

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for

August 10, 2025

*"Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants,
but in your thinking be mature." – 1Corinthians 14:20*



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“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Colossians 1:25-28

Leader: *Of this church I (Paul) was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit,*

People: **So that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God,**

Leader: *That is, the mystery (sacrament) which has been hidden from the past ages and generations,*

People: **But has now been manifested to His saints,**

Leader: *To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery (sacrament) among the Gentiles,*

People: **Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

Leader: *We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete (or “mature man”, or “perfect man”)*

People: **In Christ.**

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – Hebrews 5:8-9

***Hymn #649** – “More Love to Thee, O Christ”

Scripture Reading – Hebrews 5:11-6:19

Ancient Creedal Proclamation – Apostles Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

[Gifts labeled “Deacon’s Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

***Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Sung Psalm #1A** – “That Man is Blessed”

Prayers of the Church & Lord's Prayer (sins)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reformation Creedal Reading – Westminster Larger Catechism, 77.

Leader: *Wherein do justification (being declared righteous) and sanctification (being made holy) differ?*

People: **Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification,**

1Cor 6:11

1Cor 1:30

Leader: *Yet they differ, in that God in justification*

Rom 4:6,8

People: **Imputes the righteousness of Christ;**

Leader: *In sanctification of His Spirit infuses grace,*

Ezek 36:27

People: **And enables to the exercise thereof;**

Leader: *In the former (justification), sin is pardoned;*

Rom 3:24-25

People: **In the other, it is subdued:**

Rom 6:6,14

Leader: *The one (justification) does equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life,*

Rom 8:33-34

People: **That they never fall into condemnation**

Leader: *The other (sanctification) is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any,*

1John 2:12-14; Heb 5:12-14

1John 1:8,10

People: **But growing up to perfection.**

2Cor 7:1; Phil 3:12-14

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Ephesians 4:11-16

***Gloria Patri #735** (red hymnal)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Sermon – “Mature”

***Hymn #642** – “Be Thou My Vision”

***Benediction**

Everyone is welcome to Coffee Hour Fellowship downstairs after church today

Announcements

- Pastor Doug would like to thank Jon for preaching while he was on vacation and all those who help keep TRC running.
- Starting on Sunday, September 7, we will be back to our normal schedule:
 - 9:00-10:00 AM Sunday School for all ages
 - 10:30 AM **Lord's Day Worship**
 - c.11:45 AM Fellowship Time

- Pastor Doug would like to know if there is any desire of an ***additional study this fall?***
 - Sunday School for all ages will return on September 7th.
 - Wednesday Study (6:30-8:00 PM) will be returning with a study of the Book of Hebrews on September 10th. The Alpha Club will return on the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays.
 - If you have a suggestion for another study could you email pastor Doug, or give him a note. Is there a particular topic you would like (Introduction to the basic doctrines? Church history? Denomination overview?)
Is there a particular time you would like to meet?
Would you want it via Zoom?

ONLINE RESOURCES

TRC's Webpage:	TrinityReformedCT.org
TRC's Facebook Page:	facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/
TRC's Youtube Channel:	youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT
Pastor Doug's	youtube.com/simplyreformed
Youtube Channels:	youtube.com/@PilgrimsOfPlunder

INTERNET PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any prayer requests for our prayer chain, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: **trcnwprayer@gmail.com**. (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

LEADERSHIP

Elders:	Rev. Douglas Aldrich, pastor	860-379-1147	douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net
	Bob Ensminger	860-485-8738	robert.ensminger@arthurgrussell.com
	Rich Gabelmann	860-605-7852	rgabelmann0415@gmail.com
	Rev. Jonathan Haulenbeek	203-709-0784	jhaulenbeek@icloud.com
Deacons:	David Mattson (chair), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Dean Winters		
Sunday School:	Verna Aldrich, Vika Winters	Music Coordinator:	Cindy Rines
Clerk:	Sheryl Gabelmann	Treasurer:	Cindy Rines

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Worship Starts At: 10:30 AM (9:30 AM in the summer)

Sunday Worship At: Winchester Grange (100 Newfield Rd; Winchester Center, CT 06098)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 343; Riverton, CT 06065 – Phone: (860) 238-7399

Webpage: trinityreformedct.org – Email: trinityreformedct@gmail.com

Sermon Notes

Ephesians 4:11-16

"Maturity"

