

- i) We are to be Ignorant of Evil, and Lovers of Good
 - a) Small child, infant
 - i) The concept of childhood here is different than in other parts of Scripture
 - (1) ranges of meaning in terms in careful Bible reading
 - ii) This has the idea of ignorance, not dependence
 - (1) Thus the previous analogy of "babbling" which is incomprehensible lack of knowledge
 - b) We are not to be ignorant in a very particular area: our thinking
 - i) This does not necessarily have to do with intellect, but rather with worldview, i.e. what is the 'knowledge' on which one bases all of reality upon
 - ii) Every sphere of life is based upon fundamental beliefs about what is true, what is *valuable*, what is good
 - (1) The Corinthians were acting like children because they were *valuing* power more than love, i.e. acting like toddlers who both wanted the same toy.
 - (2) The Corinthians were acting like children because they were seeking gifts of power, works of power, at the expense of others' flourishing and growth and edification.
 - (a) Mine, mine, mine! Me, me, me!
 - (3) It is not enough to simply know the truth intellectually, but rather to value the truth and to lean hard into it as true.
 - (a) It is a valuation issue: infants don't value things rightly, but mature people do.
 - (4) Therefore, don't value evil, but value the knowledge of God and His world
 - iii) We are not to be ignorant in regards to our understanding of what is true, valuable, and good.
 - (1) What is true, valuable, and good? See Jesus.
- ii) We are to be Mature Image-Bearers of God
 - a) Mature, reaching the end of what you are supposed to be - consistent with the fullness of purpose, potential, and righteousness
 - i) Telos – completing the purpose for which something is intended
 - ii) Therefore, it is not merely about maturity, but about attaining the goal for which one was made
 - iii) We are to think, understand, evaluate, and discern the value of things consistent with the God in whose image we were created
 - (1) This means that we are to consider and value the way that our Father does, i.e. like God.
 - (a) When we were unsaved, we thought and reasoned like our first father, Adam, and the master who held us captive, the Devil (John 8:40-44; 1 John 3:8-10; Matt 13:38)
 - (2) Now, having been redeemed from slavery and fully adopted into the family of God, not merely with paper and ink, but with the very Holy Spirit of God indwelling us, we are to think newly
 - (a) Romans 12:2
 - (b) Titus 3:1-7
 - (c) 1 Pet 1:14-19

- b) This maturity, or completion, has to do with seeing the eternal things, the things which last, suited for God's glory and God's presence in peace and flourishing
 - i) 2 Cor 4:16-18
 - ii) Col 3:10
 - iii) This renewal of the inner person is according to a true and accurate knowledge of eternal things, the things which are rooted and patterned on the God in whose image we are made
 - (1) Following Col 3:10-17 we see what maturity of knowledge looks like, for it is actions consistent with a heart seeking God's glory and the mutual edification of others because of God's great grace and mercy towards us
 - (a) "holy and beloved"
 - (i) The distinct way in which the church lives points to the distinct God.
 - (ii) The loving way in which the church lives towards one another points to the God how loves others.
 - (b) Edification, mutual flourishing, is the goal of our interactions with one another, for this is the mature life, which is righteousness
 - (c) This is not merely a command to follow, but the result of the worldview which is consistent with how and what God has made the world to exist for His glory and the flourishing of His Creation
 - (d) This will be perfected when Jesus returns and eradicates the presence of sin, but in the meantime, by God's Spirit, the Church is progressing towards this goal in ever-deepening dependence upon God's Spirit, based upon the finished and promised work of Christ Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, with hope in God's finishing what He started
- c) This consistency with God's image, in all our heart, soul, mind, and strength is the mature and complete fulfillment of what it means to be human.

iii) How Does Mature Understanding Reflect God's Image Rightly?

- a) The local church exists to make the gospel visible to the world.
 - i) The truth and values we *portray* reveal the gospel which we *proclaim*
 - ii) The Corinthians were very knowledgeable, but their actions were inconsistent with the knowledge they obtained - hypocrisy
- b) We make the gospel visible by expressing the truth in three primary ways:
 - i) The truth of who God is
 - (1) Holy
 - (a) This church should be so distinct from the world that we reveal the distinct God to the degree that the world knows the distinction.
 - (b) We ought to be sacred, not casual in our gatherings, standing on principles of righteousness and humble in the real presence of the Almighty God.
 - (c) People should be falling on their faces because the distinction of our God as evidenced by the distinction of our message and the distinction of our lives
 - (i) We tend to treat casualness as signs of authenticity, but the Scripture does not reveal authenticity in the presence of God that way:
 1. Job authentically repented in dust and ashes when He knew the Lord
 2. Isaiah authentically called doom down upon himself when He saw the Lord
 3. Ezekiel authentically fell on His face in the presence of the Holy One

4. Peter authentically begged Jesus to leave him alone when He saw Jesus' power

(d) Do our gatherings portray the immensity of God to the point of humility like this?

(2) Loving

(a) These relationships together should be so full of compassion and kindness and gentleness and forgiveness and mutual edification, living for the flourishing of others that we reveal the God who loves sinners

(b) The fruit of the Spirit should distinguish our gatherings together, the maturity of the saints in the characteristics of God

(i) An individual who exemplifies this type of maturity can draw attention

(ii) But a community which exemplifies this type of maturity reveals a picture of what humanity can look like under the reign of God.

(3) Authority

(a) God instituted authority and submission because He is both in His triunity

(i) 2 Samuel 23:3-4

(ii) When we live in communities where we experience firm, gentle, patient correction in attentively guiding care for one another, we live.

(iii) There is a God who both loves us and corrects us, who rules us and who gives His life for us.

