on earth to do until He came or called.

Listen to His plan as we stand, and hear the voice of God speaking out from His Book as you follow along as I read God's Word.

*Ephesians 4:11-16 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, **12 for the equipping** [preparing, perfecting] of the saints for the work of ministry, **for the edifying** [building up] of the body of Christ, 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. NKJV*

Pray

Those verses we just read describe what God has been doing here at Calvary for the past 80 years. He has been building His Church by saving lost sinners and placing them into this body to be mended and built up.

Mended and Built By The Truth

Did you notice the two concepts Paul emphasizes in v. 12?

- In the NKJV the Greek words are translated: "**equipping**" and "**edifying**";
- In the NIV it is: "to **prepare** God's people for works of service" and "so that the body of Christ may be **built up**";
- In the NASB it is: "for the **equipping** of the saints for the work of service", and "to the **building up** of the body of Christ";
- In the KJV it is: "For the **perfecting** of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ";

- In the ESV it is: “to **equip** the saints for the work of ministry, for **building up** the body of Christ” (ESV).

That verse contain God’s goal for all of us in Christ's church this morning—bringing believers to spiritual health and spiritual growth through truth in Christ. How is this done within a local church?

Paul introduces us to the twin concepts of the “equipping church” and the “edifying church”.

Both ministries are vital. We all need to grasp our responsibility, so that we come to church and operate as a church in the way that God designed us to serve Him.

Mending and Building Up Lives is God’s Plan for all of us

Now let this picture God's Word gives to us, sink into your heart and mind.

Paul grabs a word that gave an immediate picture in everyone’s mind that read this letter. Saints need to be made whole, they need to be mended, and they need to be repaired.

So the word “equip” which means either mending nets or setting bones, describes the taking injured, damaged, or weakened things and getting them back the way they are supposed to be. Can you see the connection?

An equipping/edifying church is all about helping people from where they are to where God wants them to be. We all need help, and we all are to help each other. Now plug those images into the purpose of Christ's church as we meet.

Mending lives so that those lives can be engaged as tools in Christ's hands building up, helping, exhorting, and discipling others.

Believers are out in life getting frayed, torn, and ripped by all the troubles and struggles we go through each day.

We each sustain some degree of damage through struggles at work, conflicts at home, and temptations nagging us everywhere, and fears assaulting us when we are alone.

We also are often just like a net as it gets dragged along the shore in daily use—we have sustained wear and tear to our lives just with the daily pressures and stresses of living.

But now comes the wonderful part. This truth is what has strengthened Christ's church through all these centuries since Pentecost—when we gather obediently as Christ's church, He is present; and when Christ is present He uses us to do his work of repairing one another from the injuries of life’s struggles.

This is God using Paul to explain the occupation we all are to do for Him. 100% employment in the Church comes as we each see that God wants us to actually do something for Christ in the lives of those around us.

- We gather to have the torn places in our lives mended with God's Word.
- We come together to see God fixing, mending, restoring each part of life that has started to unravel.
- Through His plan we get back on the road, the broken down relationships mended, the flat tires of lost hope repaired, confidence and assurance are restored, and we go back on the road of life again.
- We are repaired, mended, and built up—by His Spirit, through His Word, and using other believers.

This is what is repeatedly demonstrated throughout the pages of the New Testament:

Mended Lives Get Repaired And Built Up by God's Word and People

The church that offers these needed repairs is the church that is truly an “equipping” and “edifying” church; and that is what we see as we follow this word through the rest of the New Testament.

Continue with me to see six other times the Holy Spirit also uses the word “equip” we saw in Ephesians 4:12:

- **Mending that glues us together.** *1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be **perfectly joined together** in the same mind and in the same judgment. NKJV*

Paul says for us to operate as Christ's church we need to all be working on fitting together, with no part of His Body being out of joint.

Just like a twisted ankle can bring our whole body to a halt, so we must not let any part of this local body be twisted, and halted from ongoing, Spirit prompted fellowship and unity!

Prayer: *Lord, keep me close to my family in Christ so I can pull others closer to Him.*

- **Mending that makes us complete.** *2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. **Become complete.** Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. NKJV*

Mended souls are a choice. We must want Christ's mending through others. We must want Him to use whatever it takes to make us complete, peaceful, and unified.

This is our same word **kartarizein**, the word commonly used for setting a fracture, the word used in Matthew and Mark for mending nets. It means "to supply that which is missing", and "to mend that which is broken".

Prayer: *Lord, restore and renew my peace so I can help those around me.*

- **Mending that restores others and protects us.** *Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual **restore** such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. NKJV*

We are to seek out those who are stalled, broken down spiritually, and knock on their window and ask if we can help them. This is true ministry, and this is what God wants to flow through us to accomplish. We must step out of the climate control of our car driving through life and help fellow believers with flat tires.

Prayer: *Lord, nail down my wandering heart to seeking your paths so I can point others your way.*

- **Mending that grows us up.** *1 Thessalonians 3:10 night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and **perfect** what is lacking in your faith? NKJV*

Paul shows us that Jesus uses our prayers for needy believers within His church to be the means through which HE mends other believers. Prayers prompted and empowered by Christ mend those around us.

