

Christ's Gifts to His Church - Ephesians 4:9-13

Good morning, church family!

Today looks a little different up here. Usually, I'm leading us in worship through song during the first half of the service, but this morning I have the privilege of sharing God's Word from the pulpit. For those who may not know me yet, my name is Cheyenne. I'm not only the worship pastor, but together with my husband, Marcello, I co-lead our young adults ministry. I've been serving at this campus for almost two years now, but I've been part of the His Place family since 2018.

Before I jump in, let me quickly go over a few announcements

1. Child & Baby Dedication - next Sunday during both services. Children are a gift from the Lord. If you'd like to dedicate your child to the Lord and pray over their journey of faith, sign up online at hisplace.com
2. Women's ministry is having a fundraiser Jan 18th after both services. Support Women's Ministry and enjoy a tasty breakfast burrito or 2. You can also take burritos to go. \$9 for a burrito, a drink, a treat, and a smile
3. Operation Timothy - men's discipleship course. starting Saturday January 24th 7am-8:30am, but also starting up on Tuesday nights January 27th 6-7:30pm

Today, I'll be picking up from where Pastor Chris left off last week. We're going to continue our trek through the books of Ephesians chapter 4. First, lets pray.

Raise your hand if you play an instrument—maybe guitar, piano, drums? Or if you're into painting, sketching, or writing? What about sports—were any of you stars in school, maybe even made varsity? Or do you love working on cars or bikes? Maybe really into fitness? As most of you know, I play guitar—I've been at it for over ten years now. God has truly gifted me with a natural ear and feel for music. We all have these unique talents and passions that we're drawn to—

whether it's music, athletics, art, writing, or fixing things—and they make each of us who we are

Now natural abilities are great. There's this great satisfaction when used. A lot of the time it influences your career choices, your hobbies, or even your personal development.

Did anyone do really well in English class? See, now that's not a natural ability for me. Writing and grammar were not my forte, so I tried not to lean towards things like that.

I remember the first worship team I joined. I was 16 years old and at the time I didn't realize I kind of bit off more than I could chew. I was easily the weakest player on the team. As soon as I saw the setlist posted I was in my room for hours trying to get these songs down. Even though it was difficult, I enjoyed it. There was this sense of accomplishment & satisfaction when I could play through the setlist well.

Believers and non-believers all have natural gifts and talents. However, when we join the family of God and become a part of the Body of Christ; we are given what's called a spiritual gift.

What is a spiritual gift?

- **A God-given ability to serve God & other Christians in such a way that Christ is glorified and believers are edified.**
- **“edify” - to spiritually build up, instruct, and strengthen the church community”**

last week, Pastor Chris talked about unity and maturity in Christ.

to refresh the beginning of chapter 4 verse 1 says **“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” (NIV)**

There's this act of intentionality. Everything that we do and say is either going to glorify God or not.

Paul goes on to share the requirements of this life that's worthy of the call. He shares that we should be humble, gentle, patient and loving. All Jews and Gentiles now belonged together. They are One body under One Spirit, One God, one Father, One Lord which is Jesus Christ.

today, I will be focusing on verses 9-13. I'm going to back up to 7 & 8, because they tie into this particular section as well.

verse 7-8, "but to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives, and gave gifts to his people."(NIV)

Paul is referencing Psalm 68:18. Paul takes a shift from unity to uniqueness. He's going to explain God's vision for a properly functioning church body. We're not a bunch of clones within the church. We all have different spiritual gifts that are given to us by God.

I want to emphasize that these are the gifts God freely gives to His people. See it as an encouragement. It's not by our power. It's not how well I play guitar, it's not about how much money someone has, it's not about IQ, it's not about social status. If you say yes to Jesus, you have a gift that is crucial to the proper function of the church

v. 9-10 "What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe."(NIV)

Now there's a lot of interpretations to this text. As I was studying this section, there were 3-4 pages of text just on these 2 verses. my study bible explained that this is Paul's reminder of Christ's coming. Jesus descended from heaven to this earth, died, was resurrected, ascended to heaven, and then poured out the Holy Spirit along with His gracious gifts.

