

**It's Time to Grow Up**  
Ephesians 4:14-16  
Pastor Jeremy Cagle, July 19, 2020

Well, hello everyone and it is good to see you on this beautiful Sunday morning here at Grace Fellowship Church. We have another beautiful day of sunny weather here. I think this is called summertime here in BC and it's such a blessing to celebrate this with you; to celebrate the Lord's Day. Before we begin the sermon, I want to say greetings to those of you who are here with us in person. For some of you, this is the first Sunday you've been with us in a long time. It's the first Sunday since March 15 if you can believe that. We had a group of folks come through last week that was their first time and we're kind of rotating some here. And so, it's wonderful to see your faces. Some of you I don't know if I've seen face to face in about three months, other than zoom or something like that, so it's wonderful to see you. I also want to say greetings to those of you who are joining us online. Since the pandemic is still going on, some of you couldn't make it. You had to stay home, but you're joining us online and we want to say a special welcome to you. You couldn't be with us in body but you're with us in spirit. Your hearts are here with us today, and we just want to say we're thinking of you.

I also want to mention before the sermon begins, even though we can't be together right now, that doesn't stop the work that we're doing here as a church. Even though we can't all be in the same room, that doesn't stop the ministry. One way it is continuing is over the internet. I was talking with some of the men doing the technology stuff here this morning, but this Coronavirus has really stretched us in the area of technology and we're doing a lot of things online that we haven't done before. We're putting a lot of resources up, and one thing we're doing is recently Kevin Laser and I did a video on the subject of race. We did a video on the topic of "What Does the Bible say About Race and Racism?"

Because if you've been watching the news lately, you'll know that is a hot topic right now. That's on a lot of people's minds because riots have broken out in the States over the murder of a black man by a white police officer. They've broken out over a racially motivated crime, and there are a lot of questions that are being asked right now in light of that. There are a lot of concerns that sort of thing raises, like how do we respond to that as a church? And how are Christians supposed to think about injustice? And how are they supposed to think about the topic of race?

And so, we answer that in this video; we open the Bible with you and looked at those questions because this is not the first time that's been addressed. This is not the first time those questions have come up. They were talked about in the Bible thousands of years ago. The question of race and injustice and all that type of stuff was wrestled in the Scriptures long before we got here. And so, we open that up to show you what it says. If you haven't had a chance to look at that, please check it out. It's on our YouTube channel.

We also have some other videos on there that might be of interest to you. We have one where we talk about the problem of suffering. We talk about evil and suffering. We have another one where Quentin as a doctor and a biblical counsellor talks about the Coronavirus, if that's of interest to you, and how a Christian should look at that. We have a lot of different resources that we're putting up there but take a look at those if you haven't already.

And with that said, this morning, I want to invite you to open your Bibles to a book that talks about some of this. It talks about the subject of race and current events, and that's the book of Ephesians. That's the book we're in this morning. So if you would, please turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Ephesians. And we're in chapter four. And as you're turning there, just to get us started this morning, I want to read our passage to you. We just read it a moment ago during our service, but I want to do it again for the recording. And if you would look in Ephesians 4 with me, starting in verse one, Paul writes, and he says,

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

But to each one of us grace was giving according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended from far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 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. 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; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 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.

Just to explain this to you, if you look back in verse one, chapter four starts off with the word “therefore.” In other words, this whole passage, this whole portion of Scripture starts off by pointing you back to what was said earlier in the book by pointing you back to chapters one through three. Because Paul says as a result of that, as a result of all the good doctrine, you've learned in those chapters about your salvation and your adoption and your redemption, here's what you need to do. First one says you need to walk in a manner worthy of your calling. The word “worthy” there, it's an important word in the chapter because it's the Greek word *axios*, which means fitting or suitable to something. It refers to something that coincides with something else. But even more than that it refers to an object that was balanced on both sides of a scale. If you've been following our series on Ephesians, we've talked about this before, but we've all seen those ancient scales that had a weight on one side and a weight on the other, and you would put things on either side until they were even. And that's what this word refers to. Paul says you need to live a life like that. You need to live a life that is even with your application and your doctrine. You need to live a life that's balanced on both sides of the scale.

