

Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 13

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “Gifts That Grow the Body”

Ephesians 4:11-16 ~ May 15, 2011

OBJECTIVE: To help believers understand their ministry in the local church.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- VBS Sign-ups - Volunteer Meeting (for all volunteers) - Sunday, May 22nd at 2:00 p.m. - in the GLOW room
- Youth Fundraiser Lunch – today after 2nd service
- Muscles needed! Help w/landscaping project this Saturday
- Quarterly Business meeting – next Sunday 5/22 – after 2nd service – 1st quarter financials
- OIKOS is coming! Attend one of our adult S.S. classes for the month of June
- VBS Registration for kids – Next Sunday – Important meeting for all VBS Volunteers – 2 p.m. in the GLOW room
- All-Church Event – Tucson Padres Baseball Game – Friday May 27th - \$10.00 – includes tailgate bbq & admission to game

What is the point of school?

Why do we celebrate graduations?

- Completion of the goal
- Future Opportunities

What is the point of church? *To share the Gospel, learn the truth of Christ, and glorify God as we mature in Christ.*

How do we accomplish that?

Turn to Ephesians 4

Read passage

The foundational gifts for the church vs. 11

NASB – “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.”

11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

As I mentioned last Sunday, there are approx. 20 spiritual gifts listed in the N.T. – and Paul draws our attention to four of them here in vs. 11 (most put pastors and teachers together as one gift).

Apostles = this was a unique gift that God used to establish the Church. In a general sense, the word ‘apostle’ means *someone who was sent*. But in the N.T., the Apostles were a distinct group of men which included the original disciples plus a handful of others, who saw the risen Christ and were given spiritual authority and power to validate the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This gift ceased to exist as the Apostolic Era came to a close. The Apostles (John, Peter, Paul, etc.) did not appoint successors to their Apostolic office, but they did appoint successors to carry on the work of the ministry.

Prophets = This was also a unique gift that God used to establish the Church. Some prophets foretold the future (Acts 11:28), they would encourage believers (Acts 15:32), and perhaps their most important task was to reveal God’s Word since the N.T. Scriptures had not been completed yet. Most believe that this foundational gift ceased when the N.T. Cannon was complete toward the end of the first century.

Evangelist = This is not someone who has 20 suits and 20 sermons. The person with the gift of evangelism has the great passion and ability to talk with people about the Gospel, and to see results when they share Christ. In the N.T., the evangelist would function much like our modern day missionary. They would travel to a region where the Gospel was unknown, and begin to make it known. They would start a church in that

town, and after a short time, move on to another region and start the process all over again.

Pastor-Teacher = This is viewed as one gift because they are linked grammatically in the Greek text. Pastor is from the Latin word for ‘shepherd’, and this person has the ability and responsibility to protect and care for the “flock of God”. The primary way this is done is through the teaching of God’s Word. Paul commissioned the Elders at Ephesus to guard the church against false teaching (Acts 20:26-35). Caring for the church through the teaching of God’s Word is the primary task for the Pastor-teacher.

These four gifts are called foundational for two reasons. First, during the first century, the Apostles and Prophets established the foundation of the Church – which is the Gospel and teaching of Jesus Christ. Second, they are still foundational today in that the work of evangelism, missions, and teaching the truth of Christ is the basis on which all the other gifts and ministries stand. It is upon the foundation of God’s truth that the Church grows, is strengthened, and is unified.

The purpose of the foundational gifts vs. 12

“...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...”

The purpose of the establishment and teaching of God’s Word is seen in three areas.

First, to equip believers

The Greek word for ‘equip’ or ‘prepare’ has a number of meanings, all of which contribute to our understanding of what it means for believers to be prepared or equipped. The word was used in a medical context for setting a broken limb or for putting a joint back in place. It was used in politics for bringing together opposing factions, and in the N.T. it is used of mending nets (Mark 1:19) and of correcting someone in the church and restoring them to the fellowship of the church (Gal. 6:1). (The New Daily Study Bible, by

William Barclay, p. 171)

So, equipping or preparing believers in the church means that the pastor-teacher helps the people understand God’s Word so that what was broken is now restored or complete. What was a source of conflict is now brought together under the truth of God.

The second purpose for the foundational gifts is for works of service

Notice it is “God’s people” who are called to “works of service.”

The healing and repair that God’s Word brings should lead to serving in the church. One of the goals of learning the truth of God is to pass on what you have learned! The great truths of God are not meant to be contained in your mind and heart like valuables in a safe. God intends that you treasure them, not hoard them! We are each called to go into the world and share the good news of Christ – to share the truth of God.

The role of the pastor is not to do the ministry of the church...it's to prepare / equip the people in the church to do the ministry!

Illus – juggling – spinning plates. I can juggle 2 or 3 balls – but no more than that. No pastor – no matter how talented and energetic they are, can do the ministry of the church – nor are they called to do the majority of ministry in the church. In fact, if a church expects the pastor to do all the ministry of the church, they have an invalid view of what the pastor's job is! Visiting the sick, giving rides to those without transportation, providing meals, teaching Sunday School or a small group, discipling of new Christians, following up those with spiritual or physical problems, spiritual counseling, prayer with one another, greeting new people in the church and making them feel welcome here and get connected, showing love to one another, sharing the Gospel with non-believers...these things are not the exclusive job of the pastor! They are the responsibility of each believer in the church. I do these things, but my primary task before God is to equip *you* to do this work!

