

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for October 21, 2018

Gifts for the Church
Ephesians 4:11-13

I. The gifts for the church (4:11)

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

- This list of spiritual gifts focuses on leadership
- Apostles
 - Term literally means “sent ones”
 - This was the title given to the disciples who became the first ones “sent out” to establish the early church in the book of Acts
 - There were obvious limiting factors to who these apostles were
 - Acts 1:21-22 “So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”
 - Later on, Paul himself was added to the team of apostles in the early church leadership
 - 1 Corinthians 15:8-9 “Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”
 - Others besides Paul were identified as apostles in the New Testament
 - Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, and others
 - There are a couple of different ways to understand this dynamic of multiple apostles
 - One way is to recognize the generic nature of the term since it means “sent one” or “messenger”
 - “The term ‘apostle’ is used in more general ways of other men in the early church, such as Barnabas (Acts 14:4), Silas, Timothy, (1 Thess. 2:6) and others (Rom. 16:7; Phil. 2:25). They are called ‘apostles of the churches’ (2 Cor. 8:23), rather than ‘apostles of Jesus Christ’ like the 13. They were not self-perpetuating, nor was any apostle who died replaced”¹

¹ John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1809.

² Douglas J. Moo, “The Letters and Revelation,” in NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and

- 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 “Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.”
- Evangelists
 - Evangelists were gifted to proclaim the good news of Christ to the lost
 - Term evangelist is based off of the term *euangelion*, which is the Greek word for “gospel”
 - Thus, evangelists were “gospelists,” heralds, or proclaimers of the good news
 - In the early church, these evangelists probably did much of their evangelizing in new areas where Christ had not yet been proclaimed
 - In effect, these evangelists were largely responsible for planting many of the early local churches so we might even call them “church planters”
 - We only have a couple of specific examples of this in the rest of the New Testament
 - Philip proclaimed Christ to the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8
 - Acts 21:8 “On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.”
 - Paul told Timothy to be doing the work of an evangelist
 - 2 Timothy 4:5 “As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”
 - While all Christians have been called by God to evangelize and share the gospel, God has specifically gifted some in the area of evangelism
 - We could almost say that the evangelists continue in the path of the early Apostles by preaching to the lost and establishing churches
- Shepherds
 - Those who lead the church by exercising oversight as an overseer
 - Their leadership will demonstrate care, protection and teaching of the Word
 - 1 Timothy 3:2 “Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,”
 - Acts 20:28 “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”
 - 1 Peter 5:1-3 “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not

under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”

- Teachers
 - To make a slight distinction, Paul also mentions the gift of teachers to the church
 - While all pastors are teachers, not all teachers are pastors
 - Thus, teachers focus upon explaining the Word of God to the people of God
 - We could say that shepherds/pastors and teachers continue in the path of the prophets by bringing the revealed will of God in His Word to the people of God

II. The growth of the church (4:12)

12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

- “To equip the saints for the work of ministry,”
 - This is not growth in the way that many people might expect churches to grow
 - Not a growth by numbers
 - Not a growth because of a massive leadership team
 - Not a growth because of a pastor who is genius strategist
 - This is growth based upon the effect that the church leaders will have upon the saints or church members
 - God gives gifted leadership to equip the saints
 - This equipping is primarily done through the teaching of the Word of God
 - God’s Word equips believers
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
 - This equipping is not a knowledge or data transfer
 - This equipping is an empowerment to do ministry
 - When the church leadership does their job, the church members will be active
 - We have been blessed to have so many lay leaders give themselves to the work of ministry
 - This has been by design!
 - This is God’s plan for a healthy growing church
 - When the saints are equipped to do the work of ministry, the church will grow
- “For building up the body of Christ,”
 - Converging of two metaphors that have been used thus far in Ephesians
 - A building and a body
 - Every part of a building is desperately reliant on the other parts

- Every part of a body is desperately reliant on the other parts
 - Every member of the church is desperately reliant on the other members
- 1 Corinthians 12:7 “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”
- 1 Peter 4:10 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace”

III. The goal for the church (4:13)

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

- Two goals for the church
- Oneness/unity based upon knowledge and maturity based upon Christ
- “Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God”
 - Jude 3 “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”
 - “Unity is more than having a loving or tolerant attitude. It is uniting around the core Christian beliefs of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God”²
- “To mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,”
 - Romans 8:29 “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18 “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”
 - Colossians 1:28 “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”

² Douglas J. Moo, “The Letters and Revelation,” in NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 2405.