

## Varied Gifts of Grace – Ephesians 4:7-14

- 1) **Have you ever struggled with who you are in Christ? Have you looked at others and wished for what they have? Or struggled with the differences or weaknesses of others that are not like yours?**

In John 16:7, Jesus told his disciples that it was better for them that he goes away. It is often hard to believe that is true. Ephesians 4:7-14 helps us understand how Jesus' ascension to his throne in Heaven is vital to how he builds his church.

*<sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."<sup>9</sup> (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*

The unity Paul talked about at the beginning of Ephesians 4 is not uniformity. Here in verse 7, he talks about grace that is given to each of us uniquely as Jesus determines. Yet, this varied grace does not divide but serves the overall unity of the church. He goes on to tie this grace to Jesus' ascension and subsequent sending of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:7 (ESV)

*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.*

- 2) **How does the grace of the Holy Spirit's equipping show up in varied ways in the church? How does it relate and fit with the unity of the church which is such a priority?**
- 3) **How does understanding this work of the Holy Spirit help us to rest in Christ when it comes to who we are and who we are not?**

Starting in v11, Paul identifies a few of these gifts and shows what they are meant for, which is to build up and protect his church. The overarching picture of how the church works starts to take shape: Jesus rules and reigns, sending his Spirit to gift his church with all it needs to build itself up in love.

- 4) **Considering this, the giftings that you have – who are they for? What does it look like when our gifts are spent on ourselves versus when they are spent for the good of the body?**
- 5) **On the other side of the coin, how should we see the gifts of others? How should this shape our view of the church?**

We are united in Christ and diversely gifted, and because of that, you are essential to the church and the church is essential to you.

### Prayer:

- What can we praise God for?
- What sin do you need to confess?
- What cares or burdens can we help carry?