**November 26, 2017 “The Perfecting of the Saints” Ephesians 4:11-16**

As we have discussed in our study of Ephesians, this book is divided up into two sections. The first three chapters are designed to show us all that God has done for us and the last three chapters are designed to show us how we are to live in response to all that God has done for us.

In the passage we are going to study today, Paul lays out an interesting point and it is this: the work of the Apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherd-teachers is to equip the saints “for the work of the ministry, to the building up of the body of Christ.” Note it is not the work of all the afore-mentioned to do the work of the ministry but rather their work was to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry.

Scripturally there are three aspects in the life of every saint which need to the recognized. These aspects must be addressed in light of the ending of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5: 48). What did Jesus mean when He said we must be perfect?

1. Positional perfection… Hebrews 10:11-14… positionally before God we are viewed as perfect in Christ.
2. Final perfection… I Corinthians 15:50-54… when we leave this earthly tabernacle whether through death or rapture… we will be made perfect to stand in His presence.
3. Ka tar tee so… that is the word used here in Ephesians which does not mean sinless perfection but rather it means that we be a grown-up, mature, fully equipped saint of the Most High. The term used most often to describe this growth process of the Christian is called “sanctification.” Which means in simple terms, “our lives should match our confession as Christians.”

Lest we forget the reason for all this maturing is so that the body of Christ may reflect the unity of the Trinity; one Spirit, one Lord and one Father (Ephesians 4:3-6)

1. The maturing of the saints
   1. How is this accomplished?
      1. II Corinthians 7:1
         1. Perfecting holiness
            1. Through the washing of the Word (Ephesians 5:26)
            2. II Timothy 3:16
            3. Colossians 3:5-17
      2. II Corinthians 3:18
         1. Hebrews 12:1-3
         2. Fix your eyes on Jesus
            1. The author and finisher of your faith
            2. He is our all in all
      3. James 1:2-4
         1. So that you may be perfect, complete lacking in nothing
         2. I Peter 5:6-10
            1. After you have suffered for a little while
            2. Why would God do this to me?

II Corinthians 1:3-4

Who is able to minister to someone who has lost a husband or wife to death?

Who can understand the pain of divorce?

Who can minister to those with special needs children?

Who can minister to those whose children have abandoned the faith?

These things have not happened because God has disliked us, but rather that through these things we learn to trust Him. I have not yet met a maturing Christian who has not grown in faith as a result of trial. Sometimes that pain of trial lasts for a long time but then so does the growth in faith.

Having said all this, let us be clear that the greatest tool of growth in the Christian’s life is not church attendance, nor is it trials but rather it is the Word of God, II Timothy 3:16-17.