I think we all understand it's one thing to say you're a Christian, but it's another thing to live like it. Amen? I mean, it's one thing to say you believe; it's another thing to prove it and then show it to somebody else. There are far too many people in the church today who are convinced they're saved when they're not. There are far too many people who are convinced they're going to heaven when they have no proof, they have nothing to show for it. And Paul says it shouldn't be that way with you. You need to have proof. You need to live it out.

Your marriage and your job and your personal life, all these things he's going to get into in chapters four through six, they all come from your doctrine. You can't act the right way if you don't think the right way. They go together; it's what he says here. To do this, he says in verse seven, if you look in chapter four, he says, “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.” I told you before that could be translated to “But to each of us, a gift was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.” In other words, Christ has given all of us a spiritual gift. He's given all of us a talent to use in his service, which helps us live this out. It helps us apply the truth. He says in verse 11 He gives us leaders to do this. He gave us the apostles and prophets and evangelists, pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints. That means our leaders train us up in this, that's their job.

And then he says something unusual in the passage. He says something that kind of jumps out at you. In verse 14, he says, “As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by the waves.” If you read chapter four, like we just did, and kind of follow the flow of the passage, that sounds kind of strange. It seems to come out of nowhere, but it doesn't because here's Paul's point. He says, If God gives you all of this, if he gives you your gifts and leaders, and all these things in the church, it should result in this. You should grow up. You shouldn't act like children anymore. There's a time to act like children. There's a time to be young in the faith, but you need

to grow out of that. You need to have a childlike faith. You don't need to have a childish faith. The two things are different.

You know, I don't know how many of us have kids here this morning who are watching this online. But if you do, you'll know that children are interesting creatures, aren't they? I mean, they're fascinating to watch. I've worked with kids for years and you just want to sit there and watch them. There's not a day goes by that your kids don't make you smile, or laugh, and cry. because they don't act like adults. I mean, they don't act like we do. Children are different.

For example, a couple of ways are different. They're so distracted, aren't they? I mean, kids are so distracted by anything, anything. They can't sit still for long. They can't focus on you for more than a few seconds. They jump around from this to this to this. This passage says, Paul says this very well. He says they are tossed here and there by the waves. Kids are that way.

When my boys were little, I would sit them on my lap and count to five to see if they could stay there and they couldn't. I mean five seconds and they had to be off. Children are that way; it's in their nature to move around.

Another reason they're different is because they're not aware of their surroundings. If you have children, you'll know they have no sense of danger. They don't have a clue, and they'll walk off a cliff if you let them. You know, don't take them to Bridal Falls or to some of those places that have cliffs on them. It's dangerous. They'll eat poison, they'll put anything in their mouth. Verse 14 says they get carried away. I mean, not just influenced but carried away. Not just pulled in the direction of something, they get picked up and taken from one place to another. And as they get older in their teenage years, it really shows itself because if that's not under control, it can really go in a bad direction; but their passions consume them.

Because of this, children are also gullible. Children are naive. They will fall for any trick in the book. As long as it's shiny, they'll go after it. Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, they'll take it all in if you if you tell it to them in a convincing way. The passage says they are deceived by the trickery of men and by craftiness in deceitful scheming. You know, this should show you why the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Paul had no children; as far as we know, he had didn't have a wife or a family. And yet, he writes this accurately about the state of kids. This is the life of a child in this passage.

What Paul says here is that some people act like this in the church. What he says here is that some Christians behave this way. They act just like children. They act just like kids in all these areas that we just mentioned, and he says they need to snap out of it. They need to grow up.

You know, I don't have to tell you that this is a real problem in the church today. I don't have to tell you that this is a danger because you know that. In fact, one commentator said this is the greatest danger in the church. This is the church's greatest problem. It is full of spiritual children. I mean, it is full of people who are gullible and carried away by anything. Anything. You name it and they chase after it. You name it and they think it's the most wonderful thing in the world. It needs to stop.

