

**"The Practice of the Believer"**

**Ephesians 4-6**

**Part 4**

**Introduction:** In our study of Ephesians we have been looking at Paul's exhortation for unity in the body of Jesus Christ. Last week we looked at verses 7-10 and it was in these verses we learned that we are all given at least one spiritual gift and the GRACE to exercise our gifts.

**Notice Ephesians 4:7**

We then moved on and we were able to see how the gifts were made available to us. It was through the death of Jesus Christ and the victory He gained over sin and the grave. The spiritual gifts are the spoils of the victory.

**Notice Ephesians 4:8-10**

This now brings us to where we are today in our study.

**I. A Call for Unity**

**Part 4**

**"The Blueprint for the Church"**

Paul reminds us that God not only gave gifts to the church to preserve the unity, but He also gave gifted men to the church to strengthen each and every one of God children.

Now, there are many different opinions as to how the church is to operate today. In the text before us we see how God intended for the church to function.

**Notice Ephesians 4:11**

Paul gives a list of gifted men whom God gave to the church. I want to look briefly at each one of these men.

**1. Apostles**

This gift no longer exists today. The apostles were foundational men whom God used to build the foundation of the church.

**Ephesians 2:19-20**

*<sup>19</sup> Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

<sup>20</sup> And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

These men were foundation builders and now the foundation has been laid. One of the qualifications of an apostle was that they had to have been an eyewitness of Jesus Christ after His resurrection. After Judas died there was a need for another apostle. Let us notice the words of Peter in Acts 1.

**Acts 1:21-22**

<sup>21</sup> Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

<sup>22</sup> Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

The man chosen would need to be an eyewitness of the resurrected Messiah. It was here that the Lord chose Matthias to replace Judas. There are no eyewitnesses today of the resurrection so we can be sure there are no apostles.

In the early church the apostles were very important along with the prophets. They both brought forth the Word of God to a church that had no New Testament Bible.

**Acts 2:42-43**

<sup>42</sup> And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

<sup>43</sup> And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

The apostles were also given gifts which applied only to them for the purpose of showing they were authentic. There were many false apostles and so the apostolic gifts separated the TRUE apostles from the false apostles.

**Hebrews 2:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

<sup>4</sup> God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

## 2. Prophets

These were God's spokesmen. They gave to the church the Truth of God as it was directly revealed to them.

## 3. Evangelists

These were men who traveled to different areas to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This spiritual gift still exists today. Sharing the Gospel is something we are all commanded to do.

### Mark 16:14-15

<sup>14</sup> *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*

<sup>15</sup> *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

Not all ministers are evangelists, however.

### 2 Timothy 4:5

<sup>5</sup> *But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

## 4. Pastor/teachers

This is one office with two ministries.

Now let us notice the purpose of the gifted men being given to the church.

### Notice Ephesians 4:12

There are three purposes listed within this verse.

- a. **For the perfecting of the saints.**
- b. **For the work of the ministry.**
- c. **For the edifying of the body of Christ.**

Each of these purposes will only come about through the teaching of the Word of God. They will not happen through programs or entertainment. It will not happen by preaching a salvation message every week.

It is my responsibility to teach you the entire counsel of God. Let me show you what Paul said to the elders that were in the church at Ephesus.

**Acts 20:27-30**

*<sup>27</sup> For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

*<sup>28</sup> Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

*<sup>29</sup> For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

*<sup>30</sup> Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

Let me remind you of what Jesus told Peter.

**John 21:15-17**

*<sup>15</sup> So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*

*<sup>16</sup> He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

*<sup>17</sup> He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

The most important responsibility of the pastor is to teach his people, who God entrusted to him, the Word of God. This does 3 things

- **It brings you along in spiritual maturity.**
- **It equips you to serve outside the walls of this building.**
- **It ultimately edifies/builds up the body of Christ.**

If this is not done and all that God's people ever get are salvation messages, then the church ends up being very shallow. Let me show you what often happens in many churches.

**Numbers 11:4-6**

*<sup>4</sup> And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?*

<sup>5</sup> *We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:*

<sup>6</sup> *But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.*

### **Notice Ephesians 4:13**

This verse tells of our destination in growth. This verse tells us how long we are to sit under the Word of God as taught by the pastor. We will not reach this goal until the rapture. No matter where we are in our spiritual growth there is still more room to grow.

When the church does not follow this blueprint then there is strife, division and contention within the body of Jesus Christ.

When the church is taught the Word, we see 4 results in this verse:

1. Unity
2. Deeper knowledge
3. Maturity
4. Manifestation of Jesus Christ.

*J Vernon McGee made a statement on his radio broadcast one day "I am going to talk to you very frankly. Don't expect your pastor to do it all. He is there to train you that you might do the work of the ministry and that the church might become mature. We are not to act like a bunch of nitwits today. We are to give a good, clear-cut, intelligent witness to the world. I think the greatest sin in the local church today is the ignorance of the man sitting in the pew; he doesn't know the Word of God, and that is a tragedy. I would hate to get into an airplane if the pilot didn't know any more about flying than the average church member knows about Christianity and the Word of God. The plane wouldn't make it—I think it would crash before it got ten feet into the air. That is the condition of the church today. All believers need to be trained in the Word of God so they can do the work of the ministry.*

### **Notice Ephesians 4:14**

When our minds are saturated with the Word of God it helps us to be equipped against deception.

### **2 Timothy 3:13-17**

<sup>13</sup> *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*

*14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;*

*15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

*16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

*17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

Let me just say that as our world moves closer to the tribulation the deception is going to increase.

#### **Matthew 24:11**

*11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

#### **Notice Ephesians 4:15-16**

This is the ultimate goal for the church. We are to become more and more like Jesus Christ as we function in love together in the body of Jesus Christ.

#### **Romans 8:28-29**

*28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

*29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

#### **Conclusion:**

#### **John 3:30**

*30 He must increase, but I must decrease.*

**Warren Wiersbe** sums up this section writing that "Love is the circulatory system of the body. It has been discovered that isolated, unloved babies do not grow properly and are especially susceptible to disease, while babies who are loved and handled grow normally and are stronger. So, it is with the children of God. An isolated Christian cannot minister to others, nor can others minister to him, and it is impossible for the gifts to be ministered either way. So, then, spiritual unity is not something we manufacture. It is something we already have in Christ, and we must protect and maintain it. Truth unites, but lies divide.

*Love unites, but selfishness divides. Therefore, "speaking the truth in love," let us equip one another and edify one another, that all of us may grow up to be more like Christ.*