

**Ephesians 4:7-11**  
**“By Grace We are Gifted”**

**Introduction**

Paul's theme in chapter 4 is “unity”.  
 He has talked about diversity in the midst of unity.  
 We need to sort through the diversity and find our way to unity.

**Last week we learned:**

We need to embrace humility, which leads to gentleness, which leads to love.

Today, Paul shifts gears and will discuss God's *gifts* that He has given.

**4:7 to each one of us grace was given...gifts**

**Eph 4:7**

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

**A. To each one of us Grace was given:**

Grace (charis) = the free, unmerited, unearned favor of God.  
 No one deserves or has earned spiritual gifts.

We have all been given grace to be **saved**, but grace keeps coming.  
 And God doesn't just give us the **gift of salvation** and **eternal life**, but also “**spiritual gifts**” to minister to us and through us while on earth.

**Rom 12:3-8**

3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

**Rom 8:32**

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, **how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

**1 Cor 12:1**

1 Now concerning spiritual [gifts], brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

**1 Cor 12:7-11**

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:  
 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

### **1 Peter 4:10-11**

**10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### **Matt 7:7-11**

7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 "Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 "If **you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!**

**It's the same teaching of Jesus but taught in a different venue:**

### **Luke 11:13**

13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!**"

## **B. according to the measure of Christ's gift**

What are these gifts?

I believe they are "spiritual gifts".

What are "spiritual gifts"?

They are special abilities that the Holy Spirit gives to Christians.

They are different from natural talents, which are things that a person is born with.

These are supernatural abilities that God gives to His people in order to get His work done on earth.

### **Note:**

"Notice how Paul mixes the ideas of "grace" and the "gifts".

One of the Greek words that is often used to describe spiritual gifts is the Greek word "***charismata***", where we get English words like "***charisma***" or "***charismatic***".

The word means a "work of grace".

I think the “grace” here is a reference to the spiritual gifts that God gives to the church.

**4:8-10 He descended ..... only to ascend.....what happened in the ascension?**

**Eph 4:8-10**

8 Therefore He says:

"When He ascended on high,

He led captivity captive,

And gave gifts to men."

9 (Now this, "He ascended"--what does it mean?... but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fulfill all things.)

**A. When He ascended on high:**

Paul is quoting from Psalm 68:18.

The initial picture is that of a triumphant warrior who returns from his victory leading a parade of prisoners. This great warrior takes gifts from the conquered people and distributes them to his own people.

But I think there's more than just this initial picture.

Paul is linking the event we call the “ascension” with the giving of gifts to men.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He showed Himself to the disciples for a period of forty days, after which He ascended into heaven.

It was the ascension that triggered the release of the Holy Spirit upon the church. Jesus said,

**John 16:7**

**17 "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 depart, I will send Him to you.**

This is why Jesus told the disciples to “wait” in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5).

They were going to receive power from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

And with this power came the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

This was evidence of His triumph over every foe (the leading of **captivity captive**).

**B. Note: (Paraphrasing Psalms 68)**

Paul did not quote the passage exactly as it appears in Psalm 68. **Either he altered it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit or under similar inspiration he quoted from an ancient translation (called a Targum)** that quotes the Psalm in this manner.

Psalm 68:18 reads: *You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men.* There is certainly enough room in the language of the original Hebrew to *allow* Paul's reading, even though it is unusual.

**Quote:**

"It is enough for me that the apostle, under the inspiration of God, applied the verse in this way; and whatever David might intend, and of whatever event he might have written, we see plainly that the sense in which the apostle uses it was the sense of the Spirit of God."

**C. Now this, "He ascended"; what does it mean?**

In this, Paul demonstrated how the words '**He ascended**' in Psalm 68:18 had reference to the resurrection of Jesus, speaking first of His rising from **the lower parts of the earth**, and secondly of His ascension, **far above all the heavens**.

**D. descended into the lower parts of the earth**

Some think that the phrase **lower parts of the earth** refers to "Sheol":

**1. Understanding "Sheol":**

Before Jesus' cross, death, and resurrection from the dead, when a person died, their soul went to this place called "Sheol".

There were two sides to Sheol, the place for the wicked and the place for the faithful. The place of the wicked is known as hell.

The place for the faithful was known as "paradise" or "Abraham's bosom".

