

Let me invite you to take your Bible and turn to Ephesians 4:7-16. We are working our way through the book of Ephesians together (line by line, word by word), unpacking the amazing truth of God's Word. To get us all on the same page, let me do a quick recap of chapter 4:

- **The exhortation for unity (vs. 1-3)** – Paul URGED the church to walk in unity
- **The illustration of unity (vs. 4-6)** – the Trinity (equal but different in economy)
- **The motivation behind unity. (vs. 7-14)** – the Person and Work of Jesus
- **The manifestation of unity (vs. 15-16)** – submission to one another and love for one another

Due to the brevity of time we have together each Sunday, we will focus on the middle section of "the motivation behind unity" as seen in verses 7-14. We will call this part 3 of a three-part mini-series. 😊

Motivation behind unity

- **The generosity of Christ (7)** – Thesis: Jesus is unbelievably generous to the church!
- **The supremacy of Christ (8-11)** – Commentary (vs. 8: Psalm 68; vs. 9-11: commentary on verse 8a and 8b.)
- **The intentionality of Christ (12-14)** – Application (Common ministry; Common message; Common measure [protection])

The supremacy of Christ (8-11)

- Jesus is our Victor.
 - He is pictured in the OT. (8; Psalm 68)
 - He conquered sin, death, and hell. (9)
 - He purchased the right to distribute the gifts to the church according to His good pleasure. (10)
- Jesus is our Benefactor.
 - His gifts are personal. (Eph. 4:11a)
 - His gifts are foundational. (Eph. 2:20; 3:5)
 - His gifts are missional. (Acts 6:8; 8:4-8; 26-40; 21:8-9)
 - His gifts are organizational. (Acts 20:17, 28; I Peter 5:1-3; I Timothy 3:1-7; Hebrews 13:17)

An excursion or deeper look into the four gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11:

Excuse:¹

1: DIGRESS, RAMBLE

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/excuse>

2: to journey or pass through : make an [excursion](#)

Illustration: Students who are skilled at provoking teachers to digress from the lecture content and ramble about stories or ideas that are vaguely related to the lecture... but IMPORTANT to the professor. 😊

- questions about his/her family
- questions about politics
- questions about personal background
- questions related to the topic of a professor's doctoral dissertation.
- questions related to a pet peeve: Coach Phillips despised when people claimed #1 status after winning a game.

This morning, I am deliberately pausing to examine the four gifts mentioned because it provides a wonderful opportunity for me to illustrate why Jesus Christ is the Master Architect.

- "Arkhi" = chief / "Tekton" = builder
- An architect is a person who designs buildings and in many cases also supervises their construction.²

The foundation for the church (Eph. 2:20; 3:5)

The building blocks of the church (I Peter 2:5-9)

The framing of the church (Eph. 2:21-22; 4:11)

The foundation for the church: (Eph. 2:20; 3:5)

- *Jesus Christ is the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20)*
- **Apostles**
 - Definition:
 - An ambassador sent by God to establish embassies for God.
 - Manifestation:
 - One who witnessed the public ministry of Jesus (Acts 1:21-22) or was personally confronted by Jesus (I Cor. 9:1-2)
 - One who is able to perform signs and wonders (2 Cor. 12:12)
 - Comprised by the original 12 disciples (Matthew. 10:1-4)
 - Minus Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-19)
 - Plus Matthias (Acts 1:20-26)

² <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/architect>

- Paul (I Cor. 15:8-9; Gal. 1:1; 2:6-9)
- Honorary mentions
 - James (I Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19)
 - Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14)
- Continuation or Cessation:
 - Cessation
 - Part of the foundation of the church that is now established (Eph. 2:20; 3:5)
 - Paul referred to himself as “last of all” (I Cor. 15:7-9)
 - Transfer of authority is seen in the book of Acts
 - Apostles (Acts 2:42; 9:27; 11:1)
 - Apostles and Elders (Acts 14:23 (1st mention of elder by itself); 15:4; 16:4)
 - Elders (Acts 20:17; 21:18; I Tim. 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 2 John; 3 John; Revelation 2-3)

• Prophets

- Definition:
 - Messengers chosen by God to proclaim revelation to kingdom citizens.
- Manifestation:
 - One who has prophetic powers and understands mysteries (I Cor. 13:2)
 - One who builds up the church (I Cor. 14:5, 22)
 - One who models discernment (I Cor. 14:32)
 - One who serves as an instrument of conviction to unbelievers when proclaiming the truth of the gospel to the believers (I Cor. 14:24)
 - An office held by men and women (Luke 2:36; Acts 2:17-18; 21:9; I Cor. 11:4-5; I Cor. 14:34-35)
- Continuation or Cessation:
 - Cessation
 - Part of the foundation of the church that is now established (Eph. 2:20; 3:5)
 - Prophecy and knowledge will pass away. (I Corinthians 13:8-10)
 - The *perfect* refers to the completed canon of Scripture.

- Note all of the references to revelation in this text (prophecies, tongues, knowledge).
- The word *perfect* is in the neuter (not feminine like *love*) or masculine (with reference to the return of Jesus Christ).
- The picture of seeing through a glass (mirror) is found in James 1:22-25. James refers to the Scripture as the *perfect law of liberty*.
- The canonicity of Scripture (determining which books made it into the 66 books of our Bible) was affirmed at the Council of Nicea in AD 325.