If you think about it, there's no accident that things are this way. There's no mistake. For one thing, there is a devil who is a liar and the Father of Lies, so it's his job to deceive the saints. And he has demons that are everywhere. He can't be everywhere. He's not omnipresent, but his demons are all over the place. And they're using all sorts of things to disseminate lies to the church. For example. There are television stations today that do nothing but pour out lies. There are TV stations that do nothing but broadcast heresy 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all on the major networks. And people watch it, don't they? They lap it up. The stations just teach it and teach it and teach it and the people just watch it and watch it and watch it, like a human sponge; and they think it's so great. To add to this, there are publishing houses that print this sort of stuff in books. There are publishing houses that do nothing but print heresy, and they do it by the millions. They do it by the truckloads and people buy it.

You know, every month I get flyers from several Christian publishing houses. I love books. I'll buy books all day long, you know, for Christmas. You know, don't get me candy, give me a book. I love books, but I throw these flyers away every month because they're full of nothing but garbage.

To make things worse, there are colleges and universities that doctrinalise this stuff and teach it in the classroom. They clean it all up and give it a fancy title, and they feed it to Christian kids that come in every single semester. And then those students go out and they spread it all over the internet. They teach it to the young people, who go out and spread it all over the world, all over the web.

In fact, the internet has really changed the game with this. The internet has really compounded this problem because it's multiplied things so rapidly. I read somewhere the other day that every second 6,000 texts are sent out and more websites and we can count. I remember when the internet came out and I was a senior in high school, and I don't know why I thought this but I thought that it would fill up real quickly and then they would be selling websites for a million dollars. I thought they'd run out of space. It never runs out of space.

And much of the stuff that's going out today is heretical. Most of it claims to be Christian, but it's not and it is throwing the church into confusion. It is throwing it into a whirlwind, and Paul says here in this passage, you need to be ready for that as a Christian. Paul says, you need to deal with

that by growing up. You need to stop acting like a child. A child thinks everything is so wonderful. Everything is so great. They'll put a rock in their mouth to put tacks in their mouth; they can't tell the difference. Paul says as a Christian, you shouldn't be that way. You need to tell the difference between what is good for you and what is not.

Charles Spurgeon once said, "Discernment is not a matter of simply telling the difference between right and wrong. Rather it is telling the difference between right and almost right." And there are a lot of things in the church today that are almost right. They're sort of pointing in the right direction, but they're not quite there and discernment is telling the difference. That's our job to do that.

The Bible has a lot to say about this, by the way, it has a lot to say about discernment, and the need for it in the church. For example, 1 John 4:1 says,

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

A lot of people today like to quote the passage that says, "Do not judge." John tells us here to judge the spirits, test the spirits. Why? Because many false prophets have gone out into the world. That's an interesting phrase there. That means there's not a few of them, but many of them. Not just a few bad teachers here and there, there's a truckload of them; and you need to be on your guard. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 says, "examine everything carefully." Now, Paul says you need to examine everything, not just a few things, but everything and you need to do it carefully because your life depends on it. Heaven and Hell are in the balance.

2 Peter 2:1 says,

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them.

And this is the point in all this, this is what Paul is getting at here. All of this is done in secret. All of this is done with deception, and you need to be wary of it. We have to grow up in these things. You don't really have a choice in this. It's not really optional for you.

You know, growing up is hard, right? I mean, if you're around kids, around young people, you'll know that their life is not easy. We like to say, "Oh, young people have it so easy." It is not easy growing up because there's a constant stage of realizing that that you know, things you thought were this way, they're not this way, right? As Christians, this is a process we all have to be involved in. You can't put the blinders on your eyes and pretend like everything is just so

wonderful. It's not. And that's what we're going to talk about this morning. So if you're taking notes this morning in Ephesians four, we're going to look at three ways to grow up in the Christian life.

