

Love in the End Times

1) The Church Builds Itself Up In Love

'And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold'

(Matt.24:12)

- ✓ **Many who trust in false prophets will fall away because their faith was in these and not in Christ**
- ✓ **Their love for the true believers will grow cold**
- ✓ **They will embrace more lawlessness**
- ✓ **But true believers will endure these times and will continue taking the gospel to the nations**

'But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God'

(2 Tim.3:2-4)

- **In the last days difficult times will come**
- **These seasons will come and go, but the last will be worse than the first '*...evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse...*' (2 Tim.3:13)**
- **Paul speaks of the future ('will') as if they will build to a climax towards the end**
- **More intensive and extensive**
- **Love will be focused on self, money and pleasure rather than, i.e., in the place of, God**

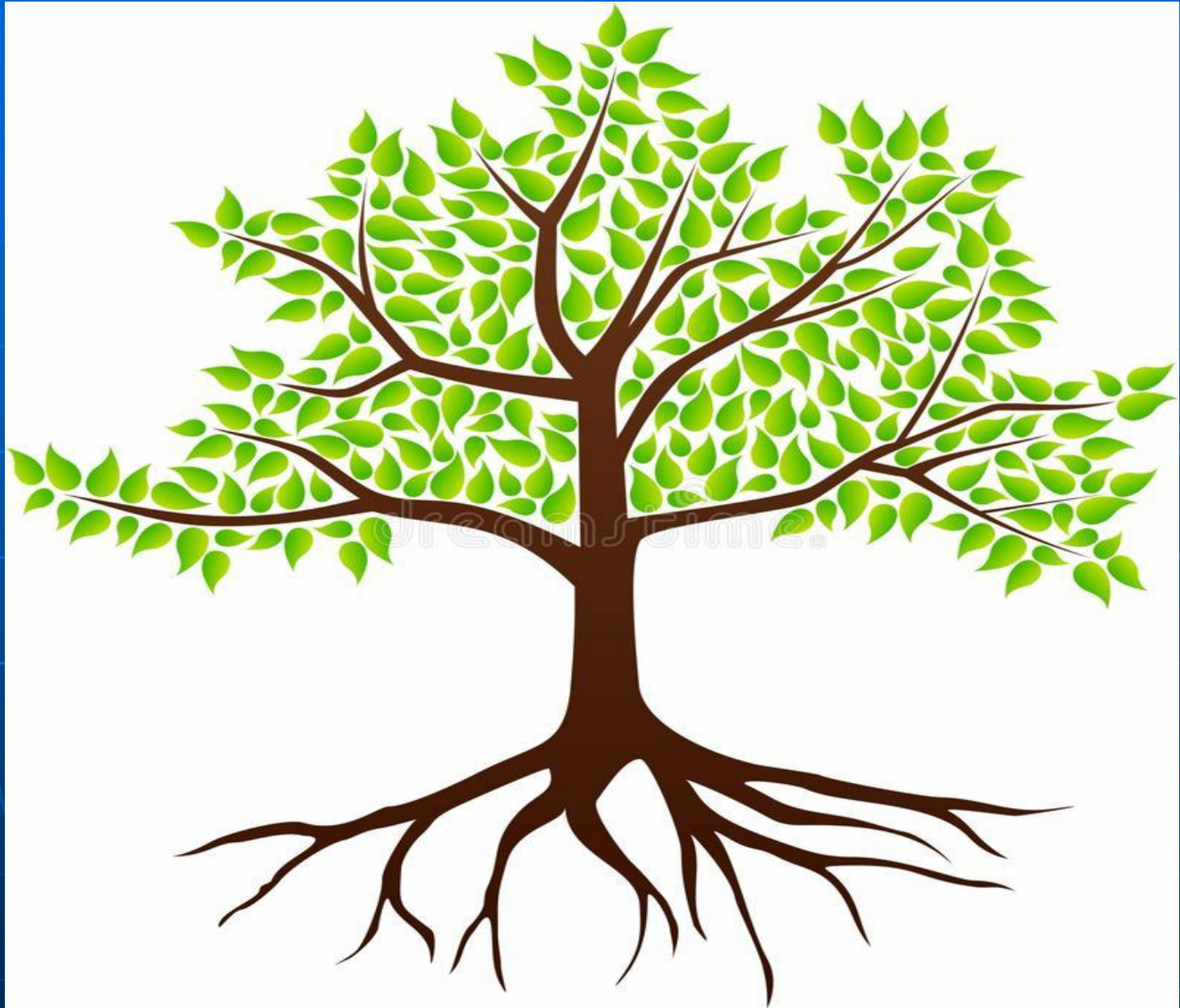
**While the world is taken up with the love of self,
pleasure and money; and the love of many
whose roots are not in Christ grows cold, God
is doing something special in the church**

Paul's prayer:

***'...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through
faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in
love, may be able to comprehend with all the
saints what is the width and length and depth
and height — to know the love of Christ which
passes knowledge; that you may be filled with
all the fullness of God'***

(Eph.3:17-19)

- **Is this God's love to us or our love to Him and to each other?**
- **It is all as the next chapter makes clear**
- **The branches of a tree are as long as its roots**
- **The more we know we are loved by God the more we will love each other**



'And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...' (Eph.4:11-12)

The gifts of 4:11 are permanent. They are for the *equipping* of the saints so that we can all participate in the work of the ministry

***Katartismos* – healing what is dislocated so that it can be useful again**

A dislocated limb is still a member of the body. It's just out of place and unable to function as it should in the body

The nature of that ministry is now explained:

***'...till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...'* (Eph.4:13)**

'Till' – stands grammatically for indefinite future; expected, but not definite

In terms of position, we are perfect and complete in Him. But in terms of growth we are on a journey towards unity, maturity and intimacy

- ✓ **Our unity is in Him. It is organic**
- ✓ **There is nothing that will automatically cause us to *experience* unity other than to focus on Jesus and place our trust in Him**
- ✓ **What is Christianity? It is Christ. Nothing else**
- ✓ **Christianity is the good news that truth is found in a Person**
- ✓ **Conversion is more than a change in direction; it's a change in connection**
- ✓ **Christian community is experienced through connection with that Person. He is our life**

- ✓ **Intimacy is dependent on the knowledge of the Son of God. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**
- ✓ **Paul was clear about His righteousness in Christ, but still wanted to know Him more (Phil.3:10-12)**
- ✓ **'We all' - we enjoy intimacy with Him in community, Eph.3:17-19**
- ✓ **The mystery of Christ is made known by apostles and prophets**
- ✓ **Then vertical grace becomes horizontal grace**
- ✓ ***'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord' (Col.3:16)***

✓ **Maturity**. The term 'a perfect man' means one who has reached the end of one's process of development

'... that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...' (Eph.4:14)

Children are characterized by 3 things:

- ✓ **Infantility in understanding**
- ✓ **Instability in behavior**
- ✓ **Infiltration of false teaching**

*'I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent
deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your
minds may be corrupted from the simplicity
that is in Christ'*

(2 Cor.11:3)

'...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love'

(Eph.4:15-16)

How do we go from being 'no longer children' to 'growing up into Him in all things' unto 'a perfect man'

By speaking the truth in love

Error arises in a vacuum of truth