August 10, 2025

Introduction

- 1) It is good to be back!
 - a) Thanks to Jon, the elders, deacons, and everyone who labors for this local church.
 - b) It is greatly appreciated.
- 2) Over my vacation I realized we have something that is rare for a Congregational church:
A fairly mature church.
 - a) Pastoring a somewhat mature church is very different then pastoring a church almost as a missionary (my main calling throughout my life).
 - b) When compared to other conservative Congregational churches we are doing well:
Unity, good elders & deacons, fellowship, etc. Two examples:
 - i) Zoom meeting with other Reformed Congregationalists in the USA.
 - ii) Realization that if I polled the congregation on whether Scripture is the authoritative word of God you would be offended.
 - c) We are far from perfect and have a lot of work to do.
- 3) Scripture, especially in the New Testament, frequently talks about being mature.¹
 - a) From our sermon text:
 - i) We are to be "*a mature man*". – Ephesians 4:13b
 - ii) "*We are to grow up in all aspects*". – Ephesians 4:15b
 - b) We will return to our expository series on 1Samuel 1-8 very soon, however, I would like to do a few sermons on being mature.

Overview of Ephesians

- 1) Ephesians is one of the greatest books in the Bible.
- 2) In Pastor Doug's opinion it is probably the most important short book (6 chapters) in the Bible.
 - a) The first three chapters are about God's calling of His Church.
 - i) It gives one of the most detailed, yet short, descriptions of the Gospel in the Bible with an incredible focus on the sovereignty of God.
 - ii) Ephesians 2:1-10 is my favorite Gospel witnessing text in the Bible.
 - iii) Only Romans goes deeper, though it takes 8 chapters.
 - b) The final three chapters are about the conduct of the church.
 - i) With maybe the exception of 2Corinthians, no other book so focuses on the catholic/universal church.

¹ Ps 92:12-14; Prov 4:18; Matt 5:48; 13:23; John 15:1-8; Acts 20:32; Rom 8:29; 12:1-2; 1Cor 2:6; 3:1-3; 13:11; 14:20; 2Cor 3:18; Gal 4:19; 5:22-25; Eph 3:16-19; 4:11-16; Phil 1:9-11; 3:12-16; Col 1:9-10,28; 2:6-7; 3:10; 1Thes 3:12-13; 4:1; 2Thes 1:3; Heb 5:12-14; 6:1; James 1:2-4; 1Pet 2:2; 2Pet 1:5-8; 3:18.

- ii) Extraordinary passages about apostolic authority, unity in the Spirit, the Christian walk, being imitators of God, union with Christ (like marriage), the effect of the faith on the family, and putting on the armor of God.
- c) Note the order: God > Gospel > Church > Individual Believer.
 - i) This is fundamentally contrary to all modern teaching, whose main god is the autonomous self.
 - ii) And all too often the modern evangelical church falls into the trap of hyper, autonomous, individualism.
- 3) As you mature in anything you are able to handle more complex things.
 - a) Correctly discerning between more nuanced positions.
 - b) For example, instead of a church trying to decide if the Bible is authoritative, it no discerns the meaning and details of how the Lord's Supper should be worked out.
 - c) Be the way, we will be going to weekly communion soon, but not starting in September, the elders need more time to work on a communion policy.

Ephesians 4:11 – Foundation

- 1) In Ephesians 4:11 Paul lists 4 (or 5) groups of church officers the Lord Jesus speaks through:
 - a) Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists & Pastor-Teachers.
 - i) There is debate whether Pastor-Teacher is one office or two separate offices.
 - ii) Note, all these terms have different nuanced meanings depending on the context. (Like the modern word "captain.")
 - b) **Apostles**, in the narrow sense, refers to those special unique officers of the church that were handpicked by the Lord Jesus to found His church. They had unique authority, which today is found in the New Testament.

Matt 10:1-4; Luke 6:12-16
 John 14:25-26
 Acts 1:1-2,21-26
 2Cor 12:12; Eph 2:20
 - c) **Prophets**, in the narrow NT sense, were those first generation leaders of the church called to proclaim Christ, very similar to the Apostles.

Acts 11:27-28; 15:32; 21:10
 1Cor 12:28-29; 14:29-33; 13:1
 Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; 1Thes 2:15
 - d) **Evangelists** are those who go out and proclaim the Gospel.

Acts 21:8; Eph 4:11; 2Tim 4:5
 - e) **Pastor-Teachers**, or teaching & preaching elders, are the ordinary office continued in the church that teaches and proclaims the Word to a local church.

