

Greater Works Christian Church

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The Ascension Gifts

Introduction: For us to fully understand the Biblical Gifts (Gifts of the Spirit, Motivational Gifts, etc.) we also need to understand the Ascension Gifts. Often these Gifts are called Office Gifts because of the office the recipient holds. As we understand these Gifts and how they are to function in the Body of Christ, the one that holds the Gift will be healthier (spiritually and emotionally) as well as those he, or she, leads.

It is important for all believers to understand how these Gifts function, because it will also show what a healthy church looks like. When we can identify a healthy church structure, we have also identified a church that will develop more healthy and whole believers. The goal of every church should be to Glorify God by Discipling Nations. Nations are disciplined first by raising up healthy and whole believers.

Question: How has our study of Spiritual Gifts helped you? Please share briefly.

Ascension Gifts and Church Leadership

Note: In this study we are focusing primarily on the Gifts outlined in verse 11, because of this we will not focus too heavily upon other truths found in this passage.

Ephesians 4:1-16

1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,
3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

6 one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

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.

It is interesting to note that Paul writes this Epistle in almost a Bullet Point format. This entire book could be easily turned into a Check List of important truths to master for overall Spiritual Health and Strength.

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

This verse shows us the final things we are to Master in our Spiritual To-Do List.

With this in mind, chapter 4 would also be part of this checklist of things to understand and master, before we came to the “Finally” portion of our list.

Question: Have you ever read through the Book of Ephesians, using it as a type of check list for your life? If yes, what did you discover?

Note: *this may be the first time you've ever heard this in this manner. If you don't have an answer at this time that is completely OK.*

Walk Worthy of Your Calling

1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

By now most of us are aware of the Gifts God has entrusted to us. The gifts you possess are your calling, especially your motivational gifts, and if you have been given as one, the Five-fold Gifts. This is who and what you are.

The first thing we are told in regard to our Calling is to, “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called”.

Walk (4043) *peripateo*

- 1) to walk
 - 1a) to make one's way, progress; to make due use of opportunities
 - 1b) Hebrew for, to live
 - 1b1) to regulate one's life
 - 1b2) to conduct one's self
 - 1b3) to pass one's life

Worthy (516) *axios*

- 1) suitably, worthily, in a manner worthy of

Calling (2821) *klesis*

- 1) a calling, calling to
- 2) a call, invitation
 - 2a) to a feast
 - 2b) of the divine invitation to embrace salvation of God

Called (2564) *kaleo*

- 1) to call
 - 1a) to call aloud, utter in a loud voice
 - 1b) to invite
- 2) to call, i.e. to name, by name
 - 2a) to give a name to
 - 2a1) to receive the name of, receive as a name
 - 2a2) to give some name to one, call his name
 - 2b) to be called, i.e. to bear a name or title (among men)
 - 2c) to salute one by name

Keep in mind:

Matthew 22:14

"For many are called, but few *are* chosen."

Verse 1 says, "*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called*"

From the definitions of the key words, we could translate this verse like this:

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to make progress, taking advantage of all opportunities available, showing yourself worthy of the Divine Invitation of God's Prophetic Utterance over you".

I took the liberty to expand on some of the words in this text, only to give a clearer picture of what verse 1 means. The words, "Divine" and "God's Prophetic" are not in the passage, I

included these words to show how and from where the calling comes. ***This is for study purposes only!***

Question: What is your calling? You will know your calling based on your gift cluster (strongest gifts). Have you answered the call? Are you pursuing the call? If so, how? If not, what will you do to start pursuing your call?

Each of us has a Calling by which we have been Called. It is heavenly; it is Divine. This is who you were created to be. Answer the Call and you will become the fullness of what you were created for. Neglect the Call and you will never rise to the level God has for you.

Verse 2 and 3 gives tells us how to “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called”.

2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,
3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Without these at work in our lives (our heart) we will never be able to “walk worthy of the calling...”:

- Lowliness
- Gentleness
- Longsuffering
- Bearing with one another in love
 - ✓ Love
- Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace
 - ✓ Diligence (endeavoring)
 - ✓ Stability (keep)
 - ✓ Unity
 - ✓ Holy Spirit (being filled with)
 - ✓ Peace (true shalom)

This forms the basis for walking worthy in our calling. This goes for everyone, Five-fold or otherwise, but because it is part of this passage, this is for those called to a Five-fold Ascension Gift office of- Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor or Teacher.

If our leaders cannot fulfill these things, we cannot expect anyone under their covering to fulfill them.

We ALL are Gifted

Verse 7 says, “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.”

This does not mean everyone will have a Five-fold Gift. It does show that every believer IS gifted.

A better translation (the Literal Translation Version, LITV)

"But to each one of us was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

Translating the end of this verse, "Christ's gift." Would make it look as if Jesus gave everyone the same gift, but in different measure.

Translating the end of this verse, "gift of Christ." Make Jesus the gift. Grace is given according to the measure of Jesus Himself, Jesus being the gift.

Every Gift you and I possess is a portion of Jesus, Himself. It is similar to the Gifts of the Spirit. The nine gifts of the Spirit are given by Holy Spirit, but Holy Spirit Himself is the Gift that gives the gifts.

Discussion: Many teach and preach about grace but rarely use it in connection with the gifts. Many of the gifts are graces given to us, while in this passage grace is given according to Christ the gift.

