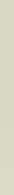


EPHESIANS

SPIRITUAL GIFTS



SUPPLEMENTAL VERSES

James 1:17

Matt 12:40

Romans 12:4-8

Acts 2:31

1 Cor 12: 1-10 & 28

1 Peter 3:19

Gen 37:35

Eph 2:10

Job 11:7-8

1 Peter 4:10-11

Jonah 2:2

Heb 5:11 – 6:3

Psalms 86:13

2 Tim 4:2

Is 14:9

REVIEW

In Chapter 2...Paul began speaking about the mystery that was hidden in ages past...but is now revealed. The Church!

The place where Jews and Gentiles will come together and worship the Lord.

Then in Chapter 3...He prays for the church

In Chapter 4, he opens up with a discussion concerning Unity.

Paul says that we have to “strive” to keep the unity of the body of believers! We have to work hard at it...we have to be gentle, patient, long suffering with each other.

We have to unite around those beliefs that we share: One Faith, One Hope, One Baptism, One Body, One Lord, One Spirit, One Father of all!

Why is Unity in the Church so important? It helps the world understand the Love of God and the Nature of God. The Trinity...three distinct persons working as one!

UNITY IS DOES NOT MEAN UNIFORMITY

As we also discussed...The church is made up of Jew & Gentile and people from every tribe, people, and language.

There are going to be differences....Differences in culture, ideologies, differing levels of spiritual maturity.

God made each person unique...and while the call is for Unity...It's not for Uniformity.

The church is a beautiful picture of where people with differences come together as the Body of Christ and love and serve God.

Today...we are going to read about how God has gifted each one of us uniquely.

GIVING COSTS THE GIVER

Before we unpack this passage...Let me ask you a question. When you give a gift to someone, does it have a cost?

Time spent thinking about the person and what they will like, time spent looking for the perfect gift, time spent waiting in line trying to pay for it, the money it cost to purchase it.

One of the points of these first few verses is that gifts cost the giver!

God paid an enormous cost to give us these gifts!

GOD IS THE GREAT GIVER

How do we know how to give?

God shows us what giving is about. He is the greatest giver!

What things has God given us? Life, breath, His Son, Eternal Life, Holy Spirit, Victory, Wisdom just to name a few.

James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights.

God loves to give! He loves to give gifts to His children!

In this passage, we are going to see that God has a unique gift for each of us, that cost him a great deal!

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE FOR EACH ONE OF US WHO BELIEVE

Let's read Eph 4: 7-16

Verse 7:

“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it”.

Did God leave anyone out here?

No. Every believer is included here. Each one of us has received a gift, as Christ has determined by His grace.

That's exciting!

God has given each one of us a unique spiritual gift...at that moment when we accepted Christ and the Holy Spirit came to live inside of us!

UNITY WITH UNIQUENESS

We are all made by God different and unique.

We are each like snowflakes...no two snowflakes are ever the same.

There are no two Marc Cruises or Rob Groffs or Pete Marshmans.

God has created each of us in a unique way...forming our character, our personalities, our physical attributes, etc.

Then...when God gives us spiritual gifts...it makes us even more unique.

Though we are called to Unity in the preceding verses...we are not called to Uniformity...We are called to Uniqueness.

God has created each of us unique, according to His grace, his pleasure, and his plan...and He has given each one of us a spiritual gift.

WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT?

Spiritual Gift = A divine ability to do something special for God in the Body of Christ. It is a God given capacity to carry out a function in the Body of Christ.

It is not a natural ability such as physical strength.

It is determined by God.

It is distributed by the Spirit of God.

Lists of Spiritual gifts are found here and also in Romans 12: 4-8 & 1 Cor 12: 1-10 & 28

Many gifts are mentioned...around 19...Gifts such as mercy, administration, leadership, teaching, serving, encouraging, giving, etc. There are debates surrounding some issues regarding spiritual gifts: Are these lists exhaustive? Are some of these gifts that are not in use today such tongues, prophesy, healing, etc?

1 Cor 12:6 There are many different kinds of working, but the same Lord.

WHAT'S YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT?

How do I find out what my Spiritual Gift is?

1. Take a Spiritual Gift Assessment.
2. Talk with a Pastor or an Elder who knows you well.
3. Think through those situations where you have served, and God has used you. What has come rather easily for you? What are you passionate about doing?
4. Make a decision to start serving Him, and pay attention to the feedback that others give you. They may say things like “Wow, you are really gifted at that”

PAUL REFERENCES PSALM 68

Verses 8 & 9

This is why it says “When he ascended on high he led the captives in his train and gave gifts to men”

What does “he ascended” mean except that he also “descended” to the lower early regions?