Regardless of interpretation, we can all agree to say this.

Christ's lordship knows no bounds: there's no realm, no authority, no part of the universe that can escape His presence. Jesus is Lord of heaven and Earth.

Paul now states 5 different gifts.

These 5 gifts are called the ministry offices.

v.11 "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers (NIV)

1. **Apostles** - probably referred to the 12 disciples. They were unique, because they could personally testify to the resurrection of Jesus.
 - The AG does not give the title apostles.
 - The Greek word for **apostle, "apostolos" which means one set out for a specific purpose or mission.** So some may give themselves that title, because it lines up closely with church planters and missionaries.
2. **Prophets** - a designated person who communicated a word from God. They were God's spokespersons
 - When God wanted to convert a message to people, he used prophets to deliver it. In the OT, majority of the time, it was to warn the people of their disobedience to God.
 - In Acts, Paul was prophesied over about his arrest and it was a confirmation for him about the ministry that he was doing.
 - Prophecy is still very active today. Maybe you've been prophesied over. Paul insisted we take their word seriously. Any prophecy spoken to us must be tested against the scriptures ¹ **Thessalonians 5:20-21 (NIV) "Do not scoff at prophecies, but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good."**
 - The Church needs people with the gift of prophecy. It can warn and correct us, but it can also strengthen, encourage, confirm and comfort us.

3. **Evangelists** - this refers to a person who proclaims the gospel, or the Good News.

- give examples, Pastor Chris, Greg Laurie etc.

Paul then separates pastors and teachers. Some people will put them as one. They definitely overlap in some areas

4. **Pastors** - probably better translated as shepherds. One whose role is to guard and lead the flock under their authority. They care for, offer counseling, prayer, and leadership to the flock. They want to nurture the spiritual life of the believer.

5. **Teachers** - another word could be instructor. They explain doctrine to believers, guiding them into a deeper knowledge of scripture. Helping people understand & grasp what the Word is saying.

Paul only states these 5 because His focus was again, unity and maturity in Christ.

To function as a healthy church, it starts with a solid leadership. These gifts lay the groundwork for the church. Those that are called apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers share the truth about Jesus and serve as leadership to the church. They proclaim that Jesus is superior in all things. He is the Head of the Church. The very image of God. The final authority. He is the focal point of our faith.

Now that doesn't leave out those that don't have these specific gifts. We don't get off that easy. Context in the Bible is always so important. We read scripture for what is what written for. Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus. He wanted them to understand God's plan and goals for the church, which was all made possible through Jesus. Then we say how can this be applied to my life today?

v.12-13 “to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (NIV)

- leadership: we are to train the people to do the work themselves.
- Equip the people in the church to exercise their gifts in order to encourage others and bring glory to God.
- we see unity & a healthy functioning church when we are taught sound doctrine & have a common understanding of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are

We live in an age of consumerism. What can I get out of this service? How can the church serve me? Well, your leadership is here to equip you. to give the knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. Now it's your duty to use your gifts and share the truth of Jesus Christ.

I'm going to read from Romans 12:3-8, but I would also encourage you to dive into 1 Corinthians chapter 12. It has a detailed lists of the other spiritual gifts.

Romans 12:3-8 (NIV)“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith, if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently, if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

No gift is better than the other. They are all different, but they work hand in hand just like different organs of our body.

1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of god’s grace in its various forms.”

- Share examples of how the gifts are displayed in your group of influence
- share examples on how your gifts have changed as you have faced trials and matured in Christ

Finding your gift takes time. Learn and study what they are. Pray over it and ask God. Take a spiritual gifts test. I’ve taken the time this week to print out a website and the list of the gifts. I have handouts here. If you’d like one, please see me after.

Salvation call/response