

The Growth We Need

Ephesians 4:11-16; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 2-2-2020

1. We should pursue the growth of the local body of Christ.

¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up** in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, **causes the growth of the body** for the building up of itself in love. (15-16)

- As elders, we are concerned about church growth.
- As members of this body, you should be concerned about church growth.
- Because God's Word calls us to grow.

2. Growth may or may not include additional church members, but that is not the focus.

And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and **some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers** (11)

⁴¹ So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. ⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. ⁴⁶ Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. **And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.** (Acts 2:41-47)

- But we often think of growth simply in terms of numbers.
- We should desire more people to be a part of our church.
- Because numbers do represent people.
- Because hopefully numbers represent souls saved and growing in Christ.
- But Paul says nothing in this passage about the numerical aspect of growth.
- This is because numerical growth should not be our focus.
- Because God is the One who adds to the church. (1 Corinthians 3:5-9)
- We want a growth that is from God, not from man-made strategies. (Colossians 3:19)

3. Growth is about growth in Christlikeness and faith and love.

¹¹ And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, **to the building up of the body of Christ;** ¹³ **until we all attain to the unity of the faith,** and of the knowledge of

the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to **the fullness of Christ**.¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ**,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, **causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.** (11-16)

- The kind of growth Paul is talking about is Christlikeness.
- But growth in Christlikeness requires growth in faith.
- And growth in Christlikeness requires growth in love.
- When this kind of growth is happening, we can trust God to add to the church as He sees fit.

4. Growth is about growth in ministry in the local body: individual believers using their gifts and following their callings.

from whom **the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part,** causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (16)

- It is clear that growth in Christlikeness, faith and love requires some involvement on our part.
- This growth is a community project.
- This growth requires that every member of the body use their gifts in service to Christ.
- This growth requires that every member of the body follow their callings in ministry.

5. Growth is about the leadership and the church supporting this kind of growth.

¹¹ And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* **pastors and teachers**,¹² **for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;** (11-12)

- It is clear that growth in Christlikeness, faith and love and ministry in the body requires the equipping ministry of the leadership of the Church.
- A huge part of this equipping ministry is the faithful, regular ministry of the Word week in and week out.
- Another important part of this equipping ministry is investment in people.
- But, by implication, it also includes helping people use their gifts and fulfill their callings in ministry in the local church.
- For some, this includes the practical help of financial support so they can be freed to minister. (1 Corinthians 9:6-12; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 3 John 1:5-8)