

All Grown Up

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This morning, we've been in Ephesians on Sunday night for a long time and such rich encouraging powerful stuff here. The apostle has spent about what we've divided as three chapters of laying that glorious foundation that we are all converted and changed by the Gospel of sovereign grace. The Almighty God who, of course, is sovereign has ordained our salvation through his Son Jesus Christ and then you pick up in chapter 4 and he gets to his pointed practical application. It's as if he says, "Okay, you're transformed now, you're converted by the power of sovereign grace through the preaching of the Gospel, now here's the way I want you to behave. Here's the way you're to function." And of course, this is written to a local assembly of baptized believers, a local church, and everything in it is about local church life.

I exhorted you previously that if you're doing this as something of a community Bible study, there's really nothing here about building the fellowship of a community Bible study. There's nothing here about building a Christian fellowship of Christian athletes or the Gideon's International, as fine as those organizations may be. The New Testament isn't centered on those ministries. Those ministries come and those ministries go but God's local church prevails year in, year out, generation in, generation out, century in, century out. God will do his work through his church and that's why I often exhort you, certainly not wrong to be involved in other things outside of your local church, but if you are, you're moonlighting. That's secondary according to God's word.

So he's writing to a local church. He gets to chapter 4 and he says, "Okay, here's the way I want you to function as my people on the earth." And he begins by talking about the fact that we're to have this unity together since we're all transformed and changed by the Gospel in the power of the Spirit – listen now – we all have a unique capacity within us to bond and to love all others in our local church family who also have that unique capacity. You have a new spiritual reality in your life that connects with the other new spiritual realities in the other folk's lives in the church.

You know, we talked a lot about church history last week and that's why the early Baptists would not baptize you or admit you into the church unless you showed you had had that transformation, unless you proved out that you had had a spiritual new birth, because they said that's what a church is, people the Lord has changed and called out of the world to this new assembly, this new collectivity called a local church. So he says you

ought to have unity and you ought to work at that unity that God's ordained by changing each one of you and giving you so much in common, it's greater than anything that makes you in this unity from a worldly perspective.

Then he goes a little further and he says and also as you're working together, ministering together as a local church, Christ has given each one of you a special spiritual gift. I call a gift mix. He's given you a mix of spiritual gifts, maybe teaching, exhortation, service, helps, administration, whatever it may be, and you're to employ these in building up your local church family. He says that's not of you, it's a grace gift. You didn't earn this or deserve this. God didn't look down from heaven and say, "You're so precious and wonderful and special, I'm going to give you this spiritual gift." Nope. Didn't do that. As a matter of fact, he may have given some of the more public gifts to those who are least deserving, humanly speaking.

Then he went a little bit further. He said not only did God give each one of you in your local church these gifts to employ in caring and ministering to one another and, by the way, if you don't have a well-organized small group ministry, there's no way to do that. You can't just throw 1,000 people out there and say, "Okay, y'all care for each other. Y'all minister." It doesn't work. That's why the Old and New Testament gives us the structure of organizing the congregation into smaller units so we all can bond together, learn each other, develop some transparency and some trust, so that we all can literally care for, equip, disciple, nurture, correct when necessary one another as needful.

Now we come to that next area, this is the last time we discussed Ephesians, where he says not only did God give you those individual gifts, he's given as a gift to the church men in the office of apostle, men in the office of prophet. We believe those have passed away with the completion of the New Testament. But then he said men in the office of evangelist and pastor/teacher or a pastor whose ministry is teaching. He says, "I've given you these gifted men as gifts to you, the local church, so that you could do this," and that's where we are today. Alright? All of us have individual gifts. God gives gifted men as pastors to the church for, and here we begin in verse 14 going through verse 16. "As a result," of God doing all those other things, "we," that's the local church family, particularly here it was Ephesus, for us it's Grace Life of the Shoals, "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," in the context that has to be a local church family because you can't fit together with a universal body, you can't function with it, you can only function and fit with what's a local body of believers, verse 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."

So I've entitled this "All Grown Up." That's what he's saying to the church at Ephesus. That's what he's saying to Grace Life Church of the Shoals. "I want you to be mature. I want you to be grown up, spiritually speaking." And he's going to clearly outline some things here about what true spiritual maturity is and what true spiritual maturity looks like

because, trust me, the world, the flesh and the devil, has filled our culture with false counterfeit understandings of spiritual maturity and Paul is going to clarify and fix that if we'll let him.