In your own words, explain the connection between Grace and the Gifts, and why this is important.

Christ's Ascension Gifts

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.)

There is a great deal of Spiritual Meat in these verses, but I will do my best to stay the course of the Gifts.

Verse 8 gives us the reason why we call them the ascension gifts-

Therefore He says: "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, AND GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

The Five-fold Ministry- Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher were given by Christ as He ascended.

He Gave Some to be...

Verse 11, *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,*

Every Spirit-filled believer has Gifts from God to bless and edify the Body, but not all believers will have a Five-fold gift. The key word for this is “some”.

Jesus gave:

- SOME Apostles
- SOME Prophets
- SOME Evangelists
- SOME Pastors
- SOME Teachers

Please keep in mind we are all gifted, but not necessarily in this area.

Also, being called to one of these Ascension Gifts DOES NOT MAKE YOU MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS!

Why the Ascension Gifts?

Verse 12 tells us, *“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”*.

Many Five-fold ministers Lord their position over the people they have been entrusted to, not understand who or what they truly are, and what they are to be doing. Those who use their position and title to Lord it over the people are the False Five-fold.

When trying to speak to your Pastor (or other five-fold title), have you ever heard (or been told directly):

- I don’t deal with people on your level
- I am the (insert five-fold title here), you must submit to me.
- God won’t speak to you before He speaks to me (after sharing a word or direction of the Lord).
- You must serve me because I am the (insert five-fold title here).
- You must address me by my title, (insert Five-fold title here and last name).

Or, upon receiving a position of leadership in a Church:

- Don’t hang out too much with the people of the congregation. You cannot become too familiar with them, or they will stop respecting you.

Have you ever seen a church leader expect church members to do chores for him, such as washing his cars, cleaning his house, picking up dry cleaning, etc.?

Have you ever been to a church BBQ or Potluck and watched as the (insert five-fold title here) demanded that everyone else waits on him first?

Have you been in a Church where the (insert five-fold title here) sits on a “special chair” almost throne like in appearance?

I have seen and witnessed all of these in various churches. These are disgusting displays of False Five-fold Ministry.

Question: Have you ever experienced one of these examples (or anything like it)? If so, please share (without say who or where, unless relevant to the story).

How did this encounter make you feel about yourself? Towards the church leader that said it (or acts like this)?

The Five-fold is to Equip the Saints for works of Ministry

Romans 1:11

For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—

1 Timothy 4:14

Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

2 Timothy 1:6

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Just as Paul would Impart a Spiritual Gift, the Five-fold Ministry is to impart Spiritual Gifts to those in their care.

Paul encourages and teaches Timothy how to grow in his Gift. The Five-fold do the same. It is the primary job of the Five-fold to equip and train the church in doing the work of ministry. When this is done properly the Church is Edified (built up).

Question: Do you have a Five-fold Minister equipping you for works of ministry? If so, how? How has this benefitted you?

Keep in Mind, the Five-fold are Gifts to the Body of Christ

Verse 8 tells us, *Therefore He says: "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, AND GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."*

Christ Himself gave Gifts to the Church when He ascended. The Gifts spoken of here are the Five-fold Ministry.

Verse 11 clarifies this by saying, *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers”*

If you hold one of these Christ given Titles and Positions, you are a Gift to the Body of Christ, NOT THEIR LORD AND MASTER!

Gifts are to encourage and make one happy. Gifts are to show the love of the Giver towards the Receiver. Gifts are to Bless and build up the receiver. Gifts are never to dominate the receivers of the Gift.

The Proper Order of the Church

We find that the Five-fold Ministry is given by Jesus to the Church so the Church can be Built up and Equipped for ministry.

Ephesians 4:11-12

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,

The five ministries mentioned make up the leadership of the overall church. This is local as well as corporate.

Church Structure

1 Corinthians 12:27-28

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

This passage so clearly shows how the church is to be structured. Many want to fight against this, but keep in mind, this is God’s word, not mans.

Verse 28):

- First Apostles
- Second Prophets
- Third Teachers

After that miracles...

First (4412) *proton*

- 1) first in time or place
 - 1a) in any succession of things or persons
- 2) first in rank
 - 2a) influence, honour
 - 2b) chief
 - 2c) principal
- 3) first, at the first

Second (1208) *deuteros*

- 1) the second, the other of two

Third (5154) *tritros*

- 1) the third

Looking at the use of these words and the overall context it is easy to see this as a list of function and order, and NOT a list of importance (i.e. not a hierarchal list).

We could say, the Apostle is the first gift to the body- the prophet is the second gift to the body- the Teacher is the third gift to the body.

Notice what happens when these three are in proper order- “then miracles”. When the church is established as God wants it to be, power is released and flows freely.

Question: In 1 Corinthians 12:28, the Pastor and Evangelist are not mentioned. Why is this?

Note: Please go over the Diagram on Church Structure.

Conclusion: When we understand and establish the Gifts of God the Church functions in great power just as Christ intended it to. We are in the process of restructuring the Body of Christ for the next season of church and world history. We are going to need the power of God to flow freely through us, so the structure of the church is needing an overhaul.

Question: In your own opinion- What would the Church look like overall if it was established according to Ephesian 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:28?