**Intro** (3 Min)

* Ephesians intro (1 Min)
* Today: New Community: Spiritual Gifts
* Lincoln (267) writes of Ephesians 4:1-16: “no other section of the letter is so directly and intensively devoted to the Church’s life and purpose”.
* Bottom line: we all have spiritual gifts, as we minister to one another, we all grow together & glorify church = beautiful!

1. **Where do Spiritual Gifts Come From? (Ephesians 4:7–10)** (6 Min)

* (4:7) Jesus has given spiritual gifts to each one of us
* (4:8) Spiritual Gifts Prophesied in the OT
* (4:9–10) Jesus gave us Spiritual Gifts through His Advent/Incarnation, Death, Ascension, and Pentecost/Holy-Spirit outpouring (v. 9-10)

**Acts 2:32-33** *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. (33) Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.*

1. **What are the Spiritual Gifts? (Ephesians 4:11)** (15 Min)

Insert definition (Elwell’s dictionary) here:

1. **The 5 Gifts of Ephesians 4:11**
   * apostles: 1) the 12 back then, 2) missionaries today
   * prophets: 1) not for today in terms of writing Scripture, but:

**1 Corinthians 14:3** *the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.*

* + Prophecy = specific word for s.o. (gift of knowledge/wisdom), prophet like a teacher (e.g. people tell me, “that was exactly for me”), sometimes foretelling
  + Evangelists, pastors and teachers = gifts, not offices/positions

1. **Other Passages on Spiritual Gifts**

* Spiritual gifts mentioned in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12
* **4 Key NT truths about Spiritual Gifts:**
  1. the NT gift lists are examples not an exhaustive list
  2. every single Christian has spiritual gifts (Eph 4:16):

**1 Corinthians 12:7, 11** *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (11) All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

* 1. every Christian has different gifts, we do not have all gifts (contra Bethel):

**1 Corinthians 12:29-30** *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? (30) Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?*

* 1. every single Christian should use their spiritual gifts:

**Romans 12:6** *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them*

**1 Peter 4:10** *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace*

**Application Questions:**

* Are you serving in our church?
* Do you know what your spiritual gifts are?

<https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gifts-survey/>

* Are you ministering in our church according to your spiritual gifts?

1. **What is the Purpose of Spiritual Gifts? (Ephesians 4:12–13)** (8 Min)

* 3 Purposes: Spiritual Growth, Unity, Maturity

1. Growth (4:12)

* The Perfection of the Saints a) for service/ministry, b) for growth

1. Unity (4:13a)
2. Maturity (4:13b)

* “knowledge” (*epignōsis*) = experience, not just intellect
* Spiritual maturity = Christlikeness

**Colossians 1:28** *Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*

* Christ fills us so that we/our lives can be filled with Christ:

**Ephesians 1:22-23** *And he…gave him as head over all things to the church, (23) which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

* + Is your life filled with Christ?

**Application:**

* Are you growing spiritually? Are you closer to God now than you have ever been before? Why/why not?
* Are you living in unity and peace with others in the church? Do you have quality relationships with other Christians?
* Are you becoming more spiritual mature? Are you becoming more like Jesus or just letting the years go by without growing more spiritually mature?

**Conclusion**

**JOHN’S SERMON PREP CHECKLIST TEMPLATE**

**~~Step 1: Sermon Text Exegesis~~** ~~(2.5–5 hours)~~

*~~Interpretation is the Foundation of the Sermon House upon which everything else is based~~*

1. ~~Introductory Preparations (30–45 min):~~
   1. ~~Determine main sermon theme and passage~~
   2. ~~Study sermon passage and make commentary notes:~~
      1. ~~Make (and read!) verse-by-verse Greek/Hebrew & English study text notes~~
      2. ~~Study any of my old (sermon) notes on this text~~
2. ~~Study commentaries on the passage (2–4.5 hours)~~
   1. ~~Hoehner~~
   2. ~~Lincoln~~

**~~Goal~~**~~:~~

* ~~I could teach through my sermon text with ease, explaining the proper interpretation of each part of it.~~
* ~~Complete Sermon Prep Step 1 by Monday~~

**This week: 7.75 hours**

**Step 2: Sermon Outline** (2.5–5 hours?)

*The Sermon is the House itself, built on the Foundation and that which everyone Sees*

* ~~Step 1 Review:~~
  + ~~Read Step 1 Sermon Notes~~
  + ~~Write condensed sermon notes (1 page or less) which act as a 1~~~~st~~ ~~draft sermon outline~~
* ~~Sermon Practice Round 1~~
* ~~Write out your sermon outline:~~ 
  + **What is my Sermon Title?**

New Community: The Purpose & Function of Spiritual Gifts?