A little boy may look in the mirror and he may still be a little boy and he may have grown a lot in the last year or two but he may look in the mirror and he may say, "Hey look, mom, I'm all grown up." Well, if we look in a mirror and see if we're all grown up, we should look in a mirror and see Jesus. When we grow up to maturity, we're like Jesus.

Now a lot of people get really messed up at that point like they'll be like Jesus. I'm convinced what the Scripture primarily means when it says we're to be mature like Jesus or we're to imitate Jesus, certainly doesn't mean you become the Savior of the world. Amen? You don't do that like Jesus. You don't become the Son of God. You don't do that like Jesus. You don't perform the signs and wonders and miracles Jesus performed because only he, the Incarnate Son of God, had that authority and that power. But I think what you've got to get to when the Bible says be like Jesus is, "I love and treasure what Jesus loves and treasures. My heart is devoted to, my mind is enthralled with the things that Jesus is devoted to and that Jesus is enthralled with."

A little boy can't be just like his father but he can begin to love what his father is and what his father is about and you're maturing, you might put it simply this way: you're maturing when you love Jesus and love what Jesus loves. Boy, that's a key phrase right there. Far, far too many in professing Christendom claim to love Jesus but when you look at their life and their purposes and what they're about, they don't seem to love what Jesus loves. They love their own concept of what they think Jesus would want them to be about, not about what the Bible says Jesus loves and what Jesus is about.

Now, I, in our outline. First of all, Paul says to the church at Ephesus, mature believers just do not act like babies. Very simple, isn't it? Mature believers do not act like babies. He says there in verse 14, "As a result, we are no longer to be children." It's the same word you could use for babies, those that can't even talk yet.

Now let's outline a few things from the Bible in general that children are like, and we don't need to be like this in our spiritual walk and in our view of Christianity. First of all, children are mentally immature. They just are. They're just mentally immature. They don't think right. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 13:11, "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things." Another way of saying this is as you mature in your spiritual thinking, you're not unsound in your spiritual thinking. It's so common to run across people who study the Bible and read the Bible, but when it all comes together and they act on it, it's just unsound in the way they've put things together. That's the way children are. They're just not sound yet or mature in their reason. 1 Corinthians 14:20 reminds us, "Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature."

Well, mentally immature. Secondly, a child lacks resolve. In other words, a child, they're here, then they want to do this, now I've changed my mind and I want to do that. No, I'm not going to do that, I'm going to do this. And that's part of what makes a child cute and fun, but that's not attractive in an adult and it's certainly unattractive and unacceptable in a Christian who ought to be mature spiritually speaking. Matthew 11:16-17, "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children, and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'" He says the point is with a child, they say, "Let's sing a happy song," and you play a happy song and they're bored. They're not interested in a happy song. You say, "Well, let's sing a dirge. Let's sing a blues song." And you play a blues song and, "No, we don't want that." They don't have any resolve. They don't have the ability to find out what matters and this is what we're sticking to right here. We're making a resolute conviction and decision this is the path we're on. No, they change all the time.

So children are mentally immature, children lack resolve. We don't want to spiritually be like any of those. Thirdly, children make arbitrary decisions. I mean, as a child they just don't yet have the capacity to consider all the important information before they make a decision. That's just what a child is. They're just arbitrary about things. In Isaiah 3:4 when the prophet said one of the ways he was going to judge Israel, he said, "I will make mere lads their princes, And capricious children will rule over them." So Israel is going to have to suffer under leaders who make just arbitrary and emotional decisions, not principled, mature decisions, and people suffer when they're under leadership who just react arbitrarily or out of their emotions all the time. I think we've got a whole political wing in our culture today who just everything's a knee-jerk drama emotional response instead of sound principles which has made America and Western civilization in general as great as it is.

My three year old granddaughter, she's more arbitrary than most three year olds and she was getting in her grandmother's van the other day and Liz said to her, "Now, don't get my van dirty." And immediately she responded and said, "If an alligator gets in this van, he's going to get water everywhere." Where does that come from? Is that not arbitrary? But that's what makes a child cute and that's funny but you don't want to be like that in your spiritual life where, "Here's just what I'm all about for Jesus. This is my ministry." Boom. "No, I'm going over here. This is what I'm going to do for Jesus."

