

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4

“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.) 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 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; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 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.”

''The Gift of Pastor & Teachers''

We have been working our way through the list of five gifts given by the Spirit for the equipping and edifying of the Body of Christ. This morning we come to pastors and teachers and Lord willing next week we begin to consider the work of ministry in the church.

- **We first saw the foundational gifts of Apostles and Prophets arguing that we do not have those in person today.**

Rather just as the rich man was warned by Jesus about the importance of listening to Moses and the Prophets, we are to hear the Apostle & Prophets through God’s Word and we will see this morning that Pastors and teachers play a critical role in doing just that. Last week we considered the evangelist which stepped on most of our toes because we never feel like we have shared the Good News enough in our lives!

- **We were challenged to be those beautiful feet that carry the Good News and Lord willing we have all been striving to do better!**

Now we come to two gifts that certainly do carry down to our day and they are both generalized and specialized. We do in fact have some who are set aside and called to be pastors and teachers, while at the same time we all find such roles to play in our lives as we shall see when we get to some practical applications. So first the Apostle Paul says that we are given pastors, and it is interesting that this is the only place in most Bibles that this word is used.

However, we soon realize that there are many references to ministers, elders, bishops, overseers & shepherds to fill out what we should think about pastors! While some may dispute whether all of these refer to the same office, here at Church of the King we hold to the two office view of Church government with Elders and Deacons. Each might serve in many different ways, but those are the two offices that young Timothy and Titus are instructed to train men for.

As we saw last week, a Deacon like Phillip can also have a gift for evangelism and in the same way elders can serve in different ways. [explain my time as a presiding minister]

So we find the Apostle Paul giving pretty specific instructions for how to identify and train pastors for the ministry:

I Timothy 3: “3 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle,

not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” *[make reference to the Elder training manual]*

If we think back to our study of Acts, we remember that Paul and others appointed Elders in the Churches that were planted just as Covenant Reformed Church did for us when we were planted as their mission work. And in Acts 20 we are clearly told about the responsibilities they have in shepherding Christ’s Church: “17 From Miletus [Paul] sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church... [he speaks to them about his trip to Jerusalem and then says]...

25 “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. 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. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. 32 “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. 34 Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. 35 I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ 36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.”

We also see the Apostle Peter reminding those he would leave behind about the importance of their ministry!

I Peter 5: “5 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. 5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

Peter’s warning about submission is especially noteworthy for us today in our American culture that promotes doing things my way! As I mentioned, in a moment I will touch on how all of us may find a role of shepherding or teaching in our own lives, but that is far different from how the leadership in the Church is to function. We live in an age where everyone has access to amazing tools to study the Bible and can listen to pastors and teachers from all over the world.

Our small church has over a thousand sermons posted on Sermon Audio! While this can make for strong Christians it also brings the temptation to not be in proper submission to the local pastor and or teacher that God has placed over you.

Here at Church of the King we have always stressed that we all need to be good Bereans taking what everyone says or teaches back to the Bible to see if it is true!

- And encourage honest questions, but we never want to overlook the need for proper submission to the church God has placed you in.

This can be true even for the subject at hand because I mentioned that we are a two office church: There are some who teach that you can have as many as seven offices, but that is not our practice. Could it change over time? Perhaps, but it is not the role of members to try to make such changes because they think the church officers are wrong.

A good example of this comes with the next gift of teachers. Some churches divide the eldership between teaching elders and ruling elders and others have a separate office of teacher.

We see the teaching role as an important one for the Elder which is why being apt to teach is the major difference in the qualifications for elders and deacons.

Of course our deacons should follow the great example of Stephen who gave that powerful sermon in Acts 7! While pastoring certainly involves a great deal of teaching, we should remember that teaching is more instructional or academic. That is why my time here in the pulpit each week is different from a seminary class that could be taught or even basic instructions about church membership.

We see examples of teaching through out the Scriptures and one of my favorites is Eza!

We read at Ezra 7:6: “this Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the Lord, the God of Israel, had given.”

And of course the teacher who left us the most material to ponder was King Solomon who gave us Proverbs but also reminded us in Ecclesiastes that

Everything Is Meaningless without God where he begins by saying,

Ecclesiastes 1:1 “The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: 2 “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher; “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” [vapor]

And after covering pleasure, worldly wisdom, labor, vows, riches and even life itself he reaffirms his statement, in chapter 12 at verse 8:

“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “All is vanity.”

He then speaks about our duty before God.

9 “And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs. 10 The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright—words of truth. 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd. 12 And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh.

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.”

Paul and Peter warned the elders to not wonder from the truth and Jesus concludes His ministry by calling out those teachers of the law that had led Israel astray:

Matthew 23:15 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

I will leave chapters 23, 24 & 25 as your homework.

The bottom line is that those called to serve in the Church as Pastors and Teachers have a solemn responsibility to carry out the work of the church and to shepherd God’s people: This is why Jeff and I covet your prayers.

But as I mentioned, there are certainly shepherding and teaching roles in many places in all of our lives.

A person in the Church might be discipling a new Christian or leading a small Bible study.

Parents certainly have the responsibility of shepherding the children God blesses them with and this must include faithful instruction.

We should always remember the importance of such teaching with the example we have in young Timothy where the Apostle addresses him in this way in his second and final letter to him:

II Timothy 1: “3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, 4 greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, 5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. 6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

This should encourage all young parents as they raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord! That task is shared by all the members of Church of the King, but we always remember that it is certainly a full time job for the parents.

We are reminded of this in Deuteronomy 6 which we often turn to, but the Lord’s admonition is repeated in chapter eleven, so we should pay careful attention...

Deuteronomy 11: “18 “Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 19 You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 20 And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21 that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which Jehovah swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.”

Communion Meditation: Psalm 74:2:

“ O God, why have You cast us off forever?

Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?

2 Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old, The tribe of Your inheritance, which You have redeemed—

This Mount Zion where You have dwelt. ”