It's our outline for today. This is what it is about. If you're taking notes, in Ephesians 4:14-16, we're going to look at three ways to grow up in a Christian life. We're going to talk about this because this is such a big deal today. We're going to talk about this because this is such an issue. You have to take this seriously as a church because there's so much stuff getting thrown at us today. There's so much stuff being pulled in our direction. I've talked to a lot of people in our church who say they feel like they're drinking out of a fire hydrant right now. And they feel like it's stuff just spraying at them from the world. And you need to know what to do with those kinds of things. You need to know how to process it and we're going to talk about that with three ways to grow up in the Christian life.

The first one is you need to learn how to be stable. The first way to grow up in the Christian life that Paul gives us here is you need to learn how to be stable, which means you need to learn how to stay fixed on something, focused on something. You need to learn how to stay still instead of bouncing around all over the place. The world is bouncing around today, isn't it? The world is like a ping pong ball. You wake up today, "Coronavirus is getting worse." You wake up tomorrow, "It's getting better." Next day, "It's getting worse," next day "It's getting better." And that's just something that's a neutral type of issue. There are spiritual things like that. Back and forth, back and forth. Paul says you need to learn how to be different. There should be a sense of peace about you. And if you read in verse 14, it says it this way

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.

Just to say a few words about this, if you notice, Paul starts off the passage by saying, "As a result" or "so that" in some of your translations, this ties it back to the previous verse to what he just said. In other words, Paul says as a result of you getting all these things, as a result of the Lord giving you spiritual gifts and leaders and equipping you for the work of the ministry, here's what you need to do now. You need to no longer be children tossed here and there by waves.

As you read that, you can see there there's two images he's giving you here. There are two-word pictures. One is that of children. That word is *nēpios*, which referred to a little child or baby. There's a Greek word that refers to older children, teenagers or older; and that's not what this word means. This is a really little child under the age of 13, or even younger, under their parents' supervision. And the other image here is that of a ship. "A vessel being tossed here and there by the waves and carried about by the wind." If you see here, it says not only *the* wind, but *every* wind. And not only every wind, but every wind of doctrine. In other words, the idea here is that



Paul saying is every time a new doctrine sweeps into the church, they latch on to it and off they go with it. Every time a new teaching comes along, they believe it and it takes them away; so that it's never ending with them. It never stops just like the wind. The wind never stops blowing; these people never stop bouncing around. It continues to blow and blow. You know, I haven't spent too much time on the water, but I've been told that most shipwrecks occur for this reason. They occur because the ship loses its anchor. They occur because it loses its fixed tie to dry land, and they just can't fight the wind anymore.

A lot of Christians are this way. Paul says a lot of believers are like this. They don't fight the wind; they give into it. Don't fight the flow, they just go with it. Paul says you shouldn't be that way. You should be different from that because you need to be stable. You need to have an anchor in the storm, so that when the winds go this way and that way, and the world blows this way and that way, and the news says this and the internet says that, you stay put.

Jesus says the wise man builds his house on a rock and when the waves and the wind and the storms beat against it, it doesn't fall. There needs to be a certain calmness in your life. As a believer there needs to be a certain sense of peace. I don't think there's anything right now that would separate a believer from a non-believer more than a sense of peace, amen? I don't think there would be anything that would separate a Christian from a non-Christian more than a sense of calmness. This world is fidgety right now like children; you don't need to join that. There's a saying that goes like this. "You don't have to drink the Kool Aid." You don't have to drink the poison. You can resist it; you can stay away from it because you have the Word of God.

You know, this passage is, as I was studying it this week, it was pretty sad to me. It was kind of discouraging because I've seen so many Christians do this. We all have seen so many believers get this backwards because they think they're mature when they chase after every wind of doctrine. They think they're grown up when they go after every new idea that sweeps into the church. They think it makes them more tolerant, makes them more open minded. I've told you before, the Hebrew word for fool means open minded. It means your ears are wide open; everything goes in and everything goes out of your head. And you can watch these believers as their life gets further and further away from the truth. You can watch as they just drift. They say things like this: they say "If you really want to be a Christian, then you need to believe this. If you really want to be a sage, you need to follow this guy or that guy. Follow this movement or that movement. You know, you guys are the have nots, were the haves. You know most of the truth, but we know the rest of it, you got to follow us." Or they say, "I need to look into this, or I need to look into that. I don't want to miss out." You know I've counseled people who have been this way and they are just worn out. Their library is full of books and they can't read them because they're too tired from chasing after stuff. Or their shelves are full of DVDs, and they can't watch them anymore because they're just so exhausted. Other people give their money to this; life savings to people that lead them astray.