My, do we not see that in Christianity today, hoping from one thing to another and as I've said before, it's like churches today reinvent themselves every five to seven years. "Here's our new approach! Here's our new thing!" Well, here's the 2,000 year old old thing you need to get down first.

So Paul says, "Don't be like babies in your spiritual life with mental immaturity and with a lack of resolve and with arbitrary decision making." Then, of course, connected to that, they're just naive. Children just don't understand the great danger that can be involved in a lot of the ways they would decide to do something. "Mommy, I'm going over there." Well, over there is across a busy street. They just don't get it. They're naive.

Boy, in Christianity today it's real common for me, I mean just every day to see Christians making decisions and they don't have enough biblical wisdom to know the first two or three steps of the decision you're about to make don't look like much, but you take the first two or three and you're almost always going to take the next three or four and that last domino leads to disaster. They're naive, though. They don't have the wisdom. They don't have the maturity to see where this is going. That's why you need mature, solid, local church families with older men and older women for the young people, the younger generation. I mean, young people, I mean 30s and 40s sometimes. They need to stay under their authorities in their church and say, "I don't understand why you're saying we ought to do it this, this and this way, but I have the maturity to know you guys have already been down the road a ways." Don't be naive. That's the way a child would be.

So he says here no longer be children. Don't be mentally immature, lack of resolve or make arbitrary decisions and be naive in your spiritual walk. I wish I had the person to give credit for this little paragraph but it's a good one. Listen to this, "The immature Christian is gullible and in the history of the church, no group has fallen into more foolishness than has much of the church today. Despite our unprecedented education, sophistication, freedom and access to God's word and sound Christian teaching, it seems that every religious huckster can find a ready hearing and financial support from among God's professing people. The number of foolish, misdirected, corrupt and even heretical leaders to whom many church members willingly will give their allegiance and their money is astounding and heartbreaking. The cause of this spiritual plight is not hard to find. A great many evangelists have preached an easy-believism Gospel and a great many pastors have taught an almost content-less message. In many places, the congregation has not been built up in sound doctrine or in faithful obedience, consequently there is little doctrinal solidarity. There is no unity of the faith," we talked about that a couple of weeks ago, "and also little spiritual maturity."

Now let me cross over, it'll be on your screen, to Hebrews 5:11-14 because as the writer was writing to the Hebrew church, he hit on this same idea of stop being a baby; stop being immature in your spiritual discipline. He says, "Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing." Now here the writer says, "The problem is not your teacher or your teaching, it's you guys aren't listening right. You're dull of hearing." "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." So here we see a spiritual slackness or immaturity or child-likeness and an inattentiveness to Bible preaching.

Now when there is a resistance to strong and clear Bible preaching and teaching, it produces a hardness in your heart and there is a downward spiral in that that you just get harder and harder and harder until you become like Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine," they just won't put up

with it, "We don't want that preaching." "But wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths." It's just very common in so many congregations to find men who have been in the congregation 50, 60 and 70 years and they're acting as childish as a 9 year old. They've refused to go on and go forward and Paul writes to the church at Ephesus and says, "Do you not understand this glorious Gospel of sovereign grace transformed you, has put the Spirit of God in you, has given you special gifts to use in building up and growing the church family, has given you gifted men, not that they're special but God's gift is different, so that they might be able to preach to you and teach to you so that we all can be above the level of children spiritually speaking?"

So that's some characteristics that we've been talking about of immaturity or child-likeness in our spiritual life. He also has some illustrations. He said, "Don't be like children." That's the characteristic, you're like a child in all of those arbitrary, lack of resolve and the other ways we mentioned. But now also in verse 14, we're not to be like children, "tossed here and there by waves, and then carried about by every wind of doctrine." When he says "tossed here and about by waves," I call them the bobber believers. Do y'all use that term when you go fishing? Use a fishing bobber? A float? A cork, whatever it is? And you throw that thing out there and that bobber just kind of bobs along with whatever moves it and you're hoping a fish will move it. But it's just wherever, whatever pushes it next.

