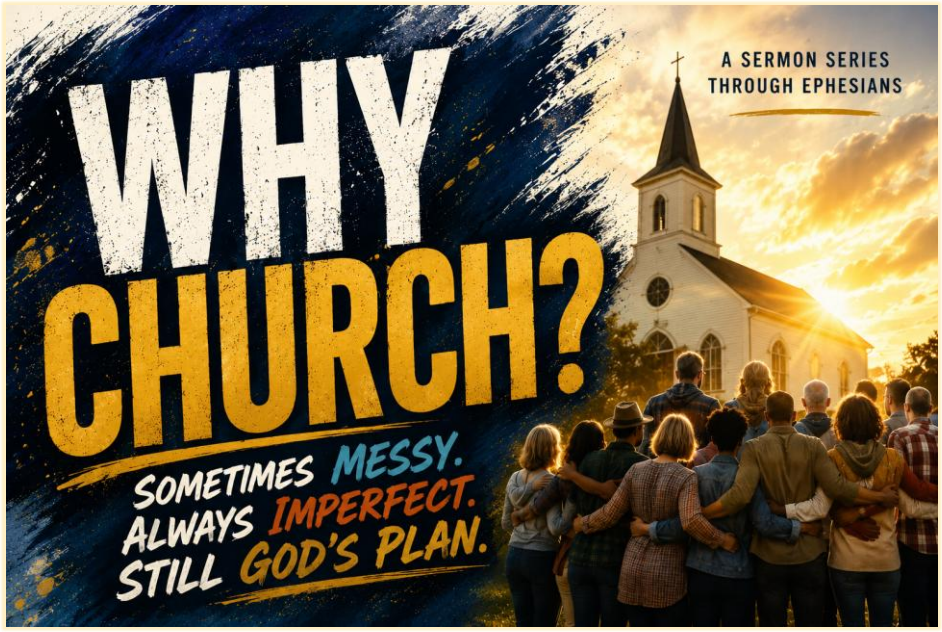


The Church Jesus is Building
Ephesians 4:7-16

Have you ever seen a sign outside a restaurant or business: “Under construction. Excuse our mess?” You understand what’s happening. Work is underway. It isn’t finished. But there’s more to come.

Now, you could also get hurt at that construction site. You could trip over a tool carelessly left in the walkway. You could step

on a nail. Suddenly, “Excuse our mess” doesn’t feel like quite enough. You understand work is happening. But you wish someone had been more careful. You might even decide you’re never going back.

Something like that can happen at church.

We need to acknowledge that. Being under construction doesn’t excuse carelessness with people. We’ve been asking, *Why Church?* We’ve acknowledged that church is sometimes messy. Even so, Jesus is at work among us! In Ephesians 4:7–16, we see the church Jesus is building: a people who are servants, a people who are solid, and a people who are supportive.

Let’s look at what Jesus is building—and our part in it.

Jesus is building a people who are servants (Verses 7-12).
These verses can be read as a chiasm—a mirrored structure:

A But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

B Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”

C (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?

C[1] He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

B[1] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,
A[1] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

A: God’s grace is given to each of us for salvation and service.
B: God gives these servants to equip his people for service.
C: This provision flows from Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension, that he might “fill all things” (Read Eph.1:10).

Jesus is building a people who are solid (Verses 13-14).

People who are Solid	People who are Not

Jesus is building a people who are supportive (Verses 15-16).

We *began with a sign: "Under construction. Excuse our mess." We also recognized that people can get hurt where construction is happening. The work doesn't excuse the hurt. And the hurt doesn't mean Jesus has stopped working. If you've been hurt by the church—your worst experience of church needn't be your last experience of it. If all you can see is the mess, remember: the mess isn't the whole story. Jesus is at work! And for each of us, three questions: How am I becoming a* ***servant,*** *using what he has given me? How am I*

*becoming **solid**, grounded in the faith? How am I becoming **supportive**—and willing to be supported—as we follow Jesus together? Why Church? Because the church is still God's plan. And Jesus is still building!*

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