Paul says it has to stop. You need to be stable. You need to be level-headed. You make progress in the Christian life by growing up. You know, one thing we all admire in our parents is that they're stable, right? If you've had parents that stayed together, had a stable home, looking back on that that's the thing you admire about them the most. That's what adults are. They're stable.

In one of his books Donald Grey Barnhouse talks about the time he and some friends played a trick on his neighbors. They played a joke because they went out on the major street in the town on a major intersection and they pointed up at the sky. And they said they started arguing they said, "Yes, it is. No, it isn't. Yes, it is. No, it isn't. You're crazy. No, you're crazy. You're foolish. You don't see it. No, I see it." And they started arguing until a crowd gathered around, and they started arguing too. And Barnhouse said he went away, and he came back half an hour later, and the crowd was still there arguing. And the point he made was this, he said false religion is like that. Cults do that. They make you stare up at the sky and nothing. They make you argue about stupid things, the clouds, because they trick you, and they deceive you. And Paul says here you don't need to follow that. You need to grow up which leads to the next point to talk about this morning.

Another way you grow up in the Christian life. The first one is you need to learn how to be stable. It means you need to learn how to stay fixed on something. You need to learn how to stay still instead of bouncing around all over the place. Well, you know, I would just say it this way, one of the problems, I talk to other pastors here in Chilliwack, even in other parts of the world, and one of the hardest things pastors are facing right now is people just bounce around from church to church. They bounce, and they bounce, and they bounce. Paul says one sign of maturity is stability. Stay still in one place. I understand there are a lot of reasons why people go from church to church, but what I'm saying is this is what maturity looks like.

It leads to another point to talk about; a second way to grow up in the Christian life, and that is you need to learn discernment. I said a little bit about this one as well, but a second way to grow up in the Christian life is you need to learn how to be discerning, which refers to the ability to tell truth from error. The word "discernment" it comes from a Latin word meaning to separate something, or to divide it. The next thing Paul says is you need to learn how to separate spiritual things into what is right and what is wrong. What is good for you and what is not. If you read in verse 14, he writes, and he says,

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.

As you read that you can tell Paul, as he goes on in this passage, Paul gets more specific here. As he continues on, he gets more detailed because he wants to be clear here. He wants to make sure there's no misunderstanding. But he says not only do you need to stop being tossed here and there by the waves, but look at this, he says you need to be stopped being tossed by men. Not only do you need to stop being carried around by the wind, but you needed to be stopped being carried around by people. And this raises the stakes a little bit. This takes it to another level because Paul makes it personal now. Paul makes it very intimate because he says it's not some random force that is doing this to you. It's not just some random power, even though there is a satanic power behind these things. This is done to you by the trickery of men.

And the way Paul says this is interesting here, it's very colorful, because in the Greek the word "trickery" is *kubeia* from which we get the word cube or dice, and it referred to the ancient practice of tricking people with dice. Like people do today, the ancients would gamble, and they would gamble by throwing dice and one side of the dice would be loaded so you knew which side it would roll on. It's what this word refers to.

The phrase "craftiness and deceitful scheming" that's one word in Greek and it refers to desperate scheming or someone who does this in a frantic way. In other words, they'll stop at nothing to trick you. They will stop at nothing to deceive you. They're zealous about this, Paul says.