I remember so distinctly as a boy, there was a pond not too far from my house. We lived in a new subdivision and there were a lot of farms around us and I just as boy, you know boys will be boys, I fished until I was run off. That's the way it works. So I was fishing in a pond one day and there was a brush pile out in the pond and it had a little indentation in it and I found out if I would pull that bobber right by that little indentation, the wind would blow it up in the bushes and every single time it went up in the bushes, I would catch a nice catfish. I caught about 15 of them. And I thought that's exactly what Paul's talking about here. If you just let the wind blow you along, you're going to get gobbled up. You're going to get swallowed up into something that's going to be a mess. You're not to be a bobber believer, just tossed about.

Then he picks up on that, amplifies it a little bit further in verse 14, he says and "by every wind of doctrine." Just, you know, you read another pamphlet, you listen to another conference, you read another person's book and all of a sudden you're going off in this direction. "I like his..." Doctrine just means teaching. "Now I like this lady saying this. I like this lady saying this." And you're just kind of here and there. He said mature believers don't do that. They can glean some good from a lot of places but they're just not thrown about by every wind of doctrine. I call them the kite-like Christians. You put a kite up in the air, that kite has no mind of its own. It's going to go wherever the wind pushes it.

We don't want to be bobber believers and we don't want to be kite-like Christians. Those are two illustrations he gives that we should not be like this. Now here's the point: if God

has saved you by sovereign grace, chapters 1 through 3 of Ephesians, if God has saved you, he's put spiritual gifts in you and he's put a new love in you for other believers in your local church, if you are busy sharpening, building up one another with your spiritual gifts and if God has given you faithful pastor/teachers and they're preaching to you and exhorting to you, there is no excuse for you to be vulnerable and subject to the misleadings of false teachers and false teaching. Quit being bobbed around by every wave and blown around by every wind. "Well, So-and-so said this." Who cares? What's the book say? Don't be like a child. Have some resolve. You dads, be mature. Don't be silly emotional children. Find out what's right, put your anchor down and say, "We're gonna live and die on these truths. Period." Can I get an amen from our men? Be men. Be men.

Well, some characteristics of the baby believer, some illustrations of baby believers, now let's go to II. some characteristics of mature believers. Some characteristics of a mature believer. First of all, hitting on what I just screamed about, verse 14: he can see through false teaching. The mature believer can see through false teaching. Now he doesn't always see it at first because you do understand that false teaching...as a matter of fact, a person can do false teaching and they themselves not be a false teacher. I mean, a good person can get off track and teach some false doctrine, they get on a tangent and teach something. If that's not true, then you need to fire me. We're all learning and growing and repenting but as you mature, you begin to see through this stuff. Be careful now because there are a lot of teachers out there who throw a lot of Bible verses around and a lot of the same terminology you and I use but it's not sound doctrine. It's a misuse of the word of God.

Notice what he says here. He says don't be blown around by every wind of doctrine. Verse 14, middle part, "by the trickery of men." That phrase "trickery of men" could literally be translated "rolling the dice," and it came to mean any dishonesty, any dishonest use of something or dishonest action. So he's saying, "These guys are tricksters. They're using the Bible and using Gospel language but they're tricky." It's deceptive. It's not sound.

Now Paul said, that's not enough, he uses another phrase, "by the trickery of men and by craftiness." Crafty means the sheer manipulation to make it look good. They take the Bible, they use the Bible in a tricky and crafty way to make it look so solid and so right and so good. And can I say this to you: I mean, you can study the list of heretical false teaching, not just in Christian clothing but heretical philosophies, don't be surprised if most false teaching does not fly the banner of love.

I saw a little part of the documentary on Jim Jones. Do you remember Jim Jones flew all the people to Guyana and they committed mass suicide? I mean, it was all about the special love we have one for another. If you look at the movements of communism and others through the ages that turned out to be total disasters and terrible for the people, it came out with compassion and care and love for all people. Be careful. Don't be surprised if the large amount of false teaching out there, even that clothed in Christian garb, doesn't fly the banner of love. "But we're so loving." The problem is you're going to see it in just

a moment, we're to speak the truth in love. That's where they miss it. A true rightly divided word of truth cloaked in Christian love and that's different than just love that's being misused.

So he says there's a trickery here, there's a craftiness, and he uses the word in the New American Standard in verse 14 by "deceitful scheming." That means this is a systematic program of manipulation and deception they're about. They've got their system worked out.

