

Ephesians 4:7–13

<sup>7</sup> But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."

<sup>9</sup> (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?

<sup>10</sup> He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

<sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

<sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

<sup>13</sup> 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;

### ***"The Church, Part 5"*** ***Ephesians 4:7-13***

INTRO:

The local church is the agency through which God is doing His work in the world today. This is why, as the Apostle Paul teaches us how to live out the tremendous spiritual realities in **chapters 1-3** in our daily lives, he is concerned about God's church.

If we are going to ***"walk worthy of the calling with which [we] were called"*** (4:1), we must do this worthy walking in the local church. So, Paul writes extensively about God's church in the passage we are about to explore today. In **verse 7**, the Apostle turns our attention to the gifts which God gave to His church

***I. The Giver of the Gifts (v. 7-10)***

***II. The Gifted Individuals who are Given (v. 11)***

***III. The Purpose of the Gifted Individuals (v. 12-13)***

***I. The Giver of the Gifts (v. 7-10)***

A. In the **verses before verse 7**, the Apostle Paul wrote about the central truths around which true unity is to be built. At **verse 7** Paul introduced another subject.

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

Each one of us who are saved has been given a specific grace gift by the Lord Jesus Christ. We are also told this in **1 Corinthians 12:7**

***“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.”***

1. This gift was given as a part of Christ's triumphant ascension after His death. **Verse 8** is an allusion to **Psalm 68**. It paints a picture of the Lord Jesus ascending to heaven in a triumphal procession proclaiming victory over sin, death, and the tomb.

2. As a part of that triumph, He gave gifts to His people.

(v.8) ***“Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.’”***

B. Grace gifts given to us, who are the church, we receive to serve Him. The gifts were purchased at a great personal cost by the King of glory. He was willing to go all the way to the cross in order that we might be saved and so that we might have the privilege of serving Him.

## ***II. The Gifted Individuals who are Given (v.11)***

A. What gifts are these God the Son gave to His church? In **verse 11**, the gifts are gifted individuals Christ gave to His church. ***“And He Himself gave . . .”*** These gifted individuals are the Lord Jesus Christ's personal gifts to His church. It is not enough to say, ***“And He gave. . .”*** The extra word is there to emphasize that it is a personal gift!

B. Whom did He give? ***“He Himself gave some to be Apostles”*** Notice the emphasis is on the ones who have the gift not the gift itself. The Apostles in mind here are those special individuals personally called, enabled, and authorized by the King of kings to serve in a special ministry to His church. These are the men who wrote the New Testament and who started the churches in the various cities around the world. They had to be men who had personally witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This gift was foundational and it disappeared with the death of the first Apostles.

C. ***“He Himself gave . . . some prophets.”*** These individuals were also foundational in their gifts. They provided direct revelation from God before the New Testament canon was closed.

**Ephesians 2:19-20** ***“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of***

***God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.***

These first two gifted individuals are not present in the church today!

D. ***“He Himself gave . . . some evangelists”*** Who are these gifted individuals that the Lord Jesus gave to His church? There are two places where this gift is mentioned in the New Testament.

1. First, in **Acts 21:8** where we read of Philip, the evangelist.

***“On the next day we who were Paul’s companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.”***

What did Philip do? Did he travel around to churches and conduct week long evangelistic crusades? No. He was one of the original deacons and we find that he went into the virgin territory of Samaria and planted churches there!

2. Second, we find it in Paul's closing exhortation to Timothy in **2 Timothy 4:5**;

***“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”***

Timothy was Paul's assistant in church planting in Asia Minor and Europe. At this point in his life, tradition tells us that Timothy was the pastor of the church at Ephesus. It is conceivable that Paul is directing Timothy to not neglect the ministry of starting churches around him. From this limited information, it is reasonable to conclude that the evangelist in **Ephesians 4:11** is the church planting missionary.

E. ***“He Himself gave some to be . . . pastors and teachers.”*** This is one individual and not two offices. What is his function in the Lord's church? He is first “poimen” – pastor or shepherd to God's local flock. Shepherds first and foremost, feed the flock. They also lead the flock

**Psalm 23:2b, 3** ***“He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.”***

He also protects the flock and sometimes corrects the flock.

1. There are two other titles that the Lord Jesus gives to him. He is also called a bishop “*episkopos*” that is “*overseer*.” He is the one charged with the supervision or oversight of the church.

2. He is also a “*presbuteros*,” “*elder*.” He is to be a man of wisdom and maturity, who can lead God's people.

3. The major function that he has is he is the teacher. He communicates the word of God to the people of God on a regular basis. He is responsible for the spiritual diet of the flock.

### ***III. The Purpose of the Gifted Individuals (v. 12-13)***

A. Why did the Lord Jesus give these gifted individuals to the church? They are given so they can do the ministry right? No. Remember **verse 7**?

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

These people are not the only ones given gifts to be used in the ministry. Each one of us also has been given a gift. So, what are these gifted individuals (evangelists and pastors) supposed to do?

B. We are told in **verses 12-13**, they are ***“to equip the saints.”*** The word means ***“to prepare.”*** What equipment does Paul have in mind here? The Word of God is the equipment.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** ***“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.”***

One problem in the Lord's church today is that most of God's saints don't know the Bible well enough to do the ministry.

C. What is the major goal of this ministry? Look at the rest of **verses 12 and 13**.

***“For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 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.”***

Your ministry and mine are to literally ***“build up”*** the body of Christ. Spiritual growth and maturity is the first goal of local church ministry. What about evangelism? Evangelism happens when Christians reach spiritual maturity.

1. How do we know when we have grown enough? What is the line on the door that we have to measure up to? We are spiritually mature when we are come to unity around the things that really matters.

**vs.3-6** ***“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 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.”***

2. We are spiritually mature when we have an abundant personal knowledge of Jesus Christ

**v.13a** *“Until 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.”*

If we do not have a real, growing, vibrant, personal relationship with God, we are not spiritual.

3. Finally, we are spiritually mature when we are filled with the fullness of Christ (v.13c). When we are totally controlled by Him and not by our own desire and wills, we have reached a measure of spiritual maturity.

As we step up to the wall and mark our growth on that standard, where are we? It is as we grow that we minister and as we grow God gives us spiritual children to nurture. The church is built up the way a church should be built. The end result is that God the Father is glorified in His church through Jesus Christ.

*None of Self and All of Thee*