Acts 20:28; 1Pet 5:1-4
 1Tim 3:1-2; 4:13; 5:17
 2Tim 4:1-2; Titus 1:5-9
- 2) Easy to get lost in a lot of (important) secondary questions (e.g. "Does prophecy still exist today?")²
 - a) The big picture is clear: God, through Christ as found in Scripture, has spoken with clarity.

Matt 22:31; 2Tim 3:16-17; Heb 1:1-2
 John 1:1-5,14,18; 14:6; 15:37-47; 17:17
 - b) God has ordained men to teach and preach Christ's Gospel to His people.
- 3) Here is the beginning of maturity: That you are taught the word of God by those whom God has called in His church.

Rom 10:14
 Acts 8:31; Titus 1:3
- 4) Free-styling by yourself is not mature but is at best childish.

² Answer: In the narrow sense of equal authority with Scripture? No.

In the broadest sense of forthtelling (declaring God's truth to the present situation with a call to repent and believe as clearly found in Scripture)? Yes.

Ephesians 4:12 – Church Foundation

- 1) This teaching of the word by officers of the church is “*for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;*” – Ephesians 4:12
- 2) Notice how church focused this is.
- 3) There is a bit of debate on how to translate this verse:
 - a) Literal Greek: “*toward the putting in order of the holy ones to work of service to building of the body of the Christ.*”
 - b) Older translations, and theologians, in verse 12 make it only about the church leaders, i.e. the clergy, those listed in verse 11.
 - i) KJV (1611 AD) - The clergy are “*for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*”
 - ii) Note the commas.
 - c) Modern translations make a transition from focusing on the clergy to the parishioners.
 - i) NASB: “*for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;*”
 - ii) Though I usually default to the old, and the traditional, the more modern translations seem closer to the original Greek and follow the strong focus of the church in Ephesians.

Eph 1:3-14,18-23; 2:11-22

Eph 3:4-11,14-21

Eph 4:1-16,25-32

Eph 5:1-2,19-33; 6:10-20
- 4) However, even the more modern translation puts the emphasis on the church.
- 5) So, the purpose of the preaching and teaching of the Word is for:
 - a) “*The equipping of the saints for the work of service*” and “*to the building up of the body of Christ*”.
 - b) A saint is not a super holy person from the past but simply a Christian, one who has been declared justified, declared holy, by the blood of Christ, which is received by faith alone.

Acts 9:13; Rom 1:7

1Cor 1:2,30; Eph 1:1,7

Phil 1:1
 - c) The “Body of Christ” is the church, Christ’s spiritual body on earth.

Rom 12:4-5; 1Cor 12:12-27

Eph 1:22-23; 4:11-16; Col 1:18,24
- 6) But what is this “service”, this “ministry”, mentioned in verse 12 that all Christians are supposed to do? How do we build up Christ’s body? Well, keep on reading.

Ephesians 4:13-16 – The Christian Service

- 1) First work of service/ministry: “*Unity of the Faith*” – Ephesians 4:13b
 - a) This is obviously an ongoing work.
 - i) Thus “*until we all attain to the unity of the faith*”. – Ephesians 4:13a
 - ii) We will never fully have this until the Lord Jesus returns and removes all sin.
 - b) This is the goal of preaching, however.
 - c) Please note, this is not false unity, that we just “get along by just loving other.”
 - i) What is that insane line: “*Doctrine divides but love unites*”.
As if that isn’t a doctrinal/dogmatic/creedal statement.

- ii) This unity is about getting along with the world by the world's standards which is a grave sin. John 15:18-19; Rom 12:2
2Cor 6:14-17; Gal 1:10
James 4:4; 1John 2:15-17
- iii) Love here just means tolerance of the world.
- iv) This is just a lie and hypocrisy.
- In those worldly churches if some sin the world disapproves of happens, (i.e. racism) then there would be swift discipline.
 - Yet if it is some sin the world approves of (e.g. abortion, sexual prevision, feminism, etc.), or a "doctrine" that is disliked, (e.g. the authority of the Bible, the sovereignty of God, etc.) then that is just "dogma" and "unloving."
- d) True unity is around "the faith".
- i) Jude 3-4 – *"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."*
- ii) "The faith" is Christianity and all that it teaches focused on Christ
- e) Keep on reading!
- i) Unity is based around "the knowledge of the Son of God."
- Not just some generic god of our imagination.
 - But the Son of God who is the Word of God incarnate.
- ii) This brings maturity.
- *"To a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."* – Ephesians 4:13b
 - Should women strive to be mature? Yes! 1Cor 14:33-35; Eph 5:22-25
However, God calls men to lead the church 1Tim 2:11-14; 3:1-5
and the household. Col 3:18-19; Titus 2:3-5
 - To be mature is to strive to be complete, to be perfect, to live by the highest moral standards.
 - The measure (or standard, or benchmark) of this maturity is not our stature (literally "lifetime"), however. Eph 1:23
Col 1:19; 2:9
 - It is to be "put in Christ".
 - As Ephesians 4:13c puts it: *"which belongs to the fullness of Christ."*
- f) This is not "pulling yourself up by your bootstraps."
- i) This is knowing Christ as Savior, God and Lord.
- ii) That in yourself you have no hope but will only receive the wrath of God.
- iii) But faith in Christ brings full forgiveness, i.e. the Gospel.
- iv) And from this saving faith comes a life of obedience of daily dying to sin and living for Him.