My goodness, it's amazing. I won't name the particular Christian sect that I'm talking about but I sat down with a Christian leader, actually I was in the airport in Honduras and our flight was delayed and I said, "Well, just share with me how your group, how you came to your conclusions." It was amazing the amount of research and work and study they had put in to have formed the false church and false doctrine they were purporting, proposing or presenting and believing in. That's what this is talking about. These guys had a premeditated systematic approach to their whole error system.

These tricksters with clear manipulation of error and planned systematic teaching blow their doctrines by our churches to lead the sheep astray that they might shear them. 2 Corinthians 4:2, Paul says, "but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Paul says, "I deliberately work to make sure I'm not adulterating, misusing God's truth for some selfish or man-centered end." But just as many families today are dominated by their children, so many churches today are dominated by children, at least in maturity. It is tragic when the church's children, the spiritually immature believers who change their views with every wind of doctrine and continually fall prey to men's trickery and Satan's craftiness and deceitful scheming are found among those influential teachers and leaders in the church.

Well, first of all, a spiritual mature people, there's just something in their spirit that says, "Wait a minute, that don't seem sound." And I'm going to give you and it's going to be what I've told you a million times, I'm going to give you one of the key principles here in just a moment whereby you can discern, "Is this teaching sound teaching?" Alright? It comes right out of the text.

2. Not only can you begin to see through false teaching and false teachers, secondly, you're saturated in truth and in love. In verse 15, he begins by saying, "but speaking the truth in love." Now notice the balance there. Not just love. Are you listening to me, church? You do not get to look into your emotions and find a definition for love. Sorry. Your emotions are tainted and warped and fallen. If you want to know what love is, you go to the book and let the book's truth about love dictate to your emotions. Are you hearing me, church? "But I feel...." So? "I just so feel like...." Well? There's a thousand different "feel likes" out there. We've got to unify around the truth about love. Amen? And where my feelings violate the truth, I rebuke my feelings and get in line with the truth and that's how we have unity.

So we speak the truth in love and what he's saying here is that's how we can keep growing up. In your small group and in your Christian life, if you're fellowshiping with brothers and sisters in Christ, over and over and over again we might have a conversation and one of us is getting off of truth a little bit and your job is to lovingly use the truth to get them back over on track. That's not an unusual thing, that's every day, every moment Christianity. That's what we do together. Now you get a big strong dose of that from your preacher. That's important but we're all to be speaking the truth in love and it always goes together because when I correct you over truth, if I'm mature, it's because I love Jesus first and you're part of his church and I want you to be right for his sake, but I love you second and I love me third. That's real love. It's not about me saying, "Boy, I straightened him out! Buddy, I blistered his...! I tell you, I got him!" That's not love. That's not love. That's harshness and coldness and self-exaltation. The truth matters but always out of a motive of love for Christ and his church more than you. You've got to love Christ and his church more than you love your wife, your husband, your children, or your brothers and sisters in the church. You love Christ and the truth first, and then we love each other.

I think this is a good way to think of it. We always carry with us these two great standards: the velvet of love and the iron of truth. Iron and velvet. The velvet of love and the iron of truth. Look, it's just 100% common for an immature believer to get off track but make sure you deal with them with the iron of truth always wrapped in the velvet of love and a mature body walks that way. Never perfectly but that's the basic pattern that we're on, loving Christ, wanting to make much of his glory through his church, therefore we want brothers and sisters to get on track with sound doctrine and truth, but we always want to handle it out of a motive of love, not just, "Boy, I got them straight!" Yeah, and you're a worse problem for the way you did that than the error they were involved in. I'm preaching to Brother Jeff this morning while I'm preaching to you.

You see, God and the Lord Jesus Christ, he is truth and he is love. To know Christ is to know truth and to know truth is to know love and we are to be saturated in truth and saturated in love and that means we're God saturated. Love is the crescendo of the musical of Christian maturity. Did you hear that? Now listen, people get this wrong, "Well, it's all about love." No, it's not, it's about truth because even the truth defines love. But the truth is when we're all mature, we're treasuring our Christ and treasuring his church and its well-being above everything else and we're lovingly also treasuring one another to that end. It's truth and love all wrapped together.