Paul is quoting Psalm 68:18

Psalm 68 is about a triumphant procession! It is a victory lap!

The first half of the Psalm refers to Israel’s march from the Desert of Mt Sinai into the promised Land.

The second half references the “after conquest” procession to Mt Zion, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem

THE PICTURE THAT PAUL ILLUSTRATES

In those times, after a battle was won, the victors would have a huge procession...A big parade...a victory march. (Kind of like a celebration in a city after winning the Super Bowl.) On display in the parade would be...the enemies that were taken captive, the spoils that were gained, and also...the good guys...the ones that the enemies had taken captive that were freed. Some of the spoils of the battle were then “given as gifts” to the people.

The picture that Paul is painting is one of celebration after a battle.

DESCENDED INTO THE LOWER EARTHLY REGIONS

Verses 8 & 9

This is why it says “When he ascended on high he led the captives in his train and gave gifts to men”

What does “he ascended” mean except that he also “descended” to the lower earthly regions?

When Christ left heaven to come to earth and become a man, that was his first descent. But this verse indicates that he “descended into the lower earthly regions”.

Last week we discussed the Creeds that the early church had developed to help ensure that we all believed the same things and that unity was kept.

The Apostle’s Creed which is one of the most widely used Creeds by all Christian denominations says that after his physical death Jesus “descended into hell”.

In the Old Testament, the word is actually “Sheol” in Hebrew...In Greek it is “Hades”. In English we say Hell...but this is not the “Hell” that we normally think of.

SHEOL: THE PLACE OF THE DEAD

The Hebrew word Sheol is mentioned over 60 times in the OT. It literally means...the place of the dead.

The first mention of Sheol is in Genesis

Gen 37:35 Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son. NASB

Whenever Sheol is mentioned, it's always mentioned as a place "down there" somewhere in the depths of the earth.

Job 11: 7 -8 "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? They are higher than the heavens...and deeper than the depths of Sheol" NASB

Jonah 2:2 "I cried for help from the depth of Sheol." You heard my voice. NASB

Sheol is a place where both the wicked and the righteous went when they died...before Christ came.

Psalms 86:13 You delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol NASB

Is 14: 9 Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come. NASB

Sheol was divided into two compartments: Paradise or (Abraham's bosom) & Hades (the place of torment)

JESUS DESCENDED INTO THE LOWER EARTHLY REGIONS...WHAT DID HE DO THERE?

The apostle's creed states that "Jesus descended into Sheol or Hell".

Matt 12:40 Jesus answered "...For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Acts 2:31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE was neither abandoned to HADES(SHEOL), nor did his flesh suffer decay. NASB

1 Peter 3:19 he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits, those who were disobedient long ago...

When Jesus descended into Sheol, he proclaimed the victory that had been won over sin, death, & Satan. He then took those who were in "Paradise or Abraham's bosom" up to Heaven with Him. "When he ascended, he led captives in his train"

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE A PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST'S VICTORY!

He also gave gifts to men...Spiritual Gifts. This is a sign of Christ's victory!

It is a proclamation that He is victorious!

Think of what these gifts cost God to give. His one and only Son, humbled himself left the throne of heaven and became a man, lived a perfect life, then was beaten, humiliated, spit upon, and then died an excruciating death on the cross to pay the debt for our sin...Then He descended into the Sheol for 3 days. He won the battle over sin, death, and Satan!

Christ paid a huge price to give us these special gifts.

They are symbols of His victory. As His children use their spiritual gifts to serve Him...it not only builds up the body of Christ, but it is not only a reminder...it is a proclamation of Christ's amazing victory that has been won!

ARE YOU ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN USING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT?

Since these gifts cost God so much to give and...since he has taken the time to gift each one of us uniquely...The question needs to be asked: Are you using your spiritual gift?

Have you opened it up?

Do you know what it is?

Are you actively seeking to grow in using it?

Or...is it sitting on a shelf somewhere?

HE GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES, SOME PROPHETS, SOME EVANGELISTS, AND SOME TO PASTORS & TEACHERS

Verse 11: He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some to be teachers.

These particular gifts were instrumental for building the foundation of the church.

Apostles: “Sent ones” who were witnesses of the resurrection

Prophets: Those who foretold the ministry and held people to scripture

Evangelists: Those who are gifted at sharing the gospel in a winsome, relational way that people can understand

Pastors & Teachers: These were shepherds who cared for the people and taught the word of God.

