

INTRODUCTION

1. Before we return to our study of Genesis, I want to take a moment and talk about what 1 Corinthians 16:15 calls *the ministry of the saints*.
2. To do that I want to direct your attention to Ephesians chapter 4.
3. The book of Ephesians addresses many truths about the believer's relationship to Christ and to one another.
4. The first three chapters describe what it is to be in Christ.
5. The last three describe how a Christian lives.
6. Read Ephesians 4:11-12.
7. In this chapter Paul tells the Ephesians to "have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (v.1).
8. And walk "with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (v.2).
9. Verses 3-6 tells us why.
10. Because there is "one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."
11. In this marvelous chapter God is calling us to walk in a manner that fits the calling – a call that unifies us with the body of Christ and with the triune God.

12. Now in verse 7 he further elaborates on that call by instructing us concerning the “grace that was given” to “each one of us.”
13. He says this was “according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”
14. Now in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and 1 Peter 4 we are given a list of gifts that have been given to the body.
15. The list in 1 Corinthians 12 lists both temporary and permanent gifts while Romans 12 and 1 Peter 4 gives permanent gifts.
16. In verse 7 of Ephesians 4 Paul says “to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”
17. Kenneth Wuest says, “Each gets the grace Christ has to give, and each gets it in the proportion in which the Giver is pleased to bestow it; one having it in larger measure and another in smaller, but each getting it from the same Hand and with the same purpose” (Word Studies in the Greek New Testament).
18. Paul is saying that “Each one of us has been given a specific portion of God’s grace for the operation of our gifts.”
19. In the words of Romans 12:6-8, Paul says, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who show mercy, with cheerfulness.”
20. Whatever our gift is we’re to use it “according to the grace that is given to

us.”

21. Back in Ephesians 4 we see other gifts that He gave “When He ascended on high [and] led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.
22. Verse 11 says what those gifts are.
23. But before he mentions what those gifts are he gives some discussion in verses 9-10 concerning Christ ascending and descending. Notice what he says.
24. John MacArthur says, “After a king won such a victory he would bring home the spoils, and enemy prisoners to parade before his people. An Israelite king would take his retinue through the holy city of Jerusalem and up Mount Zion. Another feature of the victory parade, however, would be the display of the king’s own soldiers who had been freed after being held prisoners by the enemy. These we often referred to as recaptured captives – prisoners who had been taken prisoner again, so to speak, by their own king and given freedom” (Ephesians, p.138).
25. The phrase “When He ascended on High” depicts a triumphant Christ returning from battle on earth back into the glory of the heavenly city with the trophies of His great victory.
26. “He gave gifts to men” follows the same analogy.
27. Like a triumphant conqueror distributing the spoils to his subjects, so Christ takes the trophies He has won and distributes them in His kingdom.
28. And verse 11 says, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”

29. In this list we are given the list of the “gifted men” that Christ gave to His church.
30. John MacArthur writes, “Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers are gifted believers given to the Body of Christ so that Christians might be brought to maturity. They are the agents of change in the life of the church; they are channels for the flow of dynamic energy for spiritual growth; they are catalysts for experiential maturity. The result of their ministry is the Body built up in love (v.16)” (The Body Dynamic, p.73).
31. In verses 11 and 12 we see first *the gifts* (v.11) and then *the purpose of the gifts* (v.12).

I. The Gift of Grace (v.7)
II. The Giving of Gifts (vv.8-10)
III. The Gifts Identified (v.11)

- A. Apostles (v.11a)
- B. Prophets (v.11b)
- C. Evangelists (v.11c)
- D. Pastors and Teachers (v.11d)

II. The Purpose of the Gifts (v.12)

- A. To Equip Believers for Service (v.12a)

“Equipping” Gr.katartismos, means, “perfection or completion” (Zodhiates). It refers “to that which is fit, is restored to its original condition, or is made complete” (MacArthur).

“The word was a medical technical term for setting of a bone. The noun describes the dynamic act by which persons or things are properly conditioned” (Rienecker).

1. God wants you to be perfect

- a) The command

Matthew 5:48 - “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (NASB).

- b) The reality (3 types of perfection)

(1) Positional perfection (we “are” perfect)

Colossians 2:10 says, “And in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority” (NASB).

(2) Experiential perfection (we “are being made” perfect)

1 Cor.1:10 - “Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

“The whole point of the Christian life is to move toward experiential perfection” (MacArthur).

(3) Ultimate perfection (We “will be” perfect)

1 John 3:2 - “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

2. God perfects you through the teaching gift of the evangelist and the pastor-teacher

“Teaching is the pastor’s main job. Receiving the Word and ministering it so the Body may grow are mainly tasks for the members” (John MacArthur, *The Body Dynamic*, p.78).