Jesus tells a story, (***not a parable***, because in parables he didn't mention actual names of persons as he does here, "Lazarus"), and this story helps us understand Sheol and its two separate compartments, **where they can see each other but not go to each other**.

**Luke 16:19-31**

19 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "**So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom.**

**The rich man also died and was buried. 23 "And being in torments in Hades,** he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 "**Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'** 25 "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

26 **'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'**

27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, 28 'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

29 "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

31 **"But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "**

The suggestion is that after Jesus died on the cross, He went to Sheol, not to suffer more, but to preach.

Our belief is that He went to the place known as "Paradise" and preached to the faithful dead to tell them that He had paid the price for their sins and then He led them out of Sheol to heaven.

## 2. **In 1 Peter, he also mentions about Jesus' preaching to the spirits in prison:**

### **1 Peter 3:18-19**

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh **but made alive by the Spirit,**  
19 **by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,**

### **1 Peter 4:6**

6 **For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead,**  
that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

## 3. **Jesus refers to prophecies about this:**

### **Matt 12:40**

40 "For as Jonah was three days and three nights **in the belly** of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights **in the heart of the earth.**

### **Isa 61:1-2 (mention also in Gospel of Luke 4:18-19)**

1 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,  
Because the LORD has anointed Me  
To preach good tidings to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
**To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;**

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,  
And the day of vengeance of our God;  
To comfort all who mourn,

**E. the One who ascended far above all the heavens**

There are three types of “heaven” – the atmosphere, outer space, and the place where God and the angels live.

When Jesus ascended, He went above all. He ascended to the throne of God.

**F. that He might “fill all things”**

Jesus is the scientific “atomic glue” that holds all things together.

**Col 1:16-17**

16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

**17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**

**Col 1:17 (NLT)**

17 He existed before anything else, and **he holds all creation together.**

**Col 1:17 (NIV)**

17 He is before all things, and **in him all things hold together.**

**Rev 4:11 (KJV)**

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and **for thy pleasure they are and were created.**

**Rev 4:11b (NIV)**

11b ....for you created all things, **and by your will they were created and have their being.**"

<b>4:11 apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers</b>
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**Eph 4:11**

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

**A. He Himself:**

This means that Jesus established these offices.

They are the work and appointment of Jesus, not men.

**Gal 1:1**

1 Paul, an apostle (**not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father** who raised Him from the dead),

**Note:**

Paul now mentions some of these “gifts”.

We might be more apt to call them “ministries” or “callings”, but Paul calls them “gifts”.

## **B. Gave some 4 offices of ministry:**

### **1. Apostles**

(*apostolos*) - ("away" + "to send") – a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders

The basic idea of the word is, "to be sent".

In some sense we are all "sent".

We are all commanded to go and preach the gospel.

But most of the time in the New Testament the word is pretty much limited to the "twelve apostles".

### **The original twelve Apostles:**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Apostle, also called, "the twelve" were unique and special ambassadors of God's work.

Those first century apostles were used to provide a foundation (preserved as the New Testament) as described in (Eph. 2:20).

### **Today's Apostles:**

In a way you could make a case for using the term "apostle" today; However, but not in the same authoritative sense of the first century apostles.

I think some of the best folks you could apply it to are those that we send out to the mission field. The missionaries that are doing the work of an Apostle do not call themselves Apostles and would not allow others to call them that either.

### **2. Prophets**

(*prophetes*) - ("for" + "to speak") – in Greek writings, an interpreter of oracles or of other hidden things;

So Prophecy can be a forth-telling of God's word (i.e. preaching and teaching); but it could also be a for-telling (i.e. speaking of the future).

Literally, it's a person who speaks for God.

It may involve talking about the future since God knows the future, but it most simply means to "speak for" God.

As with the **apostles**, modern **prophets** do not speak in the same authority as the first century prophets brought God's foundational spoken word (**Eph. 2:20**).

### **Prophets mentioned in the New Testament:**

There is an individual who is called a "prophet", a man named Agabus. In **Acts 11:28**, he prophesied that there would be a great famine throughout the world, which did indeed happen. Paul also ran into this fellow just before being arrested in Jerusalem (**Acts 21:10-11**). God used this man to warn Paul, but Paul felt that he needed to still go to Jerusalem despite the dangers that faced him. Later we discover that all 4 of his daughters also have the gift of prophecy (**Acts 21:9**).