New Community: Spiritual Gifts

* + **What are my Main points (1., 2., 3.)?**

2 main points:

1. Jesus Gives Us Spiritual Gifts (Ephesians 4:7–11)
2. The Purpose & Goal/Result of Spiritual Gifts (Ephesians 4:12–16)
   * **What are my Subpoints (a., b., c.)?**
3. Jesus Gives Us Spiritual Gifts (Ephesians 4:7–11)
   1. Jesus gives spiritual gifts to each one of us (v. 7)
   2. This was prophesied in the OT (v. 8)
   3. Jesus fulfilled this through His advent, death, ascension, and Pentecost/Holy-Spirit outpouring (v. 9-10)
   4. List of 5 spiritual gifts (v. 11)
4. The Purpose & Goal/Result of Spiritual Gifts (Ephesians 4:12–16)
   1. Completion of the Saints (v. 12)
   2. Unity & Maturity (v. 13)
   3. What Spiritual Maturity is (v. 14-15) = what it’s NOT (v. 14), what it is (v. 15)
   4. The End Goal: growth of the whole body into Christ
   * **What Illustrations & Examples will I use for these points?**

Note: 4:12-16 is very picturesque anyways, Paul especially uses metaphors from the human body as well as from architecture (a building). So it’s easy to piggyback off of Paul’s illustrations and expand them to be my own

v. 11 = examples of spiritual gifts now vs. then

v. 12 = furnishing a living room

v. 13-14 = spiritual birth, childhood & adulthood = Christlikeness

v. 14 = imagery of storm, wind, waves

v. 15 = the Head = power, goal/example = everything!

v. 16 = human body

* + **What is my Main Objective for this Sermon? What do I pray God will work in the hearts of those who hear this message?**
* General knowledge/awareness/understanding of Spiritual gifts: 1) their existence, 2) their origin in Christ/Holy Spirit, 3) their purpose/function
* That people would be aware of their own spiritual gifts and use them to minister effectively
* That we would see the goal/end of it all: spiritual maturity. That we would ask ourselves: am I a spiritually mature person? Is my life filled with Jesus? Where do I need more of Jesus in my life?
* That we would have a clear understanding of the NT vision for the local church = every person ministering to others, each one of us helping each other to grow spiritually and become more like Christ. Are you ministering to others in this church? Are you growing in Christlikeness? Does our church reflect the image of what the church should be here in Ephesians?

**~~Goal~~**~~:~~

* ~~I have a finished sermon outline which demonstrates a clear idea of what I’m preaching about on Sunday~~
* ~~Complete Sermon Prep Step 2 by Wednesday~~

**Time Completed:** 4.75 hours

**Step 3: Sermon Delivery** (2–4 hours?)

*Practicing and fine-tuning the sermon are the finishing touches which make the difference between a good and a great Sermon*

* ~~Sermon Practice Round 3~~
* Sermon Outline Final Draft:
  + Write conclusion
  + ~~Write PPT presentation~~
  + ~~Write CG/Sermon Notes~~
* Sermon Practice Round 4

**Goal**:

* I have finished my sermon preparation and am ready to go on Sunday.
* I usually complete Step 3 by Thursday…would it be possible/feasible to finish it by Wednesday?

