

# **BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE**

## **Different Gifts -- One Body**

Ephesians 4:7-16

1998

### **Introduction**

"On a special Teachers' Day, a kindergarten teacher was receiving gifts from her pupils. The florist's son handed her a gift. She shook it, held it overhead, and said, "I bet I know what it is, some flowers." "That's right" the boy said, "but how did you know?" "Oh, just a wild guess," she said. The next pupil was the candy store owner's daughter. The teacher held her gift overhead, shook it and said, "I bet I can guess what it is, a box of candy." "That's right, but how did you know?" asked the girl. "Oh, just a wild guess," the teacher said. The next gift was from the son of the liquor store owner. The teacher held it overhead, but it was leaking. She touched a drop of the leakage with her finger and touched it to her tongue. "Is it wine?" she asked. "No" the boy replied, obviously delighted that he was the first student to at least temporarily defy the teacher's apparent insight. The teacher repeated the process, touching another drop of the leakage to her tongue. "Is it champagne?" she asked. "No," the clearly delighted boy answered. Once again the teacher tasted the leakage and finally said, "I give up, what is it? "The boy enthusiastically replied, "It's a puppy!"

Fortunately, the gifts that God gives are not puppies and they don't leak in a box! God does have gifts for us believers. He lays out various gifts in this section that have to do with the expansion and strengthening of His body. To empower us in our efforts to "keep the unity of the Spirit", Christ has given to His church certain "gifts".

#### **1. They are given by God's grace**

1 Cor 4:7 "For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?"

#### **2. They are given strategically and individually for the building up of the Body of Christ.**

Rom 12:4-6 "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 who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us."

#### **3. They are given for the benefit of the body of Christ**

1 Cor 12:4-7 "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of

working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

No one has all the gifts. But each has some measure of God's grace and gifting for the benefit of the church.

## **I God Has Gifted Every Believer**

### **A. Prophesied in the Old Testament - Ps 68:18**

#### **1. Where did Jesus ascend to? - Eph 1:19-21**

When we read that He ascended, the meaning is clear. After his resurrection Jesus was "raised from the dead and seated at God's right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come." Eph 1:19-21

#### **2. Where did Jesus descend to?**

- a. Following His death and prior to His resurrection, Christ went to Hades and proclaimed a message of victory over those who disobeyed Him during the days of Noah who were prisoners of Hades (1 Pet. 3:18-20).

He descended into the earth in his burial. As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so was the Son of man in the heart of the earth. (Matt 12:40). He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens (v. 10), far above the airy and starry (which are the visible) heavens, into the heaven of heavens; that he might fill all things, all the members of his church, with gifts and graces suitable to their several conditions and stations.

1 Pet 3:18-20 "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built."

#### **3. What did Jesus accomplish?**

- a. He led captives in his train - Is 61:1; Matt 27:52-53

Isa 61:1-2 "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners ..."

Matt 27:52-53 "The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people."

b. He gave gifts to men -

By doing so, He fulfilled His triumphal victory prophesied by ascending on high while leading captives in his train (fear, power of sin, death, evil powers and authorities - Col 2:13-15) and by giving gifts to men (the Holy Spirit, power, etc.)

4. In order to fill the whole universe:

a. With blessings - Hendrickson

b. With his presence and himself - Barclay

B. Fulfilled in the New Testament- Acts 2:33; 1 Cor 12:7-11

Jesus received the gifts from the Father (Ps 68:18) and gave a large measure of gifts and graces gifts to men; particularly, he enriched his disciples with the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 2:33 "Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear."

1 Cor 12:8-11 " To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines."

The gifts and offices named here "exercise their ministries in such a way as to help other members of the church to exercise their own respective ministries." F.F. Bruce

## **II God Has Gifted the Church**

A. With leadership

1. Apostles

a. One of the original twelve

1. They were eye-witnesses of the resurrection - Ac 1:15-22

2. Their role in the church was foundational; God used them to establish the church - Eph 2:20

3. Their work or function was temporary

b. A church planter

1. A believer with a multi-faceted gift ministry necessary for the establishment and strengthening of new churches and/or pioneer works of God.

2. Paul, Barnabas (Act 14:14), James (Gal 1:19), Silas (1Thess 2:6), Junias and Andronicus (Rom 16:7)

There are modern day apostles today in that there are men who plant churches. But the 12 apostles of Jesus were unique in their role and authority.

## 2. Prophets

- a. Inspired men and women used to reveal God's Word and will - Eph 3:5; cf. Ac 2:17; 11:28; 21:9
- b. Like the apostles, their role was foundational. God used them in establishing the church - Eph 2:20

Included:

- 1. Foretelling the future - Acts 11:28; 21:9, 11
- 2. Forthtelling the word of God - Acts 15:32; Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10, 28

"The supernatural capacity to proclaim truth from God, in order to exhort, edify, or console believers, and to convict the unbeliever of the reality of God."

There continue to be prophets, but not with quite the same ministry as those in the Old Testament or the first generation church.

## 3. Evangelists

- a. Literally, "bearers of good news"
- b. Example: Philip (Ac 21:8), who proclaimed the gospel of Christ both publicly and privately - cf. Ac 8:5-13, 26-40
- c. Timothy was charged to "do the work of an evangelist" - 2 Tim 4:5

"The divine ability to be able to share the gospel with unbelievers in such a manner that they frequently decide to become disciples of Christ and responsible members of the Body of Christ."