• One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and generally apostolic authority, direct or indirect. The first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books were both held in North Africa-at Hippo Regius in 393 and at Carthage in 397-but what these councils did was not to impose something new upon the Christian communities but to codify what was already the general practice of these communities (F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1960, p. 27).

- Canonicity was determined by genuine proof of authorship (**authority**), **orthodoxy** of teaching, and the **receptivity** by the church.³
 - The Scriptures are considered “the more sure word of prophecy” according to 2 Peter 1:19-21.

The foundation for the church (Eph. 2:20; 3:5)

The building blocks of the church (I Peter 2:5-9)

⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture:

³ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/canon.cfm>

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”^[a]

⁸ and

“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

- **Evangelists**

- Definition:

- A witness sent by God to share the gospel with unbelievers.

- Manifestation:

- Philip is the only person in Scripture given the title of *the evangelist*. (Acts 21:8)
- Philip was one of the seven men originally selected to serve as deacons in the church. (Acts 6:5)
- Philip fled from the persecution in Jerusalem and preached the gospel to the unbelievers in Samaria. (Acts 8:4-25)
 - He performed signs and wonders (Acts 8:6)
 - He baptized the new converts in Samaria. (Acts 8:12-13)
- Philip heeded the instruction of an angel to explain the gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch through the book of Isaiah. (Acts 8:26-35)
- He baptized the Ethiopian along the road. (Acts 8:36-38)
- Immediately after the baptizing the Ethiopian, Philip was carried away to the region of Azotus and preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea. (Acts 8:39-40)

- Continuation or Cessation:

- Cessation
 - Paul encourages Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. (2 Timothy 2:5)
 - No other mention of anyone with the gift (office) of evangelist *with the supernatural gift of signs and wonders (Acts 8:6) and transportation (Acts 8:39)* outside of Philip in Acts 21:8.
 - Baptism is an ordinance of the local church. (Acts 2:41; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 4:5)
 - Only the Apostles and Philip the Evangelist baptized people outside of a connection to a local body of believers (Acts 10:47-48; 16:30-34).
 - Paul was careful who he baptized. (I Cor. 1:14)
 - Peter commanded that Cornelius get baptized. He didn't personally baptize him. (Acts 10:48). Why? Because baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the local church that should be administered by the elders of the church.

The foundation for the church (Eph. 2:20; 3:5)

The lively stones needed to build the church (I Peter 2:5-9)

The framing of the materials for the church (Eph. 2:21-22; 4:11)

- **Shepherds & Teachers**

- Definition:

- A leader called by God to feed, protect, and guide a congregation of born-again believers using the Word of God.

- Manifestation:

- The provision of the office of shepherd/teacher is found in Ephesians 4:11 and I Corinthians 12:28.
- Elders begin to arise in the book of Acts as partners with the Apostles and then separate from the Apostles.
 - Apostles and Elders (Acts 14:23; 15:4; 16:4)
 - Elders (Acts 20:17; 21:18; I Tim. 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 2 John; 3 John; Revelation 2-3)

- The responsibility of a shepherd/teacher is to set aside time for prayer and the ministry of the Word. (Acts 6:4)
 - accurately teach the Word. (I Timothy 4:11)
 - publicly read the Word. (I Timothy 4:13)
 - faithfully preach the Word. (2 Timothy 4:2)
 - regularly share the Word with unbelievers. (I Timothy 4:13)
- The responsibility of a shepherd/teacher is seen in the three titles given to a shepherd/teacher
 - Elder: mature handling of the word and circumstances
 - Pastor: caring for the flock of God
 - Feeding, protecting, and guiding (I Peter 5:1-5).
 - Overseer: administering the ordinances and details of church ministry.
- Continuation or Cessation:
 - Continuation
 - The character of a shepherd/teacher is described in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
 - The examples of shepherd/teachers can be found in the Pastoral Epistles and the first three chapters in the book of Revelation.
 - No requirement for the shepherd/teacher to perform signs and wonders.

APPLICATION:

- **Jesus is our Benefactor.**
 - He is faithful to provide *exactly* what we need... *precisely* when we need it.
- **Jesus is our Benefactor.**
 - He has given us a blueprint for what He wants our church to become.

The blueprint of the church (I Timothy 1-3; Ephesians 3-4):

The church consists of pastors, deacons, and members covenanted together around the gospel of God (I Timothy 1-3) to observe the ordinances of baptism (Matthew 28:19-20) and the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:17-34).

PBC Covenant:

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of our Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and unity; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from unbiblical practices; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the ministry of the local church.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy of speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, and to secure reconciliation without delay.

We moreover engage, that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like faith and practice where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. In the event there is no such church, we shall seek, with the Lord's help, to establish one.

The church displays **the wisdom of God** in the spiritual realm (Eph. 3:10), **the power of God** throughout all generations (Eph. 3:20-21), **and the glory of God** through the worship of Jesus (Eph. 4:13) and the ongoing experience of progressive sanctification through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18-21).