Prayer: *Lord, mend my faith, then help me to prayerfully be a part of mend another's life.*

- **Mending that focuses our lives.** *Hebrews 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹**make you complete** in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. NKJV*

Jesus uses us within His church to be His instrument through which HE mends other believers.

Prayer: *Lord, restore my focus so I can see the needs of others and help them for you.*

- **Mending that builds our endurance.** *1 Peter 5:10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, **perfect**, establish, strengthen, and settle you. NKJV*

Through suffering God restores or mends or equips us. So suffering, if accepted in humility and trust and love, can repair some weaknesses of our character and add the greatness God wants us to have that before the suffering wasn't there.

Prayer: *Lord, renew my endurance, and then bring me alongside of someone that is sinking, and let me help them.*

How is your life? Is it in need of a little mending this morning? God's Word is available and in action this morning.

Why not pause now and ask God to renew your soul that is troubled, mend your heart that is broken, heal your emotions that are frayed, quiet your mind that is spinning or darkened or saddened, and get you back on track with the Lord.

That is what God wants to do here in and through His Church.

What is the result of being mended?

You begin to get tied to God's Word.

You begin to see that His Word is the lamp that guides, the food that feeds, the comfort that cheers our souls--as it points us to Christ.

Being mended and built up means that we regularly learn that Jesus comes to us by His Spirit, through His Word and gives us the power to do what He asks.

This power to do what He has told us to do in the Bible is grace. And God's process of changing us on the inside I love to call "energized by grace".

SERIES: Our Shared Life

Our Responsibilities to Christ's Church

As members of Christ's church:

1. We are His TEMPLE: Knowing that God looks on Christ's church as **God's new temple**—*should increase our awareness of God's very presence dwelling in our midst as we meet.*

*I Peter 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.*

I am Christ's Temple. I should want to grow in my awareness of living in His Holy Presence. That is what happens as we read His Word if we bow first in adoration and whisper a prayer of seeking Him.

Have you personally sought your God, this week, in His Word? If so say **"Yes"** aloud right now! God wants us 100% employed in His Temple.

2. We are His PRIEST: Knowing that God looks on Christ's church as **a priesthood**—*should help us to see more clearly the delight God has in the sacrifices of praise and good deeds that we offer to Him.*

Hebrews 13:15-16 Therefore by Him let us continually **offer the sacrifice** of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

I am part of Christ's Priesthood. I should want to delight in offering the sacrifices He desires. Have you thanked God for eyes to see with, ears to hear with, feet that walk, a mind that still functions? Offer Him the sacrifice of thanks for sins forever gone, of hope that it endless, of joy that never runs out. And then pick someone to "do good and to share" with.

We all need to be spiritual Boy Scouts, each doing a "good deed" for others each week. And then, each day, and then all day long. God wants us 100% employed as His Priests.

3. We are His RELATIVE: Knowing that God looks on Christ's church as **a family**—*should increase our love and fellowship with one another.*

I Timothy 5:1-2 *Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as **a father**, younger men **as brothers**, 2 older women **as mothers**, younger women **as sisters**, with all purity.*

I am Christ's Relative. I should want to increase my love and fellowship with those in Christ who are my true family. Try writing down a name each week of one person, and asking them how to encourage them. Then pray for that area all week long, and look for them next week and find out what God did in their lives. Can you imagine coming each week and looking for people you've prayed for and seeing people looking for you? That is what we need to be employed in doing. God wants to see us having 100% employment in serving and encouraging our spiritual relatives.

4. We are His BODY: Knowing that God looks on Christ's church as **the body of Christ**—*should increase our interdependence on one another and our appreciation of the diversity of gifts within the body.*

I Corinthians 12:27 Now **you are the body of Christ**, and members individually.

I am Christ's Body. I should want my body to do what His did. Jesus went around doing good. He had compassion for the confused, He helped the poor, healed the sick, loved the outcasts, and comforted the lonely.

God has no Hands but yours.
Brand & Yancey

God wants us 100% employed as His Body.

5. We are His BUILDING PROJECT: Knowing that God looks on Christ's church as **a house that is being built**—*should stir each of us to be a part of the process of building up, edifying, and discipling one another.*

*1 Corinthians 3:9b For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, **you are God's building.***

I am a working partner in Christ's Building Project. I should want to be stirring up those around me to love and good works. I should become an expert in building up others, mending others.

Christ should find me 100% employed in doing what He created me to do.

6. We are His BRIDE: Knowing that God looks on Christ's church as **the bride of Christ**—*should stimulate us to personally strive for greater purity, deeper love for Christ, and swifter fuller obedience to Him.*

II Corinthians 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.

I am Christ's Bride. I should want to strive to stay pure for Him. When I watch TV I am seeking His approval. When I dress its for His adoring gaze. I think of Him as my beloved.

God wants us 100% employed as His Bride.

7. We are His FARM: Knowing that God looks on Christ's church as **an agricultural crop**—*should encourage us to continue growing in the Christian life and obtaining for ourselves and others the proper spiritual nutrients to grow.*

*1 Corinthians 3:6-9a I **planted**, Apollos **watered**, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are **God's field**, you are God's building.*

I am Christ's Farm, His own personal garden that He planted. I should want to bear the fruit He planted into my life. Jesus wants to harvest from me a crop of His love, His joy, His peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. All these are what I want Him to find me 100% employed in growing by the power of His Spirit, in the soil of my life.