(b) But when we abuse authority or dishonor authority we tell an evil lie about God, and people see and hear it.

(i) We must build a community where trust might not be fully earned, but is extended by divine grace

(ii) We must build a community whose leadership rules with fervency and the fear of God, with patience and love for the people, and who carry crosses for the sake of others

ii) The truth of who Humanity is

(1) Created in the Image of God: the Dignity of All

(a) Showing great respect to one another and treating people of all types and situations in life with dignity and respect, *because* we believe that all people are created in the image of God and therefore have objective foundation for dignity

(b) Our churches should be characterized by friendships and relationship which cross natural boundaries and animosities.

(i) When we live dignifying even our enemies, we exemplify the truth of God, who loved us while we were enemies

(ii) A church is not only for people of one social group, one ethnic group, or one economic profile, etc., because God is the Father of all people

(c) A church that lives out what it preaches regarding the value of each member points back to what is proclaimed – God is the Maker of all and every human is made in His image

(2) Crooked All the Way Down: the Depravity of All

(a) Yet, it's not all puppy dogs and rainbows: we exist as dependent people, confessional people, REAL people with REAL sins and REAL struggles

(b) The local church must be a place where people see that God loves strugglers and sinners and not simply self-righteous nice people.

- (i) We preach about sin, its devastating effects, our desire to master it and not be mastered by it, and the necessity of God's mercies for it
- (ii) It is also a place where we are so committed to the Holy God that we fight against sin together in mutual commitment and affirmations of God's holiness and make ourselves morally visible to others for purpose of holiness
- (c) We live and breathe repentance and the continual recognition of the need for present mercies and present grace from God, where humility is honored and moral self-satisfaction is dishonored

iii) The truth of who Christ is

(1) Person

- (a) Fully God offering forgiveness and mercy by paying down the price of our depravity and restore the image of God fully
 - (i) Incarnate God worthy of all love, affection, power, honor, and authority
- (b) Fully Human offering compassion and understanding, showing us what it means to be fully human, in dependence upon His Father for all things empowered by the Holy Spirit for the flourishing of life

(2) Work

- (a) God has forgiven us because Jesus paid down our sin-debt, so the local church should be a community where forgiveness is freely offered as well
 - (i) We know we love God, not because of great powerful spiritual gifts, or because of great movements of our affections or emotions in tears, but because we lay down our lives for our brothers, just as Jesus did for us. (1 John 3:14-16)
- (b) Love and Holiness at the Cross of Christ
 - (i) Mutual love and affection which lays down its own power and strength for the sake of others, just like Jesus did for us, forgiving fully and constantly, moving toward sinners with affection and compassion in gentleness characterizes a mature church
 - (ii) Justice, righteousness, and truth-speaking which reveals sin, which hates it as something which betrays the Christ who died because of it, and which mutually seeks to honor God in holiness because He has wrath against sin which destroys His creation characterizes a mature church

iv) We Need to Hear of This God in Whose Image We Have Been Made in Order to Mature

- a) Paul quotes from Isa 28:11 about God's judgment upon the nation of Israel for rejecting His Word by calling other nations (Gentiles) to hear and respond to Him
 - i) Yet, even this advance of the gospel did not persuade them, in only confirmed their unbelief
- b) Thus, the fact that tongues are a sign for unbelievers is an indication of the gospel moving outward from its Jewish hometown into the world of the nations
 - i) These 'tongues', then, were understood by the unbelievers *from other nations* and a judgment upon Israel's rejection *as those who had the oracles of God*, but prophecy was used to bring the conviction of God's Word to those who spoke that language
 - ii) In fact, in Acts 2 (Pentecost), when Jews and proselytes from various nations heard these 'tongues' they recognized their own native languages, and it was a 'sign' to them of the gospel moving from Hebraic Israel to the nations

- c) But it is the gospel spoken in language that the ‘unskilled’ and ‘outsiders’ can understand and they enter into your time of worship to investigate, will be moved by the revelation of God
- i) Clearly these tongues are not understood by the unbelievers mentioned here, for they are called ‘unskilled’ and the result of their hearing would be to label the Church as ‘crazy’
 - ii) Rather, upon hearing the word proclaimed in a way they could understand, from mature knowledge of God, consistently explained and applied to life, has the following results:
 - (1) He is convicted by the Church’s message
 - (a) ‘brought to light, exposed’
 - (2) He is called to account by the whole Church’s message
 - (a) ‘examined, investigated’
 - (b) The idea is that when they are brought to light, their heart and deeds laid bare before God, whose story shows their exclusion from true life, what is exposed and revealed about them is then *discerned* to be wanting
 - (3) The secrets of his heart are revealed
 - (a) When God is proclaimed, and His majesty and glory and immensity revealed to the mind of man, it becomes very clear that our hearts and desires and affections have betrayed Him
 - (b) This is terror of the holy
 - (i) ‘depart from me, for I am a sinful man’ (Luke 5:1-10)
 - (ii) ‘woe is me, for I am cut off’ (Isa 6:5)
 - (4) He will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you!
 - (a) Humility and a plea for mercy is the result not of tongues, but of prophecy
 - (b) Worship is the result of seeing the grandeur of God
 - (c) This humble conviction, the ‘fear of the Lord’, is the beginning of wisdom and of life
 - (i) Without it, there is no faith
 - (ii) Repentance always precedes faith, logically, and repentance always begins with this type of fear of the Lord

Our congregation should be a place full of love and mercy, justice and righteousness, where words are proclaimed AND lived out consistently with them. This is human maturity and human flourishing, the kind of proclamation in word and deed, that when unbelievers and unknowledgeable come in, hear and see, and fall on their face declaring that God is certainly among them. May it be so. Let it be so. Amen.