Rom. 12:3-8

1 Peter 4:10-11

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. **11** If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”

The ministry is not for the few who are hired by the church, but for every believer since every believer has been equipped by Christ with a spiritual gift, which was given with a divine and eternal perspective according to the plan of God for your life in this place!

In fact, the greatest way to mature in your faith is not only to study the Word of God and the doctrines of the faith, but to serve one another through the various ministries in the church.

The third purpose for the foundational gifts is to build the body

The idea here is one of construction. The teaching of God's word by the pastor, equips the believers in the church to construct their lives so Christ is more at home. Also, each believer is able to share the truth of Christ with the unbelievers in their world and the church / body of Christ is built up or constructed further.

Illus. Imagine a body that is fragmented. It has broken bones and dislocated limbs. It cannot function due to its broken-down state. The Pastor-Teacher equips (mends) the body by teaching the Word of God and by shepherding the flock. When the Body is equipped (mended) it can begin to function as it is designed...as God intends and as He has gifted it!

Four reasons shared ministry is important:

#1 – Unity vs. 13

13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

The unity mentioned here in vs. 13 is different from the unity Paul mentioned in vs. 3:

4:3 - “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

If you remember, the unity of vs. 3 is an inherent unity we all have at the point of conversion because we all have the same Holy Spirit, and Paul tells us to work at “keeping” or “guarding” the unity we have. Now in vs. 13, the unity Paul is talking about is something we must attain – something we need to strive for – not something we already have and must ‘keep’ or ‘guard’. There are two parts to this unity, the first part is “unity in the faith” which is a unity in the doctrines and truth of our faith. It’s not a unity in the fact that we have faith – it’s a unity in the content of our faith – the doctrines of the Christian faith. Jude 3 “Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.”

The second aspect of this unity we need to attain to is “in the knowledge of the Son of God”

This knowledge is not just cognitive, but experiential. It’s a unity in our common practice of living each day in pursuit of Christ. In Philippians (3:10), Paul expressed it this way:

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...”

We strive for a unity of doctrine in our Christian faith, and a unity that comes from our shared experiences of pursuing

Christ each day, which leads us to a point of becoming more “Christ-like” – “attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” “measure” = *metron* – idea of a full measuring cup and we should strive to be the same as Christ...not ½ full...not ¾ full...completely full just as Christ is ‘full’.

#2 – Stability vs. 14 (remaining steadfast / solid in the faith)

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

One of the things I’m exposed to as a pastor is church junk mail. It’s amazing all the mail we get that is trying to sell us on the latest and greatest trends in church ministry. In addition to that, there’s the telemarketers selling the latest teaching materials from the various Christian publishers. And then there’s the e-mails, promoting and selling everything from Christian recording artists who are coming to our area of the country, to the cups used for communion, and the newest technology for church signs. It can be tempting to think that the success of your ministry – or the success of a church is dependent on the latest technology and using the latest marketing tools to impact the kingdom! Don’t misunderstand me...all those things have their proper place. But, after a few years of opening the mail, answering the phone, and reading e-mails, you begin to realize that Solomon’s words are true in all areas of life... “...there’s nothing new under the sun.” (Eccl. 1:9) In other words...the ingredients or formula of success of the church is not *waiting* to be discovered! God has already

revealed it in His Word...and part of the formula is our passage today!

In the Greek, “cunning” is a word that means “skill in manipulating the dice” (*The New Daily Study Bible*, by William Barclay, p. 173)

“craftiness” describes the person who is guided only by their own selfish gain, and they will do anything to accomplish that objective.

“scheming” is *methodeia* (mĕth-ōd-i'-ah) and refers to a systematic, thought out plan to mislead.

There are many philosophies that the world embraces and many versions of the truth that the world will push and argue for.

It’s a challenge for those who have never been ‘equipped’ in the faith to resist the cunning, crafty, and scheming alternatives to the truth. To avoid being attracted to these alternatives, you need to be “prepared” or “equipped” in the truth of Christ.

#3 – Loving truthfulness vs. 15

15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

As opposed to the person who is always pursuing the latest fad in the spiritual realm, believers are to speak truth to each other. Chuck Swindoll translates this verb “truthing in love” (*Becoming A*

People of Grace, An Exposition of Ephesians, by Charles R. Swindoll, p. 118, quoting Harold W. Hoehner in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*).

This is a great challenge to many in the Church. Some are wise and knowledgeable when it comes to the truth. They can detect error in teaching and they are quick to correct it. Unfortunately, their correction often comes across as harsh, a feeling that is not intended. Then there are

those who excel at loving others within the church, but they are tight-lipped when it comes to correcting error or addressing sin because they are afraid that it will create waves, hurt someone's feelings, or cause a disagreement. To balance grace and truth we must look to Christ, who was "...full of grace and truth", and was perfectly balanced in their application. This is the antidote to being "...tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching..."

#4 – Cooperation vs. 16

16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Application

The ministry of the local church is the calling of each believer.

Discover your spiritual gift.

Put your spiritual gift to use in the church.

Close in prayer