One author said Satan's ministers are skillful, and they're not messing around. They'll do all they can to wreak havoc on the church. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could spot the true teachers from the false ones because the true ones worked hard, and the false ones were lazy? That would make things easy. Okay, the guy who works 40 hours a week, 50, 60 hours a week. He's a true teacher. The one who works 20 hours a week, he's a liar. Okay, problem solved. It doesn't work that way. The false ones work just as hard as the other ones. And what Paul says here is you need to have discernment, because you can't believe everything that you see.

I mean, one sign that a child is growing up is they don't trust everything, right? They have a healthy sense of suspicion. If something doesn't look right, they can tell. If something doesn't look good to them, they can recognize it. It's the same way in the Christian life. One sign you're growing up as a believer is that you notice when something doesn't look right, you notice when something is bad. I mean, it's one thing to be hopeful, and we all should be hopeful and joyful in those things, it's another thing to be gullible and naive. We need to be hopeful and discerning. The way some Christians behave today, everything looks good to them. The way some behave, they can't see the danger because everything is okay. Biblical or unbiblical; sound or unsound, it all looks the same. They just take it all in. Paul says you need to act another way.

You know, as I mentioned earlier, this past week, Kevin Laser and I recorded a video on the subject of race. We recorded a video on the subject of “What Does the Bible Say About Race and Racism?” And we did it for this reason, we want you to see some of the dangers that are out there right now. We wanted you to be aware because if you've been watching the news, and we'll make this real practical here, you'll know that one group that is responsible for a lot of the conflict in the States is an organization called Black Lives Matter. Their name is all over the internet, social media. We moved here from the town of Indianapolis in the Midwest in the US, and they painted that logo on a massive intersection in the city. According to the website, the Black Lives Matter movement says that “We are a global organization whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy, and help people overcome oppression.” Which is a good thing. We should all get on board with that. That should be a message every Christian can identify with, but that's not all they stand for. The problem is that's not all they believe because the website goes on to say that “We are a queer or homosexual affirming network that wants to disrupt the western prescribed nuclear family structure.” In other words, “We want to disrupt the idea that one man and one woman should raise children within the bonds of marriage.”

Now, I don't want to be controversial here and step on too many toes and I don't know how sensitive of a subject this is everywhere. But I have to say, as a Christian, you can support that, can you? I mean, as a Christian, you can't get on board with that message because the Bible doesn't agree with that. The Bible is not on board with that. The Word of God upholds the family. It upholds the idea that one man and one woman should raise children within the bonds of marriage. And yet what you're seeing on the news, what you're seeing now is that a lot of Christians are getting on board with this movement. A lot of pastors and church leaders are saying we need to go with that because of what they're doing for black people. Now, let me say this, if that movement is destroying the family, they are not helping black people. If that movement is destroying the idea that one man and one woman should raise children within the bonds of marriage. They're not helping anybody. This is deception. This is something that is tricking people today and you have to be aware of that sort of thing. This is not popular stuff. I mean, this is not stuff that will get you some kind of medal for saying it, but you can't be caught up in this confusion.

This is not the only area where you see this today. This is not the only place where you see people being deceived. Like I said earlier, this stuff is everywhere right now. You also see it happening in the area of parenting. You see it happening in the area of the family because I can't tell you how many times I've seen people ruin their families by following the wrong guy. You see people destroying their marriages or their kids by following a teacher who says that “I can give you the perfect family and just five easy steps. I can give you the perfect family if you buy my book, watch my DVDs and follow these simple rules.” And before long, it's just rules, rules, rules in the family. Before long, it's just law, law, law to the point that it just exasperates the children. It wears them out. Friends, I want to tell you the law cannot give you a perfect family.

The law can I give you perfect kids, it doesn't have the power. You need the grace of God to help in those areas. You need mercy, but people buy into that kind of thing because they're being deceived.

You see this happening in the area of eschatology, in the area of end times. Every so many years a new end times guru shows up telling people about the end of the world. They want to tell you about the rapture or the blood moons or something like that. You see it happening with the King James Only controversy and the Flat Earth people. You see it happening with the Emergent Church or with the Word of Faith movement. You see it happening with the prosperity gospel, and on and on and on and on. We could talk about this endlessly. I don't want to be discouraging for you. I'm just pointing out how much of a problem this is in the church.

