

Unity in Diversity

October 14, 2012

I. The Ascension of Jesus

Eph 4:7-10 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

A. But

Though "one" in our common connection with "one Lord, one faith, & one God," yet "each one of us" has assigned to him his own particular gift, to be used for the good of the whole: none is overlooked; none therefore can be dispensed with for the edifying of the Church (from Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, Commentary)

The doctrine of the unity of the Body of Christ has a twin truth, namely, the diversity of its members. Each member has a particular role assigned. No two members are alike, and no two have exactly the same function. The part to be played by each one is assigned according to the measure of Christ's gift, that is, He does it as He sees fit. (from Believer's Bible Commentary)

B. He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth

Christ, as Lord of all, took possession first of the earth, the unseen world beneath it, the region of the lost, then of heaven (Ac 2:27, 28). His soul at death descended to Hades, that is, underwent the ordinary condition of departed spirits of men. The leading captive of satanic powers here, is said to be at His ascension; Ac 2:27-28; Ro 10:7 (from Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, Commentary)

C. "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

The speaker is God, the author of Scripture, and the place is the sixty-eighth psalm. That psalm is a psalm of triumph, where the placing of the ark on Zion is celebrated as if it had been a great victory. As this quotation shows, the psalm in its deepest sense is Messianic, celebrating the victory of Christ. As in a literal triumph, the chiefs of the enemy's army are led captive, so the powers of darkness were led captive by Christ; and as on occasion of a triumph the spoils of the enemy are made over to the conqueror, who again gives them away among the soldiers and people, so gifts were given to Christ after his triumph to be given by him to his Church. As a conqueror at a triumph gets gifts to distribute, so Christ, on his resurrection and ascension, got the Holy Spirit to bestow on his Church. (from The Pulpit Commentary)

D. "To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift."

Verse 7 introduces the subject of our spiritual giftedness. In so doing the emphasis turns slightly from the church's unity to individual diversity. Each of us received a spiritual gift by the grace of God. That grace has not been apportioned equally. Rather Christ has chosen how to divide grace to each member. Each is distinct and different. (from Holman New Testament Commentary)

II. The Ascension Gifts

Eph 4:11-16 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together

by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

A. Listings of Spiritual Gifts

1. Five Leadership Gifts (The five-fold Ministry) Eph 4: 7-16
2. Nine Charismatic Gifts of the Spirit 1 Cor 12:4-11
3. Seven Motivational Gifts (Rom 12:3-8)

B. Three Types of Gifts

1. Speaking gifts
2. Administration
The Greek word has to do with managing or leading your household. (1 Tim 3:4-5, 12)
3. Helps gifts

C. The Five Leadership or Ascension Gifts (The five-fold Ministry) Eph 4: 7-16

1. Apostle:
Definition: an apostle is one who exercises general leadership over a church or a number of churches.
2. Prophet:
Definition: a prophet is able to receive revelation and insight into matters in which they have no foreknowledge. This revelation knowledge gives them wisdom and insight into people's lives and reveals the secrets of people's hearts.
3. Evangelist:
Definition: an evangelist is someone who has a passion for winning unbelievers to Christ and to discipleship. They have an ability to adapt themselves to different kinds of people, so that their gospel presentation is relevant and attractive to those they speak to.
4. Pastor:
Definition: a pastor is one who loves people and desire to meet practical needs in people's lives. They care for people as a shepherd would care for his sheep.
5. Teacher:
Definition: a teacher has an ability to communicate biblical truths to people that are relevant to their spiritual growth and health.

D. God has a sevenfold purpose for these gifts (Eph 4:12-16).

1. They equip the saints, so that, the saints will do the work of ministry.
Eph 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service,
2. They build up the body of Christ, helping the church to grow spiritually.
Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,
3. They build up the body of Christ, so that, the church will grow numerically..
Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, ... according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body ...
4. They help the church to keep free of wrong teaching.
Eph 4:14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

5. They help people find the right relationships that will help them grow.
Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love

6. They release people in their giftedness.
Eph 4:11-12 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

7. They equip people to build each other up in love.
Eph 4:12 ... To the building up of the body of Christ;

Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

E. Reasons why you should know what your gifts are:

1. You have to know what they are in order to use them.
1 Peter 4:10 you can't employ it if you don't know what it is.

2. When you know what your gifts are you can develop them.
Mat 25:14-31 Parable of the talents

3. When you know what your gifts are you can set priorities so that your gifts can be used productively.
Mat 25:21, 23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' "Well done, good and faithful servant,"

4. When you are using your gifts you will be satisfied and not frustrated, knowing that you're contributing to the overall effort of the body, in the way that God meant for you to be contributing.
Eph 4:15-16 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

F. Principles:

Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to each member of the body of Christ. They are God's grace given to each individual for the benefit of others.

