

## OPENING SLIDES

**Ephesians 4:11-13** - “And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, [13] 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.”

**1 Corinthians 12:28** - “And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.”

**“The apostle is the first in order of the offices of the five-fold ministry. His office provides government, order, stability, and guidance...If the apostle is not functioning in his office, it is impossible for the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor, and the teacher to function properly in their offices...An apostle is an overseer of churches, elders, ministers, and ministries. The ministry of the apostle determines the course for the church.” - Robert Stone**

### **I. Do Apostles Still Exist?**

**A. The original twelve (Mark 3:13-15)** - “And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those whom He desired, and they came to Him. [14] And He appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach [15] and have authority to cast out demons.” **Matthias would later replace Judas, and then Paul was added.**

**B. Others - Scripture mentions 10 more by name who were not among the original twelve & Paul:**

James (Galatians 1:19); Barnabas (Acts 14:14); Apollos (Corinthians 4:6-9); Timothy & Silvanus (1 Thessalonians 1:1 and 2:6); Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25 - messenger is Greek word (apostolon); Two unnamed apostles (2 Cor. 8:23); Andronicus and Junia (Romans 16:7)

**C. Tracing the Greek word (Apostolos) in the New Testament, many scholars believe we can safely identify up to 83 apostles.**

**D. While true apostles may be fewer in number than all the other 5-Fold offices, they do still exist in every generation of believers (according to Ephesians 4:12-13).**

### **II. What do Apostles Do?**

**A. Provide foundational leadership** - Apostles penetrate new territory, blazing a trail both geographically and spiritually; They enter areas where the gospel has not gone before and engaging the enemy in his own camp. Apostles originate new works and steward new moves of the Spirit among assigned people and territories.

**B. Foster Renewal and Reformation** - Apostles view the status quo representation of Christianity as an enemy of God. They are often assigned to works that are dead, stuck, stagnant or ditched. Apostles step on the scene and resuscitate what has lost its vitality. They challenge and dismantle dead traditions. They remove old wineskins. They prepare people and churches for the outpouring of new wine that has too long eluded them.

**C. Establish cultures of both order spontaneity together** - Order in the church helps ensure that everyone remains on the right track, headed in the right direction. Spontaneity helps inject life and excitement into the journey. Both are important. Order alone leads to boredom, empty tradition, and meaningless ritual; spontaneity alone, on the other hand, eventually results in chaos and scriptural and doctrinal error. The two together produce balance and an environment for dynamic growth.

**D. Builds on the authority of God's Word** - Rather than building a work on the Apostle's gifting or persona, true Apostles anchor the spiritual environment and strategic ministries in the authority of the Word. They confront traditions by asking, “But what does the Word of God say?” They root those who follow them in honoring the written Word of God.

**E. Create, improve and oversee ministries within the church** - Apostles are willing to remove ministries that have run their courses. They establish healthy, functional ministries in place of ones which need to be removed. Apostles instinctually see old wineskins and removes them. Apostles will raise up leaders and give them equipping and oversight of new ministries.

**F. Operate in decisive, proven leadership** - Apostles are at their best in crisis, danger and warfare. Decisive, bold and strong leadership is part of their gifting. When great trouble arises, you will look around and quickly be able to identify who the apostles are. They will already be in motion, not waiting on a majority vote.

### III. What Spiritual Gifts/Characteristics do Apostles Operate With?

- 1. Faith** - This means learning to live and walk by faith; being willing to step out in obedience of God when others will not. Apostolic faith provides the vision for the apostle to constantly be forward-thinking, chart the course, and formulate messaging and strategy to bring others into the present works of God.
- 2. Holy Spirit power for breakthrough** - Apostles wage war against demonic and natural opposition. The enemy fights the work of God, and it often takes apostolic authority to tear down strongholds, break curses, expel demons, heal sickness and affliction and engage in miraculous power which bring glory to God.
- 3. Giving** - Apostles show willingness to give of finances, time, and energy. Simply put, they are willing to sacrifice what is needed to advance the mission. They also impart these values to all who follow them and rarely invest themselves in those who are reluctant to live as one who is sold-out to Christ.
- 4. Prophetic preaching** - Prophetic preaching establishes a big-picture vision and destiny. It constantly upholds God's expectation of what the Church is supposed to be. Apostles use their voices and influence to motivate all Christians to refuse to come up short of God's very best for them.
- 5. Biblical teaching** - In balance with prophetic communication, apostles honor the guardrails of the written Word. Apostolic mission and vision must have a solid underpinning of scriptural truth and teaching. True Apostles will always honor the Bible in defining how they lead, what they expect of those who follow and how the mission will be advanced.
- 6. Holy Spirit discernment** - Without spiritual sensitivity the Apostle would not know where to go, what to do, or how to do it. Apart from a patient listening for the Spirit, the Apostle would know the heart nor the plan of God. Apostles are willing to stay still when God is still. They are willing to leap into action as soon as they discern the Holy spirit saying to them, "Now is the time to move."
- 7. Leadership** - True Apostles will have God-imparted leadership skills. They have the ability to move entire flocks, while raising up others who tend to the individual sheep within that flock. Perhaps more than anything else, Apostles are the primary leaders of churches.