

The Blessing Of Maturity – 1Corinthians 13:11-13

Bible Study ~ 5/10/17

Grace Church of Lockeford

This passage depicts for us maturity that takes place in this life and in the life to come. There are three aspects of maturity discussed in these verses. **First, we learn that...**

1. Maturity Involves Transformation v. 11

There is a necessary transformation in maturity. Paul mentions three specific areas in which there needs to be transformation. Transforming from child to adult in our speech, understanding, and thinking.

Speaking

How does a child talk? The words and concepts are not fully formed. They speak about things that are not appropriate to the time or occasion. Essentially, they say whatever comes into their head. That is not a mature way to talk. If we are to put away childish speech, we must know when it is or is not appropriate to mention certain things. If I am talking about something inappropriate to the setting or situation, I am childish in my speech. Mature speech is characterized by grace, seasoned with wisdom and care (*Col. 4:6*).

Understanding

The word “understood” means *To set one’s mind on*. What does a child set its mind on? Whatever it wants! The desires and wants of a child always take first place in its mind and heart. They really only think about what concerns them. Any difficult thought or concept is simply cast aside. The attitude is “if it doesn’t concern me, it doesn’t need to be considered!” A child is focused on the here and now. On immediate gratification at the expense of the future. If I am setting my mind on self and the moment, I am childish in my understanding. Mature understanding is focused on others and recognizes that eternal reward is often dependent upon self-denial.

Thinking

“Thought” is the idea of logic. Have you ever noticed how logic can be absolutely lost on a child? “You can have 1 candy now, or 2 candies after rest time.” Candy now! When we are first saved, we have a child’s reasoning. That changes as we mature in Christ. We move away from instant gratification and self-centered ideas and into eternity living and a focus on others.

Childish things are to be “put away”. “Put away” is the Greek word *καταργέω* (*katargeo*) meaning *wipe out; set aside; abolish. To stop (discontinue) – to put an end to a state or an activity*. The behavior that characterizes a child has no place in the mature believer! Speaking, understanding, and thinking as a child is to be set aside or abolished. Stop it! They have no place in the life of a mature believer. The heart of the childish things mentioned here is that of selfishness. A mature believer is others-centered. Maturity involves this process of transformation. **Secondly...**

2. Maturity Involves Information v. 12

This can be a difficult verse. There are two primary interpretations of this verse and the problem is that both are true and taught in Scripture. Yet only one can properly be found here. These two interpretations are that this verse speaks of seeing Christ. Knowing Him face to face as we are known by Him. The second is that this refers to knowing ourselves. Now we are only dimly aware of who we are, especially who we are in Christ, and we will know perfectly in glory. We shall know ourselves as we are known.

In context I believe that the second options fits better. Paul is writing about the use and abuse of Spiritual gifts. Christ is not the topic of conversation. We will know Christ, but that is not taught here. That is taught in *1John 3:2*.

Regardless, the gist of the verse remains the same. We see in a mirror dimly. Our understanding is limited, our knowledge is limited. The picture isn't clear. But, there is coming a day that we anticipate seeing face to face! One day the information will be clear. It will be understandable. One day we will know without obstruction. Right now we know in part; then we will know as we are known. As we mature in Christ, we see a little more clearly each day. That is something we are to strive for as we anticipate an unobstructed view of self and Christ in the future. What a blessing to know that in heaven our knowledge will be complete. We will have all the information as well as the ability to understand it!
Thirdly...

3. Maturity Involves Prioritization v. 13

There should be a desire within all of us to major on major things. To prioritize the things that Christ emphasizes. The statement made in this verse is completely clear. We have faith, hope, and love. We need to learn how to prioritize the most important. That is love.

This means that in the exercising of Spiritual gifts, in the function of the body of Christ, we are to emphasize love. We need to know our priorities.

What this does not mean is that faith and hope are unimportant. We are repeatedly commanded to know what we believe. To know doctrine and theology. We are also commanded to always keep the expectation of Christ's return before us. But, if we emphasize knowledge over love, we become stale. If we emphasize hope over love we become either lazy or goal oriented to the point that people are just statistics. Love is what provides us the balance that is necessary. Faith will become sight. Hope (expectation) will become reality. Love will remain!

The blessing here is that when we all prioritize the right thing, there is unity of faith and hope as well.

We are to be seeking maturity in all these ways. Seek to be mature in speech, understanding, and thought. Seek maturity in knowing ourselves and Christ. Seek maturity in the exercise of love. When we do, there is great blessing!

CHALLENGE: Mature in Christ as you come to know Him more and make love a priority.

V. 11

Child – νήπιος *nēpios* *infant; child. Infant – a very young child; often of a child still nursing. Adjective (predicate), nominative, singular, masculine.*

Understood – φρονέω *phroneō* *think; set one's mind on. To think thus – to dispose the mind in a certain way. Finite verb, imperfect, active, indicative, first person, singular.*

Thought – λογίζομαι *logizomai* *consider; count; credit. To think (reason) – to use or exercise the mind or one's power of reason in order to make inferences, decisions, or arrive at a solution or judgments. Finite verb, imperfect, either middle or passive, indicative, first person, singular.*

Put away – καταργέω *katargeō* *wipe out; set aside; abolish. To stop (discontinue) – to put an end to a state or an activity. Finite verb, perfect, active, indicative, first person, singular.*

V. 12

Dimly – αἰνίγμα *ainigma* *riddle; indirect image. Abstruse thing – something difficult to penetrate mentally; incomprehensible to one of ordinary understanding or knowledge. Noun, dative, singular, neuter.*

Face – πρόσωπον prosōpon *presence; face. Presence ⇔ face – the presence or proximity of someone understood in terms of the face; with the implication of being before or in front of them.* Noun, accusative, singular, neuter.

Know – γινώσκω ginōskō *know. To know (experientially) – to know or have knowledge about (someone or something); normally as acquired through observation or the senses.* Verb, present, active, indicative, first person, singular.

Know – ἐπιγινώσκω epiginōskō *know; recognize. To recognize – to discern something clearly and distinctly, or as true and valid; often with a personal acquaintance that necessitates a reaction.* Verb, future, middle, indicative, first person, singular.

Known – Same as above. Verb, aorist, passive, indicative, first person, singular.

V. 13

Abide – μένω menō *remain; stay; reside. To continue – to continue a certain state, condition, or activity.* Finite verb, present, active, indicative, third person, singular.

Greatest – μείζων meizōn *great; loud. Greater – greater in size or importance or degree.* Predicate adjective, nominative, singular, feminine, comparative.