

## **Sermon Discussion**

### **28 November 2021**

Read Ephesians 4:7-16

#### **Dig Deeper**

In v. 7, Paul states that each believer has received grace (unmerited favour and divine enablement) from God, but that God does not give each Christian the same **measure** of grace. He speaks of God's gift of grace here as the ability to serve God. Though all followers of Jesus receive enabling grace from God, God gives **gifts** to individuals differently (see *Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6*).

Warren Wiersbe says, "*Gifts are not toys to play with. They are tools to build with. And if they are not used in love, they become weapons to fight with.*"

According to v. 11, Christ gave gifted people to the church as gifts to the church. "**Apostle**" means someone sent as an authoritative delegate. The duty of the apostles was to establish the church and the churches (2:20; 3:5). The word *apostolos* also describes any servant who is sent by his master on any mission (John 13:16). "**Missionary**" is a modern equivalent term. It is probably according to their spiritual gifts rather than their offices that Paul was thinking of these individuals.

New Testament **prophets** provided edification, exhortation, and comfort to the church. Most prophets simply "spoke forth" truth that God had previously revealed (see *Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 11:5; 14:26-33*). **Evangelists** preached the gospel both at home and abroad (see *Acts 21:8; 8:6-40; 2 Timothy 4:5*).

The Greek phrase "**pastors and teachers**" or "pastor-teachers" probably describes the overseers of local churches who pastor and teach (see *1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9; 1 Peter 5:1-3*). It is better to regard the pastors as a subset of teachers. In other words, all pastors are teachers, but not all teachers are pastors.

The purpose of these gifts is to prepare the rest of the saints to minister and build up the body of Christ, the church. "**Equipping**" means preparing, mending, or restoring people to their proper use. The role of these leaders is to minister the Word to the saints in the church so the saints can minister the Word in the world. Every Christian has a gift or gifts with which he or she can and should serve.

1. Serving other believers is a privilege, not a chore. Paul says that God has given each one of us a supernatural capacity to serve the body of Christ: "*grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*" As you contemplate your service in this church, did you jump at the opportunity to serve God? Or did you do it grudgingly? How should your perspective on ministry change in light of Paul's perspective?

2. It is important to serve in our area of giftedness. Rather than draining us, our spiritual gifts energize us. Do you know how the Lord has wired you to serve in his church? Familiarize yourself with the various gifts by reading the lists in Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:10-11. Have any of these ever been manifested in your life and ministry? If so, which ones?
3. Paul says that the purpose of pastors is not to do all of the work of the ministry themselves, but rather “*to equip the saints for the work of ministry*” (Ephesians 4:11). Do you think of the pastor as the sole “minister” of the church? Or do you see yourself as a minister too?
4. If it was primarily your job to make sure your friends at church were spiritually mature, what would you do? How is that different or similar to what you do now?
5. Some churches teach that the certain spiritual gifts have ceased, such as tongues, prophecy and healing. Others affirm that these gifts are still in existence today. What were you taught in your previous church? What implications does Ephesians 4:13 have for the debate, regardless of your position?

### **Application & Prayer**

- What one step could you take in the direction of using your gifts more to build up the body of Christ?
- What are your spiritual gifts? If you don’t yet know, here are some practical ways to discover them: **Pray and seek guidance.** Try praying for 30 straight days asking God to show. Maybe include a fast for 24 hours. **Study the gift passages in God’s Word.** A great resource is “Your Divine Design” by Chip Ingram. Take an online test at [www.spiritualgiftstest.com/test/adult](http://www.spiritualgiftstest.com/test/adult). **Test the waters.** Get involved somewhere you are interested in and see what happens. **Evaluate honestly.** Ask yourself, “What am I good at?” Don’t have an exaggerated view but don’t have false humility. Also, ask people who’ll be honest with you.
- Reflect on the implications of Ephesians 4:7-16 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in His gracious promises.