1. The gifts are given for the purpose of use.
2. The gifts are assigned, appointed, given and energized by God.
3. Spiritual gifts are for everyone.
4. There is an unlimited variety of gifts.
5. Gifts are given for maturity and growth
6. Spiritual gifts and not acquired skills or natural talents.
7. Spiritual gifts are not roles.
Every believer is to pray and worship, share our faith and be a giver, etc.
8. Spiritual gifts are not offices (you don't need a title to function in them).
9. Spiritual gifts are not for self-glory

10. Using your spiritual gifts should be fulfilling, enjoyable, and a blessing in your life.
11. We are first called to belong to Christ, enjoy Him; and then serve Him and His people.
12. Although gifts are given by God, they need to be discovered, develops and
13. Spiritual gifts are functional and utilitarian; they have a task to do when working properly.

III. Summary and Conclusion

- We all have gifts (1 Peter 4:10).
- We are to desire the best gifts (1 Cor 12:31; 14:1).
- We are to employ them (1 Peter 4:10).
- We are to use our gifts in serving others (1 Peter 4:10).
- We are not to neglect our gifts (1 Tim 4:14).
- We are to neglect to stir up our gifts (2 Tim 1:6).
- We are to walk in love as we use them (1 Cor 13:1-3)
- Someday, we will give an account of how we used our gifts (Lk 19:11-27; Mt 25:14-30).

IV. Notes

A. Believers are “Ministers.”

A simple way to define “ministry” is that it is the work of God for the people of God (Eph. 4:12). It is the work of serving others, using the gifts, resources, and power that God gives us. This is important for the church today to understand, because many Christians assume that “ministry” belongs only to professional ministers, or clergy. But ministry belongs to everyone in the body of Christ. All believers are “ministers.” All have been gifted to carry out the work of God (Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12). What, then, is the role of the clergy? To equip, or prepare, the “ministers” to do their work of ministry (Eph. 4:11–12). This involves teaching the truth of God’s Word, helping believers overcome the problems that hinder them, giving them a vision for reaching out to others with the love of Christ, and helping them develop and utilize the practical skills required to carry out their God-given tasks. Ministry is the calling, privilege, and responsibility of every member of the body of Christ. Some congregations help to remind their people of this truth by listing professional workers under the title of “staff” or “pastors” in their bulletins and newsletters, and reserving the term “ministers” for all members. It has been said that when believers are baptized, they are ordained into the ministry. Perhaps it would help to recover this perspective. It might free pastors and other church leaders to focus on their crucial role of equipping the saints for the work of ministry. It might also help to redistribute the load, which is often crushing for clergy and their families. Broadly shared ministry would mobilize and affirm the whole church and enrich every part of the world where the “ministers” live and work. (from Word in life study Bible)

B. Equip = katartismos (kat-ar-tis-mos'); complete furnishing

This is the only place that katartismos is used in the New Testament.

The root word is katartizo (kat-ar-tid'-zo); to complete thoroughly, repair or adjust.

How katartismos and katartizo is used in the New Testament:

1. Equip

Eph 4:11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, 21 equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight,

2. Train

Luke 6:40 " A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.

3. Prepare

Rom 9:22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

Heb 10:5 ... SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;

Heb 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

4. Complete

1 Cor 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

2 Cor 13:11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

1 Thess 3:10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

5. Perfect

1 Peter 5:10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

6. Mend

Matt 4:21 Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. (Mark 1:19)

7. Restore

Gal 6:1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

Classical Greek usage of katartismos:

- a. Setting in order a city which has been torn apart by factions and schisms.
- b. The outfitting or preparing of a ship for a long journey.
- c. The preparing of an army for the purpose of battle.

Word pictures to describe Equippers:

1. Trainers of the soldiers in the army of the Lord.
2. Restorers of the broken bones of the body of Christ.
3. Framers of the boards of God's house.
4. Exercisers of the muscles in Christ's body.
5. Shapers of the stones in the Temple of the Lord.
6. Healers of the breaches in the hedge of God's garden.
7. Liberators of those who are bound.
8. Adjusters of those who are out a joint.
9. Menders of those who are torn.
10. Equippers of the body of Christ.
11. Placers of God's people.
12. Organizers of the Lord's kingdom.
13. Molders of God's clay vessels.
14. Seers for God's service.