

Ephesians 4:7-13 – Gifts From the Victorious King

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: The civil authorities are saying you can't get back to normal work until there is a pill for Covid-19 or a vaccine to prevent it. **So people are eagerly waiting for a pill or vaccine so they can get back to normal work!**

We hope they work, but there are so many uncertainties. They may have side effects. They may be costly. They may not work. And of course, the virus could change and render the cure ineffective.

On the other hand, when the Lord gave his disciples the command live and to fight for him, he promised them everything they needed – and he delivered! Yes, the disciples were fearful after the crucifixion, but the Lord strengthened them and equipped them after he ascended to heaven. They could then take on the Devil, the world, and their flesh with confidence.

This is what you will hear about from God's Word today.

Our headings are:

Gifts for Christian Living

Goals of the gifts of Christian Living.

Our goals are: That **you will be supplied with what you need and strengthened with Christ's gifts to serve the church of Jesus Christ and bring glory to him.**

Gifts for Christian Living

7 But to **each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.** 8 Therefore He says: "When **He ascended on high, He led captivity captive,** And gave **gifts to men.**" 9 (Now this, "He ascended" —what does it mean but that **He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?** 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

1. So how do you get these gifts you need to live as a Christian and serve Christ the Lord?

You get these gifts through the ascension of Jesus Christ.

This is why Apostle Paul quoted Psalm 68, a Messianic Psalm of victory. At the time of the writing of Psalm 68, **David was celebrating his victories in war and the return of the Ark of the Lord to the midst of God's people.**

To show his victory, he gave gifts to the people as they ascended to Jerusalem. **No loser has any gifts to share!** But David had much to share!

The soldiers and the leaders got their share first because of their labors, but gifts were given to the people as well. **They reaped of what their leaders received.**

2Samuel 6:19 Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole

multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.

So God used David's real life situation to be a type of what Jesus Christ would do.

2. Let's look at how David typified Christ.

a. Jesus Christ gained a definitive victory over sin, death, and hell on the cross, and ascended into heaven.

He destroyed the Devil and redeemed by his blood, people who were once slaves in captivity by nature. They were kept by the captivity (sin, death, and hell).

The Lord even descended into Mary's womb – the lowest parts of the earth (Psalm 139), then he descended into the grave, and then rose up conquering sin, Satan, the world, and death.

b. After the Lord was raised from the dead he ascended to heaven. Many saw him!

c. After he ascended into heaven he secured gifts for men (best translation).

He is not here in body, but he is here by his Holy Spirit to shower these gifts to you.

3. Let's talk about the gifts.

Christ gave men varying amounts and a variety of gifts to his children.

Varying amounts:

So one might be a skilled teacher like Ravi Zacharias, and one might be a teacher like I. (Similarity: I'm brown as he.) Think of toes. 10...but all different. Some more important.

Variety:

And one might be a teacher, and one pastor. Think of a brain and a leg.

1Corinthians 12:4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

Romans 12:4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,

Since God owns all gifts, he is able to give out gifts as he has determined – according to what suits his purpose.

Keep in mind that you may need to develop some of these gifts.

You have to be trained to be a pastor or a counselor.

You may have the gifts of hospitality, but you have to learn to cook.

One of the notable things about various gifts is that there must be no room for pride, envy, and contempt. All men are needed with all kinds of gifts to labor for the kingdom.

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

4. What are some of the main gifts Christ showered on his church?

God gave people gifts. And these “people gifts” were special and general.

Apostles. The Apostolic office in the original sense has passed away. An Apostle had to be a witness of Christ’s resurrection, be directly commissioned by Christ or one of his apostles, and had to have power to do miracles to confirm his words. And yet, all Christians are Apostles in a general sense as we are all “sent” by God to the world.

Prophets. These were the ones who directly spoke God’s Word. But since we now have the whole – the complete Word of God (the Bible), this office has expired as well. And yet, all Christians are prophets in the general sense, as all must speak God’s truth.

Evangelists. These were people who traveled around preaching the Gospel and worked at starting congregations. Philip was an example of this. We can say an evangelist is a minister whose main duty is to evangelize the lost. And yet, all Christians are evangelists in a general sense. You must all share the Gospel!

Pastors. These were men who served Christians as shepherds – teaching, praying, and counseling. A pastor is a minister for practical spiritual things in a permanent situation. Another word for pastor is shepherd.

Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

The Apostle Paul was speaking to the elders of Ephesus here. Sometimes we try to make too strong a difference between pastor and elders, (not that we need to reduce the pastor) but the Scripture doesn’t make a strong difference. The implication is that elders need to develop their gifts much more! You are spiritual overseers. Study hard. Grow in your knowledge. Take courses in counseling. You have to be able to teach!

And in an even broader way, fathers are shepherds to their families...big brothers are shepherds to their younger siblings...

Teachers – Teachers were given the task primarily of teaching with no additional responsibility. They concentrated on teaching doctrinal matters and were not tied to a particular church. Today, writers of books, etc. would fall in this category as well. Do we ever need good writers today! These also includes professors.

