

The Gift of a Lifetime (Eternity) Ephesians 4:1-16

vs. 1, the **calling** you have received

- Blessed us with every spiritual blessing (1:3).
- Received an inheritance (1:11).
- Sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (1:13).
- Made us alive with Christ (2:5).
- Seated us with him in the heavens (2:6).
- You are his unique work of art (2:10).
- Peace - members of God's household (2:19).
- Incalculable riches of Christ (3:8).
- The mystery (3:9).
- To make known God's multi-faceted wisdom through the church (3:10)

Walk -> not casually and without thought, instead with intention and prescribed order of doing things (rule of life).

vs. 2-3,

- Humility and gentleness through patience.
- Bearing with one another in love.
- Keeping the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Wood glue - 3600-4000 pounds per square inch, stronger than the actual wood, which is why it is even better than screws)

vs. 4-6, ONE

Body, Spirit, Hope, Lord, Faith, Baptism, God and Father

vs. 7, Grace (Jesus) was given. Jesus is the *gift!*

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:32 He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything?

Experiencing God's good will (grace), power, and presence.

- This gift is a ministry which implies responsibility and action.

"With great power comes great responsibility." ~ Uncle Ben (Spider-Man)

We have stopped taking responsibility because we have convinced ourselves that the power of God is no big deal.

This gift is to each one, not a special few. (We belong to God / We belong to God's family)

vs. 8, Quoting **Psalm 68:18**

The phrase, "he took the captives captive"

The Point: Those that our bound remain bound.

vs. 9, Ascended / Descended

John 3:13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven —the Son of Man.

How has God been telling his story?

Joseph, Moses, David, the Suffering Servant - all of them through humiliation attained the highest glory. Christ descended to the cross and to death (humiliation).

Jesus is an embodied Savior. He is present with his people. The gift is himself. He is exalted. He is the powerful, omni present Messiah.

Acts 2:33 Therefore, since he has been exalted to the right hand of God and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he has poured out what you both see and hear.

vs. 10, to fill all things - This is the imagery of a king visiting all parts of his realm establishing his rule.

I pray you are pondering Jesus as our gift in ways, up to this point, you have yet to process.

- Jesus / Messiah / Promised One / God with us / All authority in heaven and on earth
- The ONE Messianic gift of ONE grace

vs. 11, Because of this gift (we belong to Jesus and we belong to God's family) He (Jesus) has given specific areas of service.

These persons are men and women who fulfill their service by speaking (ministers of the word). There is weight given to these functions (areas of service).

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Connecting the dots (Context, context, context) -> Priscilla and Aquilla

Acts 18:18-21, They are relied upon by Paul to get something going (a community of Jesus followers) in Ephesus. Paul leaves P&C in charge of the mission in Ephesus.

Acts 19:8-10, Remember a hall is rented and for 2 more years the kingdom is explained in doctrine and community to both Jew and Greek.

1 Corinthians 16:19 The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla send you greetings warmly in the Lord, along with the church that meets in their home.

Ephesus is Paul's last major place of new mission noted in the last stage of Paul's work as a free man. Paul would stay in Ephesus for three years. Much had already been cultivated and Paul would once again join Priscilla and Aquilla to continue strengthening the church.

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"The one who has been given to the Church as cosmic Lord, himself gives to the Church to equip it fully for its cosmic task. And to assert that the ministers are gifts of the exalted Christ, rather than merely officers created by the Church." ~ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 248–249.

Jesus gives specific people to people for a specific purpose.

What was and what will continue to be...

Apostles -> those who were willing to go into new places and start new work with the full support of being sent. (Original 12, 12 Tribes, Paul to the Gentiles, Barnabas, Junia, etc.)

Prophets -> those who apply the truth of the good news / scripture to the circumstances of everyday life. (Remember Agabus, Acts 21:10-14)

The church at all times needs both. Both services / ministries / functions continue today. These were not restricted to a certain period of time (church history).

Evangelist -> those who proclaim the gospel message. Compelled to announce. Narrower but similar to that of an apostle (Acts 8, 21:8, Philip and 2 Timothy 4:5, Timothy).

Pastor / Teacher -> it is very difficult to determine Paul's intention (1 or 2 functions). The imagery of a shepherd is rich - attentiveness, care, presence, etc.

Acts 20:28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

1 Peter 5:2 Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly;

Part of a qualification for being an overseer (bishop) is the ability to teach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9).

vs. 12-13, to equip the saints (katartismos - only here in the NT)

Connected understanding

Political usage - to reconcile

Medical - to set bones

Generally - to restore, prepare, create

- For the work of ministry
- To build up the body of Christ
- Unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son
- Growing into maturity
- With a stature measured by Christ's fullness

As the church matures..the saints are equipped, ministry is "free flowing", the church is fully hydrated with encouragement (built up)...

Maturity begets maturity -> foolishness begets foolishness

vs. 14-16, No longer...naive and helpless

The church clinging to Jesus is not like a child, instead they are radically communal (growing into Christ's fullness).

Let's refresh...speaking the truth in love -> Jesus is in charge! We are all connected, working together, to experience growth (peace / place).

Question: What is the pattern and consistency of my walk?

What are the implications specific to your experience of unity with the bond of peace within God's family?

How does all of this conversation about oneness actually make you feel?

In what ways do you cherish the gift of Jesus? How have you lost the awe of the gift? What needs to change?

Is it possible God is asking you to serve / function in one of these ways (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor / teacher)? What steps do we need to take together to see more and more of this take shape?

Are we steadily moving toward maturity each day, week, month, and year? Are we committed to be radically communal?