Rank and file missionaries of the church.

## 4. Pastors

- a. Paul may have intended to describe one function because "some" is not repeated.
  - 1. The role of pastor (shepherd) requires feeding or teaching the flock.
  - 2. Sometimes people will link the gifts of teachers and pastors together, but Paul seems to differentiate the gifts here. Some pastors great at pastoring but not at teaching. There is indication elsewhere that there was a special function of "teachers" in the local church - Ac 13:1; 1 Co 12:28-29; 2 Tim 1:11; Jam 3:1
- b. The term "pastor" is found only here in Ephesians, but from Acts 20:17, 28 and 1 Pet 5:1-2 it is evident that "pastors, shepherds, elders, presbyters, bishops, overseers" are different terms describing the spiritual leaders of local congregations.

"A believer called of God to responsibly watch over or shepherd a group of Christians for an extended period of time, being especially concerned with their protection, provision, and spiritual growth."

5. Teachers - Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:9

"The God-given ability to search out and communicate biblical truth in such a manner to other Christians as to cause them to grow in their knowledge, understanding, and interest in the Word of God."

Two extremes to avoid:

1. No gifts operating today
2. Five fold ministry

1 Cor 12:30 But eagerly desire the greater gifts."

B. To equip the church

The primary purpose of the church's leadership is not to evangelize the world, but to equip the people of God.

**Equip** = prepare (giving the tools and skills and encouragement)

"To put right, to set a broken bone, to mend nets, the restoration of the fallen"

1. For works of service

Eph 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

**Service** = diakonia = same word for deacons = menial service

2. For the edification of the church

Oikodomeo = to build up

1 Cor 14:12 "Try to excel in gifts that build up the church."

It is implied in verse 7 and made crystal clear in verse 16 that every believer has a function, a purpose and a mix of gifts that are given:

C. Until we all reach:

**Reach** = a term used to describe travelers arriving at their destination

1. Unity in the faith

One hope (4) one Lord (5) and one body (4)

2. Unity in the knowledge of Christ

Not simply factual information, but a deep, experiential relationship w/ Christ

**Illustration:** Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow. So, one hundred worshipers [meeting] together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be, were they to become 'unity' conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship. A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God

### 3. Full maturity in Christ

**Mature** = full development or adulthood.

This phrase is in the singular indicating that the church is seen as one new man in Christ.

Whether or not the goal can be realized in this life is irrelevant. That point is that the Christ is to press forward with no lesser ambition than this.

## III The Results Of God's Gifts

### A. The church is protected from:

#### 1. Spiritual immaturity

1 Cor 13:11 "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me."

Contrasted with maturity and adulthood of the previous verse

#### a. Instability

- Tossed back and forth (not solidly grounded)

**Klydon** = Raging waters, storm surf; being carried about, whirled about

**Periphero** = Violent swinging about as to make one dizzy

Its victims will be tossed back and forth like a cork in a surging sea- James 1:6 and whirled around by every chance gust of heresy or false teaching.

The unsteady and the rudderless can easily find themselves adrift and pushed off course.

As Christians we are to keep an even keel against every wind of doctrine.

- Outside the church: Cults, humanism, relativism, etc.

- Inside the church: Laughing, prophecy, health and wealth, etc.

#### b. Vulnerability (to false teaching)

- Cunning and craftiness

**Cunning** = kybia = Cheating with dice. Trickery and fraud

**Craftiness** = panourgia = "unscrupulousness that stops at nothing"

Used in reference to Jesus' questioners (Lk 20:23) and the guile of the serpent (2 Cor 11:3)

When people wander away from the truth, they do not hesitate to use whatever means available, including deception, to lead others to follow them.

- Deceitful scheming

But the church must never resort to this kind of deception.

B. Instead, the church is prepared to:

1. Speak the truth in love = lit. "do the truth"

"Speaking the truth without love can serve the cause of evil, whether preaching or teaching God's Word, rebuking a believer, or disciplining our children. Truth can be devastating. When clothed in love, however, it eliminates error, builds trust, and promotes the good of others. Calvin Miller states, "Malicious truth gloats like a conqueror. Loving truth mourns that it must confront and show a brother his error. Malicious truth struts at its power. Loving truth weeps to find that the correction it inspires may for a while cause great pain. Malicious truth cries 'Checkmate, you are beaten!' Loving truth whispers, 'I correct you with the same pain you feel. But when the pain is over, we shall rejoice that honesty and love have been served.'"

a. In order to grow up into Christ

The perfect picture of stability, in contrast with "tossed back and forth".

From Christ alone, as head, the body derives its whole capacity for growth and activity and its direction, as one coordinated, directed entity.

It is only when each part is working properly that the body receives the support it needs.

2. Build itself up in love

a. Through the contribution of each member

Each member is not to seek his own good and own growth but that of the body.

There is diversity in unity, not a uniformity. The parts do not look alike, they do not function alike, yet, they are all important, needed, interdependent, and all work toward the same end, the purposes for which each member was designed in the function of the body as directed by the head and in accord with the creative purpose of God.

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