Jeremiah 3:15 "And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Mothers in particular are general teachers of practical doctrines to their children.

Many of these gifts required training.

These “gifts” **helped to keep the church strong and united.**

5. How well do you receive the gifts (faithful teaching) of God from each other... from evangelists, pastors, and teachers?

Do you listen with open hearts to their faithful instruction? If you don't, you are **robbing yourself** of the blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ, **you will rob Christ of his honor**, and you will **hamper the church from receiving God's fullest blessings.**

6. But are these all the gifts? No. Not at all.

These are the main gifts, but there are many others as well.

You can read of the gift of **hospitality**

...the gifts of **generosity**

...the gift of being a **prayer warrior**

...the gift of **encouragement**

...the gift of **administration.**

...the gift of helping...

7. What is your gift?

Do you feel the Lord has given you one or more of these gifts and is calling you to one of these offices?

If you have one of these gifts, are you developing it, and are you using your gift for the glory of Christ? Do you need to take some classes?

Are you using your gifts for the equipping of the saints to better live for God? The goal of these gifts is to bless others!

Goals of the Gifts in Christian Living

12 for the **equipping** of the saints for the **work of ministry**, for **the edifying** of the **body of Christ**,

1. These gifts are given for the equipping of the saints for doing God's work.

There are **different kinds of equipping that the church needs**, so **not all are evangelists**, nor are all teachers...etc.

The word “equipping” is also translated “mend– to fix what was broken.” It was a medical term that means to “set broken bones straight” before casting the limb. Some make the cast, others set the bones, others put the cast on, and others feed the injured.

Even the best saints are imperfect so you must help them to live holier lives.

Though there is righteousness to their account, there is also hypocrisy. You need to help each other remove your hypocrisy and display the perfection of Christ.

Be warned: Churches can put abnormal emphasis in one area and ignore others. Some are big on diaconal work – **feeding the poor, digging wells, and having a food bank.** **Others emphasize doctrine but have little love.** Some are evangelistic but have little

doctrinal training. **But we need all the gifts.**

2. These gifts will build up (edify -we get “edifice”) the children of God, making them strong.

Who wants a frail looking **undeveloped kid with just skin and bones on your worksite?**
These gifts will **cause the church to walk in the fear of the Lord,** and in the comforts of the Holy Spirit their graces will be displayed publicly for the world to see.

If you don’t have a gift to edify the church, you will use the other gifts you have: The gift of **obstructionism, dissatisfaction, gossip, or indifference.** You will either stop the building from being built up, **or you will tear down that which is built up.**

13 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;**

3. These gifts, which will equip the saints for the work of the church, will continue until the church comes to a full unity (ripeness, fullness).

This is when the church will know Christ fully by faith. Faith and knowledge refer to the same thing. This is when the church will become like Christ is: **Perfect and free from sin.**

This unity will **only be completed in heaven** where the saints entirely unite in love and peace, **though there are beginning signs now.**

The Jews and the Gentile will be knit together by faith – Blacks and Whites, rich and poor, old and young, and man and woman.

4. Are you using your gift...and doing so consistently?

Or are you waiting for things to improve before you make phone calls to check up on the sick?

Are you waiting **till you retire to dedicate time to serving as an elder?**

What comes first, **your comforts or the kingdom?**

Are you getting the training you need to develop and use your gifts?

5. Are you supporting the gifts of the minister, elders, deacons, and teachers?

Don’t be a demolition expert...blowing things up? Help your elders to build the church in unity...making their live easy. Pray for them. Give your tithes. Volunteer for activities! Write to your missionaries. Pick up someone for church. Visit a widower! Help a single mother...and her children.

Conclusion:

First, Christ is the source of all good gifts. He gained these gifts for you when he conquered sin, Satan, death, and hell. Because of his love for his church and his desire to see his church **come to a full knowledge of him and mature in grace and conquer the world for his glory,** Christ has equipped his church with many gifts: Pastors, teachers, evangelists. And there are others as well: hospitality...generosity...prayer warrior... encouragement...administration... kindness...etc. He **“heaps” these gifts on his church.**

Second, God's gives these gifts according to his pleasure, and therefore every man ought to be content with that measure God has given him, and use it to the benefit of the whole body. Don't be jealous of another man's gift.

Third, be ready to develop your gift. Ask for training. Get some training.

Fourth, remember the ultimate purpose of these gifts is glory of Christ. So if you ignore using your gifts, you are robbing others, you are robbing yourself and you are robbing Christ.

If you are not a Christian, see how much God cares for those who are his. He wants them to live well and receive his blessings. He wants them to live for his glory. None of these things are you able to receive unless you ask him to make you his child. And what a blessing that would be to you – what joy you will reap. But, my friend, this offer will not go on forever. If you ignore this offer you will reap the justice of God. Ask him to make you his child because Christ died in your place on the cross.