You could follow anything today. Anything. You could be carried away and tricked by any issue and there's only one solution to this problem. And that is you need to know the Word of God. There's only one solution to this: you need to know the Bible. You can't study all this stuff. You can't sit down and listen to all the material on the internet. It's impossible. You need to study the Bible. You understand the Bible, you'll understand the deception. You understand the truth, you'll understand the lies.

At the end of the video that we did, Kevin asked if I knew of any good resources to help with the issue of racism; and I thought about this since then, you know, I should have said the Bible. I don't remember what I said, you guys can watch the video and tell me, but I should have said the Bible. The Word of God because it has an answer to all of that, whatever the issue is. Race, parenting, end times, Flat Earth, Prosperity Gospel, it'll tell you how to handle all that. I think so many times as Christians, we make this problem so much more complicated than it is. We make it so much harder. There's nothing new under the sun; it's all been dealt with before in the Word of God

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, he said it this way, "I want to know one thing and that is the Bible. God himself has condescended to teach me the way to heaven, and He has done it in that book. So, give it to me at any price; give me the Bible, I have to have it." We should all say that this morning, which leads to the final thing to talk about, it leads to one more way to grow up in the Christian life.

Just to review these other ones, the first way to grow in the Christian life is to learn how to be stable, which means you learn how to be fixed on something. Learn how to stay still instead of bouncing around with all the latest things. Second, you need to learn some discernment. Second way to grow in the Christian life is to learn how to tell truth from error, and you do that by studying your Bible. You do that by studying the Word of God.

The US Treasury has an interesting way of finding counterfeit dollars. Some of you might have heard of this before. But they don't detect counterfeit currency by studying the counterfeit, they do it by studying the real thing. And if they understand what the real currency looks like they can spot the false one. It's the same way with you and your Bible. Study the Word of God, you can spot the lies.

It leads us to one more way to grow in the Christian life. One more point to consider, and that is you need to learn how to be balanced in this. A third and a final way to grow in the Christian life, which sums this all up is you need to learn how to be balanced in this, which means you need to learn how to do these things with the right spirit. You need to learn the truth like we just talked about with a tender heart and that's how Paul ends this passage. If you look in verse 14, he says,

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; but speaking the truth in love.

That's an interesting way to end the passage. It's an interesting way to summarize this, but Paul seems to shift gears at the end here to say, "Instead of doing this, you need to do this." Instead of being carried about and tricked, like we just talked about, you need to speak the truth in love. He says don't speak it in hate but speak it in love. Don't believe the truth or the Word of God in a mean and angry way where you say, "I'm right and the rest of you are wrong." You need to do it with some compassion.

I think this is an interesting point that he's making here. He shows a lot of insight into human nature as he said this because this is what often happens in the church. This is the phenomenon. Once people realize they're tricked, they often get mean. You guys know what I'm talking about? Once some people feel like they've been deceived by a false teacher in the church or by some kind of charlatan, they get nasty. And they turn on everyone they meet. They snap and get angry. It's like the well has been poisoned, and everything that comes out of the well now is dirty. Paul says you shouldn't do that you shouldn't get angry. You need to be more mature than that, and when you realize you've been tricked, and you work through all this stuff, you need to speak the truth in love. One sign you're growing up is you don't argue with everybody all the time. One sign you're growing up is you don't get into a fight.

Some Christians, once they've have some discernment, all they want to do is fight with everybody. The ongoing joke is once you teach some people a little systematic theology, you need to put them in a cage for a year until they calm down, and then you can let them out. Paul says one sign of maturity is to be loving. He goes on to say it this way. In verse 15, he says,

But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 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.