Well, 3, characteristics of a mature believer: he can begin to see through false teachers or false teaching; he's saturated in truth and love, not one or the other, both/and always; and thirdly, he's saturated in local church body life. Saturated in local church body life. Here Paul comes around again to make very very clear he's talking about how we care for, love, minister to one another in our local churches. We see it there beginning in verse 16, "from whom the whole body," and that has to be the local church body, "being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies." So we're fitted and held together. When we're walking in maturity and love is the theme of our lives and we want to function in truth, then that just holds us to one another. It fits us and it creates a harmony among the diversity and a solidarity.

Then he goes on and says in verse 16, "by what every joint supplies." That means every single member of this local church family has its role to play and it's important. I can function without my elbow joint but I really need it to function well. This morning, my lower back really bothers me. I can function with that but I can function better if it wasn't bothering me. Every joint, every part is needful for the best, mature, impacting function for the body of Christ.

That's why he has this sort of summarizing statement, "according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." The body is this living organism and its growth is produced by this vital power, the power of Christ within each individual part. "From whom," he says in verse 16, the very first part, "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held." It means from Christ. Christ is the source of our individual strength and, thus, the strength and substance of our corporate unity and our corporate love.

So at the end of the day, are you saved? Are you converted? Have you received new spiritual life? If not, none of this matters, none of this works without every individual part being of him. I can't, I mean I'm in 37 years of ministry here, I don't have 37 years of creative, exciting, new stuff to keep you interested. It's going to be Christ in you that causes you to love the church. That's what keeps you going for 37 years and proves God has done something in us.

Well, in conclusion, oh, I said I was going to show you that clear obvious insight on how to test a teacher, a preacher, a spiritual person you happen to know at work. Here's the test. Are you listening to me? Do they love the local church? Do they love the local church? Now, got to have some balances here as I've said many times. Perhaps they're just immature and don't yet understand the local church is the wisdom of God and the power of God at work on the earth. They just haven't come to grasp that. They haven't come to grasp that yet. They just need to keep growing. They're just immature and need to keep growing. That's okay. Everybody needs to grow. But some people set themselves up as, "I'm gonna do this for God and I'm gonna do that for God," and you think, "Are they really sound? They've been at this a long time." If there's not a passionate love for God's wisdom and God's truth of the local church, then something serious is missing. Something bad is missing.

I mean, here the apostle is and everything in his instruction to Christians so far is all about the local church family. Why? Because Paul loved the local church because Jesus loves the local church and if you're really mature, you love Jesus and love what Jesus loves. This whole notion and it's so common in the proud and independent spirit that is in the spiritual realms of American culture, you might say, and that is, "Yes, I joined a church. Everybody is supposed to do that, but my heart, my ministry is out there somewhere." No, it may be fine to have something out there somewhere but your heart should be in the church. And I know this is a fact: there are men and women who for decades have been in very weak, unspiritual congregations and so they didn't really have a love for the church and they were troubled by that, but what you do find is they had a

longing to find a true church that they could love like that. It's always in there if there's any maturity at all.

Well, we certainly don't want to be what I talked about earlier, a bobber believer. Bob, bob, bob this way and bob, bob, bob over this way. No telling where he's going to be next month. We don't want to be a kite-like Christian, just blown here and blown there with every wind of doctrine. I'll tell you what we want to be: we want to be a buoy believer. There are buoys all in the Tennessee River over here. They are out in the ocean. You know, I'm sure it happens but I've never known any of them to just drift off somewhere. They just don't drift off. They stay right there. Do you know why? Because there's a cable going from that buoy down into the depths of the water and down into the riverbed or the seafloor and anchored in concrete or maybe on a rock, and a storm may come and while that storm is raging that buoy may lean over one way a little bit, but as soon as the wind lets up, boom, it comes right back where it's supposed to be. That's maturity. That's Christian maturity right there. This blows by, "Well, that looks pretty interesting. Wait a minute, wait a minute, that wasn't really right. Get back in line here." The wind blows the other way, "Well, I kind of like this. Well, wait a minute, that wasn't really solid." That's what a buoy does, it just always comes back right. The cable is the truth and the seabed is Christ. You're anchored in Christ, you might just say anchored in truth. When you're anchored there, you don't blow off very much.

Now I'm challenging some of you this morning to stop being a bobber believer and stop being a kite-like Christian. Anchor your heart down to where Jesus' heart is, that's God's local church and dive in and get in on it and keep building up the body in love and in truth until you breathe your last breath and you can go to your Father and say, "That was your wisdom and I was a part of your wisdom on earth." Be a buoy believer.