

Sermon 15: Shepherding the Church of God: Ephesians 4:11-16

Text: Ephesians 4:11-16 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love..."

Introduction: 4:7-16 is a unit:

- **Part 1: Grace: 4:7** God gave gifts to each member of the body.
- **Part 2: Triumph: 4:8-10** He did it through His triumph on the cross.
- **Part 3: Authority: 4:11** These gifts establish an objective standard upon which our lives must be built.
- **Part 4: Plan: 4:12-14** He has a plan for His church.
- **Part 5: Duty: 4:15a** He gives us responsibilities in that plan.
- **Part 6: Glory: 4:15b-16** The ultimate end of His plan is glorious.

Summary: Christ shepherds His church so it will grow up in Him.

Interrogative: How does He do this?

Fact 1: The Shepherd cares for His church: 4:11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers..."

- **Christ:** "He gave..."
 - **Three important verbs in the passage:**
 - **"He gave:"** In the past He gave gifts to the church.
 - **"May grow up into him:"** In the past He determined our ultimate end..."
 - **"Maketh increase of the body:"** He is continually working in the body in every generation to accomplish this end.
 - **The Church starts with Christ:**
 - **Matthew 16:18** "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it..."

- **1 Corinthians 3:10** "I have laid the foundation... other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ..."
- **Scripture:** "Some, apostles; and some, prophets..."
 - **This is the enduring objective standard for the Church:**
 - **Ephesians 2:20** We are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone..."
 - **2 Timothy 3:16-17** "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works..."
 - **2 Peter 1:20-21** "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost..."
- **Evangelism:** "Some, evangelists..."
 - **The new birth through the preaching of the gospel:**
 - **Romans 10:14** "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"
 - **2 Corinthians 4:5-6** "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ..."
 - **2 Corinthians 5:18-21** "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation...and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God..."
- **Discipleship:** "Some, pastors and teachers..."
 - **Growth into Christlikeness comes through pastoral care:**
 - **Acts 20:18-20** "I have been with you at all seasons. Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house..."

- **2 Timothy 4:1-2** "I charge thee...Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine..."
- **1 Peter 5:2-4** "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock..."
- **2 Timothy 2:24-26** "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves..."

Fact 2: The Shepherd carefully builds His church: 4:12-14 "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ..."

- **These gifts were given to bring about three distinct outcomes:**
 - **Outcome 1: Spiritually mature, well-equipped balance in ministry cooperation:**
 - **Spiritual maturity:** "For the perfecting of the saints..."
 - **Well-equipped:** "For the work of the ministry..."
 - The pastor's focus must be to equip.
 - The body must appropriate what it has been given.
 - **Balanced ministry cooperation:** "For the edifying of the body of Christ..."
 - Built up
 - Furnished out
 - Strengthened
 - **Outcome 2: Successful connection between generations:** "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ..."
 - **Our lives are a small piece of God's work to build His eternal Church:** "Till we all come..."
 - **This work will continue until we all meet the Lord:** "The knowledge of the Son of God..."
 - **Outcome 3: Discernment not dependence:** "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive..."
 - **We stop being children:** "That we henceforth be no more children..."
 - Vulnerable
 - Emotionally unstable
 - Undisciplined

- **We develop the ability to discern truth from error:**
 “Tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive...”
- **God’s method for building the Church is simple: 2 Timothy 2:2**
 “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also...”
 - Pastors must faithfully teach the whole counsel of God.
 - The church body will mature when it is done faithfully.
 - That maturity will equip each person to serve the body as they have been fitted.

Fact 3: We are responsible to the Shepherd in His work: 4:15a

“Speaking the truth in love...”

- **This phrase describes the way ministry must be done:**
 - **We must be willing to speak:** “Speaking...”
 - Desire alone is not enough.
 - Planning alone is not enough.
 - Prayer alone is not enough
 - We must establish a consistent pattern of faithful teaching.
 - **We must hold fast to the standard of scripture:** “The truth...”
 - Not individual opinions
 - Not ourselves
 - The truth
 - **We must do it from the right heart:** “In love...”
 - **Restraint**
 - **The guiding principle of what is right.**
 - **Patience: 2 Timothy 2:24-25** “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves...”

Fact 4: The Shepherd has a goal for the work: 4:15b-16 “May grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love...”

- **“May grow up into him in all things:”** A deeper communion with Christ
- **“The whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part:”**

- A deeper sense of interdependence.
- A deeper communion within the body.
- **“Maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love:”**
 - Growth within the body.
 - Growth that comes as each member serves other members of the body.

Application:

- **Unbelievers:**
 - If you do not know Christ, you are outside the scope of this passage.
 - God’s will for the church is glorious and you should long to be part of this body.
 - You can, by placing your faith in Christ.
- **Believers:**
 - These facts are true, whether we are properly experiencing the benefit of them or not.
 - He is caring for the church.
 - He is carefully building it for His glory.
 - We have responsibilities to Him as He does it.
 - The ultimate goal of His work is glorious.
 - We need to understand the proper function of our church.
 - We need to pray for the health of this church.
 - We need to be committed to our responsibilities to God within this church.