

Ephesians: Unity in Diversity

(Ephesians 4:7-16)

The Giver of Gifts (v. 7-10)

- Through the work of Christ & the Spirit, the Church has unity (v. 3-6)
- Now, Paul focuses on the individuals who make the Body of Christ
 - The focus is on diversity of people, talents, and roles in the Church
- Every member of the Church has been given gifts by Christ
- These gifts come as a result of Christ's primary gift of Himself for us
 - Thus, the first gifts are salvation & eternal life
 - All other gifts flow as a result of these first gifts
- Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 as evidence of this truth, showing that part of the purpose of Jesus' first coming was as Giver

Leadership as a Gift (v. 11-13)

- God's gifts include those who provide leadership to the Church
 - Their authority is grounded in and expressed by the true proclamation the word of God
- These are not offices, but rather roles
 - Not a hierarchy of value, but rather a calling to serve the Body (see Mark 10:42-45)
- Apostles:
 - Those who first proclaimed the Gospel, who had seen the risen Christ, and were entrusted by Jesus to establish the Church (ex. Peter, Paul, and others)
 - This might also refer to Missionaries who help establish the Church among new peoples
- Prophets:
 - The authors of the Old Testament
 - Those, who through the Holy Spirit, proclaim a direct word from God, which must be tested against Scripture (1 John 4:1)
- Evangelists:
 - The authors of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John)
 - Those who proclaim the Gospel to bring people into relationship with God through Christ
- Shepherds & Teachers:
 - Those who proclaim and explain God's word to nurture and equip the Church
 - Pastors, Elders, Teachers
- All these roles are for one purpose
 - Not to be the only ones doing ministry
 - But rather, to equip the *whole church* to minister
 - Which produces unity, knowledge, and maturity in Christ in everyone

The Fruit of the Gospel (v. 14-16)

- When we are rooted in God's truth
 - The result of Spirit-led proclamation of God's word
- Then we are not easily led astray and can stay focused on God's design for us
- And as we proclaim His truth to one another in love, we grow into the body He means us to be
- When we are concerned about what are our specific gifts are, we *may* miss the point

- It is not primarily about what your gifts are
- It is about being a gift to others

So What?

- Are *you* using God's gifts in *you* to build up others?

Meditation Verse: Ephesians 4:15