

Ephesians 4:7-16 Maturity Through Diversity

Verse 7

According to the measure of Christ's gift – Each believer is to function in Christ's body by God's enablement, proportionate to the gift (spiritual ability) bestowed on him.

Verses 8

And He gave gifts to men – Paul quotes Psalm 68 which portrays a military victor who has the right to give gifts to those associated with him. Christ, having redeemed sinful people, is their Victor and gives them gifts, and as gifts, to the church.

Verses 9-10

Now this expression "He ascended," what does it mean...

These two verses are a parenthetical comment on Christ's work for the church and why He is able to give gifts. There are three major understandings of the phrase, "*descended into the lower parts of the earth.*"

- 1 – It refers to Christ's incarnation.
- 2 – It refers to Christ's death and burial in the grave.
- 3 – It means Christ descended into Hades between His death and resurrection. Colossians 2:15 and 1 Peter 3:18-22 seem to favor this view.

Verse 11

And He gave some as...

Apostles – The 12 plus Paul had the *office* of apostleship.

There were others who had the *gift* of apostleship (1 Cor. 15:7, Acts 14:4, Rom. 16:7, etc.)

Prophets – They most likely revealed God's will to the church when the biblical canon was incomplete.

Evangelists – Those involved in spreading the gospel.

Pastors – Those gifted to shepherd the flock.

Teachers – Those gifted to teach the flock.

Other Spiritual Gifts - Romans 12:3-8 & 1 Cor. 12:28-31

- 1 – Sign gifts. Signs and wonders, healings, tongues and interpretation of tongues. These gifts were given for the formation and confirmation of the church.
- 2 – Speaking gifts. Teaching, encouraging, exhorting, preaching, mercy, apostle, evangelist, pastor, knowledge and wisdom.

- 3 – Serving gifts. Administration, helps, serving, giving, leading, and faith. These may be the greater gifts to which Paul is referring in 1 Cor. 12:31.

How to discover your spiritual gift.

Do – Try something. Get involved.

Desire – What do you enjoy? What is your passion?

Delight – What brings you the greatest joy as you serve?

Confirmation of your spiritual gift.

Discernment – Others will see the gift in you.

Direction – The church will confirm or (lovingly) let you know if you are not being used in an area of ministry.

“There is no exhilaration in this world like doing the will of God by the gift of God through the Spirit of God for the glory of God.” (David Anderson, *Position & Condition*, p. 159).

Verses 12-13

For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ – Spiritual gifts are never about self-gratification but rather about serving others.

Until we attain to...

The unity of the faith

The knowledge of the Son of God

To a mature man

To the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ – We measure up to, or become more Christ-like.

Verses 14-16

As a result – Four dangers of not being equipped.

- 1 – *Children* = Immature
- 2 – *Tossed to and fro* = No doctrinal depth or stability
- 3 – *Wind of doctrine* = The latest fad or philosophy
- 4 – *Deceitful scheming* = Satan's conspiracy to undermine biblical values and absolute truth.

The benefits of maturity.

- 1 – *Speaking the truth in love* – We must know the truth to be able to speak it.
- 2 – *Grow* – We are in a continuous growth process.
- 3 – *Every joint* – When I do my part I'm not harming someone else's growth.

The result – The body is built up in love! We reach maturity through unity and diversity as we grow in Christ!