



This week at Magdalen Road church we continued our series considering why Jesus is such good news for our current ('iGen' 1995 onwards) culture by thinking about the concept of 'adulthood'.

The word **adulthood** was probably first used as a verb in a tweet in 2008. It refers to the fact that for many millennials and onwards (1977 onwards) a delayed life stage development is often observed. By and large in the West life stages are passed through much later than in previous generations (e.g. becoming parents or buying a house).

Partly, that may be due to the simple fact of smaller families (hence longer term more intensive parenting strategies) and 'helicopter parents' who struggle to allow their children to mature because they do everything for them.

Also we considered the concept of the quarter life crisis! (QLC) 75% of 25 to 33-year-olds report experiencing this. It's the realisation that you reach the age by which you assumed you would have it all figured out-only to find that you don't. And where you see your old school friends married or promoted or parents - so you are left to ask the question 'is this it?!'

Part of the cause of the delay in adulthood comes from the broad cultural idea that 'freedom means no responsibility'. It's the idolatry of comfort. The sacred modern value that says 'I'm only free when I get to do what I want to do when I want to do it.'

We critiqued this idea with some time in Genesis one and two (1v26 to 28 and 2v5 and 15). Here we noted that work is inherently valuable and dignified because God calls us, in his image, to subdue the Earth. The end of God's creative work is the beginning of humanities work. For example in 2v5 No shrubs had appeared partly because there was no rain but particularly because man is not there to work the ground and make it fruitful. We were made to work. In paradise there was work!

Since the fall though work can be frustrating and hard, and there are thorns and thistles, but work is still inherently valuable and dignified.

Which means that the concept of delayed adulthood is problematic-we were not made to avoid it for as long as possible. Jesus says to us 'I have good news! Come to me and find dignity and worth! Be mature productive and fruitful! This is what you are made for'

We also spent time in Ephesians 4v16 to 21 and noted that in the church God longs for believers (both as individuals and corporately) to grow to maturity. This happens as the church is founded upon those with word gifts (v11) and results in maturity in (1) how we think, (2) how we speak and (3) what we do.

(1) - Robust and rooted, not blown here and there are different fads and ideas. As Gods word is opened so we grow in wisdom and steadfastness. The danger can be online that our phones disciple us. We don't know what 'every wind of teaching' means here for Paul - Maybe some kind of heresy or worldly thinking, but Paul does want us to be wise in how they think.

(2) Maturity is also seen in how we speak. Gods word is not just for the v11 gifts but v15 we all Speak the word in love to one another. A mature church is one where we easily lovingly help each other to apply the gospel to daily life (that seems to be truth he's referring to). Again the danger can be online that we can avoid people who challenge us, rather than in the church where God uses people to sanctify us.

(3) In v12 and v16 it's clear that a mature church is an active church where everybody is serving and building each other up. We are all to take responsibility and work within the body of Christ- for the sake of a corporate maturity.

Here are some questions to help your group begin to process these ideas:

- How has your mobile phone usage been this last week? What have you used it for?!
- What do you think about with the concept of 'Adulthood?' Why do you think it is being delayed? Do you struggle to take responsibility? In what areas and why? Can you associate with a QLC?!
- If you are a parent are you a helicopter parent?!
- Have a look again at the verses in Genesis- What we see about the nature of work and responsibility? How does this help us as we consider our own work (whether paid or unpaid)? How does it impact your understanding of responsibility and dignity?
- Look again at the verses in Ephesians- What do you see here about maturity within church? Where does it come from? What does it look like? What aspects of it are outlined? What might a mature church look like?