**Note:**

It seems to me that there is a difference between the use of the gift of prophecy with the position of a “prophet”.

**Today's Prophets:**

Are there prophets today?

I think there are many who might have the gift of prophecy from time to time.

But, I think when you attach the word “prophet” to a person, you need to be sure that this is someone who speaks for God with a great deal of accuracy and consistency.

Billy Graham seems pretty close to a modern day Prophet. Though he is an evangelist, God has also spoken to our nation through this man's ministry much like Isaiah and Jeremiah of the Old Testament.

Paul tells us all to desire this gift:

**1 Cor 14:1**

1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, **but especially that you may prophesy.**

**3. Evangelists**

(*euaggelistes*) - (“good” + “messenger”) – a bringer of good news, an evangelist.

An Evangelist is one who is specifically gifted to preach the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

There was one person in the Bible who was called an “evangelist”, Philip (**Acts 21:8**).

Note: This is not the apostle named Philip, but one of the fellows that had been chosen to help serve food at the church (Acts 6:5). He started his ministry as a waiter, as a “deacon”, as a “servant”. When the church began to experience persecution, Philip packed his bags and headed north to Samaria where he began to preach the gospel.

**Acts 8:6**

And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

Philip was translated by the Spirit to Gaza where he found the treasurer to the Ethiopian queen reading from the book of Isaiah. Philip told him about Jesus, and the man got saved.

**Today's Evangelist:**



In a sense, we are all called to be evangelists.  
 Telling people about Jesus isn't something that is to be left to the professionals.  
 It's something we all need to be doing.  
 We all should be concerned for people who don't know Jesus.  
 We all ought to have a heart for people to come to Jesus.

Paul told Timothy:

**2 Tim 4:5c**

5c...do the work of an evangelist...

But there will be some with a special gift, a special over-and-above ability to lead others to Christ.

For some, it may be a ministry to the big crowds. We think of Billy Graham or Greg Laurie.

For others, it may be speaking to people one-on-one.

We may not always know the names of those folks.

**4. Pastors and teachers**

It seems that in the Greek, these are meant to be a single type of "gift", the "pastor-teacher".

I'd say that Chuck Smith has been a great example of this for us.

I believe that it is God's heart that the churches all over the world be led by pastor-teachers.

**Quote:** (Guzik)

**"Pastors and teachers** (or, *pastor-teachers*; the ancient Greek clearly describes one office with two descriptive titles), who shepherds the flock of God primarily (though not exclusively) through teaching the Word of God".

**Quote:** (Bruce)

"Teaching is an essential part of the pastoral ministry; it is appropriate, therefore, that the two terms, *pastors and teachers*, should be joined together to denote one order of ministry."

**pastors**

(*Poimen*) – a herdsman, a shepherd

What does it mean to be a "pastor", a "shepherd"?

When we think of the best shepherd there ever was, we think of Jesus.

**John 10:10-14**

10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

12 "But a hireling, [he who is] not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.

13 "The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

- Being a shepherd requires self-sacrifice, laying down your life for the sheep.
- Being a shepherd involves protecting the sheep.
- Being a shepherd requires knowing the sheep.

Peter wrote to leaders to encourage them in their ministries.

### 1 Pet 5:1-4

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

- God's shepherds should serve God willingly, not because someone talked them into it.
- God's shepherds aren't in it for the money.
- God's shepherds are gentle with others and are not "lords" over others.
- God's shepherds are examples that others can follow.

### teachers

(*didaskalos*) – a teacher; one who explains the things of God to others.

It is important to God that His people learn to hear and understand His Word.

Look even way back in the book of Deuteronomy,

### Deut 8:3

"So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, **that He might make you know**

**that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.**

The apostles understood this need in the church.

As the early church began to grow, the apostles got busier and busier. They grew concerned that they were not able to spend the time doing the most important things. And so they asked the church to raise up helpers, “deacons”, servants to help with the work of the ministry.

They said,

**Acts 6:4**

"but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

God uses His Word to equip us:

**2 Tim 3:16-17**

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 **that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

One of the main ways that we become equipped in God's Word is through the ministry of teachers.

**God's heart on the subject:**

**Jer 3:15**

15 "And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

<b>Conclusion</b>
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