PURPOSE OF THESE GIFTS

Verse 12: Paul gives several reasons for the purposes of these gifts:

1. So that God's people would be prepared for works of service. (Equipping). Notice that God has work for each of us to do! Ephesians 2:10! We are His workmanship (Poeima) created for good works in Christ! You are God's Poem. His masterpiece. God wants to write a beautiful story about your life and the way He is going to use you for His purposes! There is no one else in the universe like you! God has a purpose for you! God has a spiritual mission for you! When we engage in using our spiritual gifts, we see God work in us and through us in miraculous ways!
2. So that the Body of Christ would be built up. (Strengthened in their faith)
3. So that we would all reach unity in the faith. (Functioning as One Body on mission)
4. So that we would grow in our knowledge of the Son of God (Intimacy with Him)
5. So that we would become mature believers (in knowledge and in actions)
6. We would attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Attain: To reach a destination. What is the destination? The whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Being transformed into looking like Christ and being filled with His Spirit)

THE BODY OF CHRIST ONLY FUNCTIONS WELL WHEN PEOPLE USE THEIR GIFTS!

One person said this. When the body of Christ is functioning well and everyone is using their spiritual gift...its like an orchestra. Each person playing their own instrument and Christ is the conductor. A beautiful song is played that only God could arrange.

However...when the body of Christ is not functioning well...It's like a professional football game on Sunday. 24 people on the field in desperate need of rest and 40,000 people in the stands in desperate need of exercise.

Paul wants us to understand that each one of us has a part to play in God's church...and that God has gifted each of us for those parts. When we don't play our part...not only does the Body of Christ suffer...but the Body of Christ is not effective at accomplishing God's purposes.

1 Peter 4: 10-11 Each one of you should use whatever gift he has received to serve.

ARE YOU STILL A BABY IN CHRIST?

Many of us know believers...or people who say they are believers...but they are not growing or maturing in their knowledge of God, in their transformation of looking like Jesus...or in serving and using their spiritual gifts.

Instead...they look like Babies...spiritual Babies.

The analogy of spiritual babies is mentioned a few times in the scriptures.

Probably the most pointed one is in Hebrews

Hebrews 5:11 – 6:3 The author challenges the believers to grow up spiritually and uses the analogy of a baby still needing milk. Think of the absurdity of a grown person that still needs to nurse. The point is: You should be further along in your spiritual growth by now! Grown adults should not be nursing!

SPIRITUAL BABIES CAN'T DISCERN TRUTH

This is the analogy that Paul is using here also in verse 14. “Then you will no longer be infants...tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind and teaching.”

Spiritual Babies who do not “move on” in their spiritual lives and “grow up” are susceptible to all kinds of “false teaching”. One characteristic of babies is: they put almost anything in their mouths! Spiritual Babies listen to all kinds of false teachers.

They are easily persuaded by teachers who sound great...but are not teaching the truth. These teachers may have some truth sprinkled within their teaching...but then their message deviates from the Scripture. Ex Prosperity Gospel and the many false teachers.

Paul uses the words “cunning and craftiness and deceitful scheming” to describe these false teachers.

Spiritual Babies...those who are not grounded in the Word of God...will fall for these things. That's why it is so important for us all to actively engage in our Spiritual Walks and go on to spiritual maturity!

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Verses 15 & 16:

Instead...(In other words...the expectation is that we are actively growing in our walks with Christ)

Speaking the truth in love... What does this mean? Sometimes we have to call out these false teachers. And...when we see people that we know who are following or listening to them...we have to help them see that it is false. How to we do this?

Both directly and indirectly “in love”!

Indirectly: Ask them to get involved in a Bible Study with you. Help them to get good teaching. Help them to get “solid food”. Help them to understand how to be fed and to feed themselves.

Directly: Earn the right to be heard in their lives...then ask for permission to speak about the false teaching/teacher that they are listening to. 2 Tim 4:2 Preach the word, correct, rebuke, encourage with great patience and careful instruction!

GROWING UP IN HIM IS OUR MISSION

Verse 15 Continued

We will in all things grow up in him: This is the goal for every believer. Not to stay a spiritual baby...but to go on to Spiritual Maturity. This happens as we actively engage in our Spiritual Walks and everyone is using their spiritual gifts.

Verse 16. Paul gives the picture of a physical body. The point...to show how we are each integral in the Church, using our spiritual gifts, and encouraging and spurring one another on to Spiritual maturity.

“From him, the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work”

Notice... that we are building each other up in love as we use our gifts spurring one another on to spiritual maturity.

Notice also...that each part has its own work to do!

EACH ONE OF US HAS A PART!

God has gifted each one of us uniquely by His grace.

He went to great lengths to give us these gifts.

Spiritual Gifts are a proclamation of His victory!

Spiritual Gifts are also essential in building up the body of Christ so that we all reach maturity in our spiritual walks!

Each one of us has a part to play in the Body of Christ!