That's a kind of a hard passage to read. It's a mysterious thing that he's saying here, but what he's saying is this: he says the way to apply this is to do it together. The way to speak the truth in love is to do it within the context of the local church. Verse 15 says "We are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ." That means we are to do this together; the whole church has to be involved in this. Verse 16 says, "From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the working of each individual part." That's an image from the field of science there, but scientists tell us every part of the human body is connected. Every part is held together by joints, or nerves that take information from one part, pass it on to the next, and what Paul says here is it's that way in the church. We all learn the truth together. The way God intended it is not that you go with a book in a coffee shop, and that's where you learn all your doctrine. Or you go in your basement and you watch sermons and you don't ever interact with anybody. That's not the way God wants it to be.

We learn together and the end of the verse says, "This causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." And there you see the word love again at the end here. Paul mentions it twice, so you don't forget it. This is about love. We do this because we love each other.

We learn stability, and discernment, and we learn the truth because we care about each other. The truth should have this impact on you as a believer. It should soften you; it should not harden you. As you grow as a Christian and as you study doctrine and all these things in Ephesians one through three, and that defense begins to seep deep into your heart and you understand it, it should not make you crusty and mean. It should make you compassionate and tender toward other people.

Someone once asked Augustine, a scholar from the fourth century, they said, "What does love look like? How do you see love in real life?" And Augustine said, "It looks like a body. Love looks like hands that help each other. It looks like feet that run to each other. And it looks like eyes that see each other's needs."

That's what God has given to us in the church. Which leads me to ask a couple of things today. Do you get this this morning? Do you understand that part of your growth as a Christian is your commitment to the local church? Are you a lone ranger in the Christian life? Are you a maverick Christian that does everything alone? Are you involved in other people's lives? You can read the Bible alone, but you can't grow alone. You can study doctrine alone and learn the truth by

yourself, but you can't apply it that way. You can't live it out unless you're with other people. So, are you committed to that?

To ask us another way, how are you doing with all the other things we're talking about? I mean, how are you doing with being stable and having discernment? Does your life as a Christian feel like a ping pong ball? Does your life feel like it's being bounced around? Are you emotionally distraught over every little thing you read on Facebook? Paul says we shouldn't be that way. There's a time where we need to be stable. This is a time of great confusion. It's a time of great bouncing, but the thing that'll separate us from the world is our sense of peace. And you get that by standing on the Word of God. You get that by studying the Bible.

You know, in my studies this week, I came across a story of the time Sir William Perry led a team of explorers to the Arctic Ocean in search of the North Pole. They had the sled dogs and they had all the gear, and their goal was to be the first men to set foot on it. His goal was to be the first man to see the North Pole, but as he approached his destination, he found that the closer he got to it, the farther he went away. The closer he got to the North Pole, the more he went in the opposite direction because he was standing on an iceberg. He was standing on a foundation that was moving the opposite direction.

Friends, you don't want to do that this morning. You don't want to stand on something moving the wrong way. You want to stand on the Word of God. You want to stand on the Scripture. And let me pray for you this morning that God will grant you the grace to do that. Let me pray that He would grant you the grace to stand. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, as we come to the end of this sermon, and we come to the end of this passage, our hearts are heavy. They should be, I think, because of how real something like this is in our lives today. This is the world we are in. This is the church that we often see around us, and we grieve over that, that it is full of children. On one hand, we don't want to be proud and look down on others. On the other hand, we need to identify the way things really are. Things are a mess right now, and yet, in the midst of all that Your Word is so clear in the midst of all that. Your word is so true because we read these words that were written 2000 years ago, and we say, "This is us." There's nothing new in human history.

So Father, I pray that as we studied this passage, our hearts would be humble and tender. As we've looked at this that we would say that we want to grow up. We want to be men and women that stand on something. We want to be men and women that are at peace, because we were in You. We are in Christ.

Lord, thank You for the words that Paul wrote, he lived in a world that was just as multicultural as our world. He lived in a time that was just as messed up as any time before, and yet he could



say this. Father, may we grow from this? May our church be a church that speaks the truth in love? May we see the deceptions? May we see the tricks and not stand up for them? And may You grant us grace in all these things. Thank You for the time together, Lord; thank You that we are able to gather again. As we continue to do so may Christ be glorified in the work of His church and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.