- g) This knowledge *in* Christ is full knowledge:
 - i) Intellectual knowledge of doctrine.
 - ii) Knowledge that leads to repentance, faith and submission.
 - iii) Knowledge of the indwelling of His Holy Spirit Who daily guides us.
 - h) As Calvin put it: *"The perfection of believers is the full and complete knowledge of God -the goal which we must all keep in view. Christ is the only rule of true maturity, and the nearer we approach Him, the more we advance in true perfection."*
 - Commentary on Ephesians 4:13
 - i) Again, we are not made perfect in this life.
 - ii) Though declared perfect (justified) by the blood of Christ.
 - iii) But we strive for perfection (literally the same word for "maturity" in the New Testament) by resting in Christ's perfection given to us as we live by His Spirit.
- 2) Thus, we are mature, "no longer to be children." – Ephesians 4:14a
- a) Desiring to remain a child, or a teenager, is a big problem this day and age.
 - b) We need to spiritually strive to engage in "adulthood" as the "young'uns" call it.
 - c) Spiritually mature Christians will not be *"tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming"*
 - Ephesians 4:14b
 - i) Notice again the focus on doctrine.
 - ii) Especially showing discernment, to judge correctly.
 - iii) Everything is doctrine, by the way.
- 3) It is much more than mere knowledge of systematic facts, though that is important.
- a) It is *"speaking the truth in love."* – Ephesians 4:15a
 - i) Again note, the focus is on the church.
 - ii) Discerning when to focus on holiness and when to focus on charity takes great maturity.
 - Truth for ego's sake, is devoid of love, and is neither truthful or loving.
 - Love, to get along with the world, is devoid of truth, and is neither truthful or loving.
 - iii) To do both, correctly, takes much maturity.
 - When to speak and when not to speak.
 - When to bring the carrot and when to bring the stick.
 - iv) Such as honoring an unbelieving parent (Commandment #5) while not speaking falsely about God (Commandment #3) takes much maturity.
 - Please note: #3 comes before #5.
 - Fear God, do not fear (i.e. desire to get along with) the world.
 - b) This makes us "to grow up in all aspects" – Ephesians 4:15b.
 - i) This is maturity on all fronts!

- ii) Always notice the focus, however: *“we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,”* - Ephesians 4:15c
 - This is about being put in Christ!
 - We are but parts of His body, He is the head, He is in control.
 - Please note: His body is the church.
 - You cannot be in Christ and outside the church.
- 4) Thus, Paul concludes: *“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.”*

Conclusion

- 1) It is critical to not just know the Word, not just to obey the Word, but maturity is found in putting the focus on where the Word puts the focuses on.
- 2) Note what is not the focus in our sermon text:
 - a) The world:
 - i) Not about advancing the Kingdom.
 - ii) Not about getting people converted.
 - b) On formal organizations: Committees, Missionary Organizations, etc.
 - c) Individual actives: Personal study of the Bible, etc.
- 3) Those are not bad things! There is a place for these things.
 - a) They are not the focus of Ephesians or Scripture.
 - b) To focus on them is to become immature.
A major problem in the modern church.
- 4) Ephesians 4ff is about maturity.
 - a) First, understand God’s sovereign will in Christ’s Gospel
building us into God’s Household = Ephesians 1-3
 - b) This maturity is found in, and proclaimed by Christ’s church.
 - i) This gives unity, true knowledge, defense against all worldly doctrine.
 - ii) It gives fellowship in the truth in love.
 - iii) As we grow in Christ.
 - iv) And we all labor for each other and thus labor for Christ.