- a) Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the

man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

b) He continued in chapter 4:1-6 with an even more direct charge:

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

c) The apostles expressed this priority in Acts 6:4 when they said they would “devote [themselves] to prayer and the ministry of the word” (NASB).

d) The church has evangelists and pastor-teachers for the purpose of “equipping the saints for the work of the ministry” (Eph.4:12)

Paul even said to the elders at Ephesus, “I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house...For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:20, 27).

3. God perfects you for the work of the ministry

John MacArthur writes, “God has given each member certain spiritual gifts for the work of the ministry. These spiritual gifts can be exercised in many ways: visiting the sick and shut-ins, counseling new Christians, praying and studying the Bible with others, taking food, clothes, and money to people in special need, showing personal love and care for the lonely and discouraged, reaching out to neighbors and friends with the gospel.

The local church essentially is a training place to equip Christians to carry out their own ministries. Unfortunately, for many Christians the church is a place to go to watch professionals perform and to pay the professionals to carry out the church program. In many quarters Christianity has deteriorated into a professional ‘pulpitism,’ financed by lay spectators. The church hires a staff of ministers to do all the Christian service. This scheme is not only a violation of God’s plan, but an absolute detriment to the growth of the church and the vitality of the members of the Body. Every member needs to find a significant place of service. To limit the work of the ministry to a small, select class of full-time clergymen hinders the spiritual growth of God’s people, stunts the discipleship process in the Body, and the evangelistic outreach of the church in the community. From the members who give themselves to the work of the ministry God Himself will choose certain ones to be His gifts to the church as a whole” (Body Dynamics, p.94).

This is the purpose of Spiritual gifts and the “one another’s” in the New Testament. The “one another’s” tell us what our ministry is to each other while spiritual gifts give us the power to do it.

a) We are members of one another (Rom.12:5)

- b) We are to be devoted to one another in brotherly love (Rom.12:10)
- c) We are to give preference to one another in honor (Rom.12:10)
- d) We are to be of the same mind toward one another (Rom.12:16)
- e) We are to love one another (Rom.13:8)
- f) We are to receive one another (Rom.15:7)
- g) We are to admonish one another (Rom.15:14)
- h) We are to greet one another with a holy kiss (Rom.16:16)
- i) We are to have the same care for one another (1 Cor.12:25)
- j) We are to serve one another (Gal.5:13)
- k) We are to bear one another's burdens (Gal.6:2)
- l) We are to hold up one another in love (Eph.4:2)
- m) We are to be kind to one another (Eph.4:32)
- n) We are to forgive one another (Eph.4:32)
- o) We are to submit to one another (Eph.5:21)
- p) We are to comfort one another (1 Thess.4:18)

- q) We are to edify one another (1 Thess.5:11)
 - r) We are to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb.10:25)
 - s) We are to exhort one another (Heb.10:25)
 - t) We are to confess our trespasses to one another (Jas.5:16)
 - u) We are to pray for one another (Jas.5:16)
 - v) We are to have compassion for one another (1 Pet.3:8)
 - w) We are to be hospitable to one another (1 Pet.4:9)
 - x) We are to minister our gifts to one another (1 Pet.4:10)
- B. To Edify the Body (v.12b)
- “Edifying” Gr.oikodome, lit. “to build up or build a house”
1. The Body is edified when the saints are being equipped
- Marvin Vincent says, “Notice the combination of perfecting and building. Building defines the nature of the work of ministry, and perfecting comes through a process” (Vincent’s Word Studies of the New Testament).
2. If pastors neglect their gift of teaching then no one is built up
 3. If the church fails to respond to the teaching ministry of the pastor-

teachers then no one is built up

Verse 16 says “when every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

The ministry belongs to you and all of us must do our part in order to “have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” (v.1).

Every believer is to “serve one another” through love (see Gal.5:13).

CONCLUSION

1. Some want to argue that they don't have a ministry.
2. If you're saved then you have a ministry that is to be carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. As Warren Wiersbe says, “The gifted leaders are supposed to "equip the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (literal translation). The saints do not call a pastor and pay him to do the work. They call him and follow his leadership as he, through the Word, equips them to do the job (2 Tim. 3:13-17). The members of the church grow by feeding on the Word and ministering to each other” (The Bible Exposition Commentary).
4. How are you serving Eastport Baptist Church?
5. Are you meeting each others needs?

6. Are you using your spiritual gift?
7. Ephesians 4:16 (NKJV) 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.
8. This is our responsibility to one another.
9. Are you a true believer in Jesus Christ?
10. If not, I call you to commit your life to Him today.
11. Joshua said to “choose this day whom you will serve.”
12. That question is for you too.
13. Repent and believe in Jesus.
14. Let’s pray.