

Grace Gifts
Ephesians 4:11-16

INTRO: John 3:16 says that, “God so loved the world that He GAVE His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

On the cross of Calvary, the crucified Son of God “GAVE His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

In Ephesians 4:8, We read that the ascended Son of God “GAVE (Greek *didomi*) gifts unto men.” This passage describes a victorious general distributing the spoils of war to his army. Each soldier got a present, a victor’s gift. This is what Christ did when He entered into heaven. He bestowed gifts on His people; He gave grace gifts unto the church.

I. VS. 11, GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

- A. It is Christ who gives to the church the gifts it needs for its spiritual health.
 - 1. “He” is emphatic in the Greek telling us that Christ Himself gives to the church gifted people. In the Greek, verse 11 reads, “And He it was who gave....”
 - 2. The same Christ who ascended up to heaven is the Christ who also gave gifts to men on earth.
 - a. These gifts are not the spiritual or charismatic gifts of the Spirit spoken of in I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12. These we have already discussed.
 - b. Paul here speaks of the gifts of Christ in very personal terms. The gifts of Christ spoken of here are the ministers themselves. The Lord gives ministers to the churches and Ephesians 4:11 lists them.
 - c. The grace gifts presented here are the men themselves; men who have been used to enrich the churches through the centuries. These men are not given as gifts for their own profit but for the profit of the church to bring about growth.
- B. Five presents to the church are listed here:

1. Apostles- Some of them were Apostles. The Greek word used here is *apostolos*: “one who is sent forth.” The Apostles were chosen by Christ, and the original twelve were the first in the church (I Cor 12:28).
 - a. In the restricted use of the term, it means the twelve, Matthias replace Judas, and Paul. There are no apostles today.
 - b. These are “the charter witnesses of Christ’s resurrection, clothed with life- long and church wide authority” (Hendrickson 196). (Note Acts 1:21-22).
 - c. Revelation 21 says that the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem have in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.
 - d. Matthew 19:28 says that the twelve apostles will judge the twelve tribes of Israel.
2. Prophets- a prophet is a foreteller or a forth teller.
 - a. The New Testament prophets revealed the will of God to the church before the canon was complete.
 - b. New Testament prophets were gifts to the early church providing edification, exhortation, and comfort (I Cor. 14:3).
 - c. The prophet stands before the congregation and makes the Word to glow (II Pet 1:19). In I Cor 14:3, we find that the prophet builds up, edifies, encourages, and comforts the church.
3. Evangelists- there are similar to our modern day missionaries.
 - a. They were spreading the Gospel, they are bearers of the Good News. Stedman says: “The evangelist’s task is not to go about denouncing sin, but to point the way out of sin. The evangelist may call people’s attention to that which is creating so much misery and heartache in their lives, but his work is not to denounce and condemn sinners.”

- b. They were and are traveling missionaries.
 - 1.) Acts 21:8 designates deacon Philip as an evangelist. In Acts 8, Philip was involved in a great evangelistic campaign when the angel of the Lord sent him to the Ethiopian eunuch.
 - 2.) Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:5 to “do the work of an evangelist.”
- 4. Pastors and teachers- are considered one and the same by most scholars.
 - a. These terms possibly refer to the various phases of the one office known today as pastor.
 - 1.) In Acts 20:28, the elders of the church at Ephesus are instructed to oversee the work of the church and to feed the flock.
 - 2.) The pastor is to lead and feed the sheep. The pastor is to teach by the Word and by example. Pastor-teachers are to be concerned with applying the Bible to individual lives.
 - b. The word used for teacher is *didaskalos* meaning didactically gifted. There are people who can open up the Word of God and make it live. Teachers are part of the gifts given to the church.

II. VS. 12, THE INTENTION OF THESE GIFTS

- A. This verse tells us why Christ gave gifts to men on earth.
 - 1. “For the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry. . . .” The word “perfecting” is the Greek word *katartismos*. E. Y. Mullins said the word means, “to mend, to complete, to fit out, to make one what he ought to be.”
 - a. The minister is to equip the saints, to prepare them to minister to others.
 - b. If their, the saints, spiritual net is torn, then the preaching and teaching of the Word will mend it and prepare it for fishing.
 - 2. “For the edifying of the body of Christ.”

- a. "For the building up, the growth of the body."
- b. All the saints are to be involved in the ministry.
 - 1.) Choir,
 - 2.) Teaching,
 - 3.) Witnessing,
 - 4.) Serving.
- c. If we all do our part, the result will be the edifying of the church both numerically and spiritually.

III. VS. 13, THE GOAL OF THE GIFTS.

- A. The Greek word for "come" means to "attain or come down to the goal." Three goals are set before us here:
 - 1. "Unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God."
 - 2. "Unto a perfect man." A mature, well rounded Christian.
 - 3. "Unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Knowing Christ in all of His power and awe (Philippians 3:10).
- B. Our first goal is unity.
 - 1. Note that the verse says, "Till we all...." We all need to get to the goal.
 - 2. Spiritual unity cannot come until "we all" get involved in Bible study, prayer, and service.
 - 3. Today instead of promoting spiritual unity, many are promoting school, clubs, and societies.
- C. Our second goal is to be mature, full grown.
 - 1. To be robust spiritually.
 - 2. To be full of enthusiasm and vibrancy.
- D. Our third goal is to be like Jesus in all His fullness. This was Paul's desire (Phil. 3:10).

IV. VSS. 14-16, THE RESULT OF THE GIFTS FORESEEN

- A. Vs. 14, "That" speaks of the result.
 - 1. "Be no more children."
 - a. The Greek word for children means infants.
 - b. Believers are to mature and become full grown saints.

2. "Tossed to and fro" like a little boat in the sea.
 - a. We are to be like a great oil tanker steaming to our goal.
 - b. We are to stay in the deep channel and not run aground.
 3. "Carried about with every wind of doctrine. . ."
 - a. Know what the Bible says and don't be taken in by scheming, circus-like evangelists.
 - b. False teachers cause confusion. Stay in the church that Jesus built.
- B. Vs. 15, We are to speak "the truth in love."
1. We are to cherish the truth.
 2. Christ is the source of our growth. He is the Head of the church. From the head of the church, the church gets its capacity to grow and be active (1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18).
- C. Vs. 16, As members of a local body, we are joined to and "belong to each other, we affect each other and we need each other" (Wiersbe 104).
1. As individual members grow and serve the body grows. "We must grow up. We can and we will if we will just keep eating the Word of God, breathing prayer, exercising faith and resting in Christ, from running into the street of carelessness or rebellion" (Anderson 111).
 2. A church will not grow without love (vs. 15). The love referred to here is the love also mentioned in verse 2.

CONCLUSION: The ministry of the church is to seek the lost and grow the saved (Matt. 28:19-20).

Dr. Cecil A Fayard, Jr.
June 22, 2008