**Time Completed:** 30 min (I already started working on it earlier)

**Current Total Sermon Prep Time: 7–14 hours**

**EXTRA SERMON NOTES**

* Ps 68 = God's VICTORY over Israel's enemies and PROVISION towards His people
* Eph 4 = Jesus' VICTORY over our enemies on the cross (cf. 1:21-23; Col) and PROVISION of spiritual gifts for us to grow/build one another up

**What is Jesus’ descent/ascent and how does that result in spiritual gifts?**

1. Generally, through His incarnation/advent
2. Specifically, through His death, resurrection and ascension

**Colossians 2:13-15** *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, (14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (15) He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

**Ephesians 1:20-23** *that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, (21) far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (22) And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, (23) which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

**Acts 2:1-4** *When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (3) And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

**Acts 2:14-17** *But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. (15) For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. (16) But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: (17) “‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;*

**Romans 12:6-8** *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; (7) if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; (8) the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

**1 Corinthians 12:8-10** *For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, (9) to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, (10) to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.*

**1 Corinthians 12:28-30** *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. (29) Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? (30) Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?*

**Ephesians 4:11**

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Evangelists
4. Shepherds/pastors
5. teachers

**Romans 12:6-8**

1. prophecy
2. service
3. teaching
4. exhortation
5. generosity
6. leadership
7. mercy

**1 Corinthians 12:8-10**

1. word of wisdom
2. word of knowledge
3. faith
4. healing
5. miracles
6. prophecy
7. discernment
8. tongues
9. interpretation of tongues

**1 Corinthians 12:28-30**

1. apostles
2. prophets
3. teachers
4. miracles
5. healing
6. helps
7. administration
8. tongues
9. interpretation of tongues

**1 Peter 4:10-11**

1. Speaking
2. Serving

= summary; 2 general types of gifts

**My List of Spiritual Gifts**

1. apostle
2. prophet/prophecy
3. evangelist
4. pastor
5. teacher/teaching
6. service
7. exhortation
8. generosity
9. leadership/administration
10. mercy/helps
11. word of wisdom
12. word of knowledge
13. faith
14. healing
15. miracles
16. discernment of spirits
17. tongues
18. interpretation of tongues

**Monday Extra sermon notes:**

so what if i did actually preach on the whole passage, 4:7-16, dividing it up into 2 or 3 parts:

1) Jesus gives us Spiritual Gifts (4:7-11)

v. 7 = Jesus gives us spiritual gifts

v. 8-10 = briefly explain this, but don't get caught up into details, just emphasize the main points

v. 11 = camp here, talk about Rom 12, 1 Cor 12 = biblical doctrine of spiritual gifts

2) the purpose of spiritual gifts

Wednesday extra notes:

4:11 = 5 spiritual gifts

4:12 = 3 purposes of the gifts

4:13 = 3 purposes of the church/results of the gifts

Psalm 68 magnifies God, who led the Israelites through the wilderness unto victory, subduing their enemies. Much of the psalm use extravagant language to describe God's great majesty, glory, power, etc.

**John’s Commentary Notes on Ephesians 4:7–16**

**Overview**

I have outlined Ephesians 4:7-16 several times in preparation for various teachings on this all-important passage, as indicated by the old sermon notes below. Hoehner (66) outlines 4:7-16 as part 2 of 4:1-16 on “Walk in Unity (4:1-16)”, 4:1-6 being “The Basis of Unity” and 4:7-16 “The Preservation of Unity”. He divides 4:7-16 into 2 parts: “the donation of the gifts (4:7-10)” and “the distribution of the gifts (4:11-16)”. 4:7-10 are the “description of”, “validation for” and “interpretation of the giving of gifts”. 4:11-16 is divided up into 4 parts: 1) the provision of gifted persons (4:11), 2) the immediate purpose of preparing people for ministry (4:12), 3) the goal of attaining spiritual maturity (4:13), and the 4) the ultimate purpose of growing in unity (4:14-16). The goal of growth is both individual-avoiding the negative and developing positively (4:14-15)-as well as corporate growth of the entire body (4:16).

Lincoln (229) talks about the similarities between Eph 4, Rom 12 and 1 Cor 12. The similarities between Eph 4:1 and Rom 12:1 were discussed last week, not only linguistically but also as the beginning of a new section on *paranaesis* (moral instruction). The similarity continues as Paul goes on to teach on spiritual gifts in both Eph 4:7ff. and Rom 12:6ff. Lincoln (230) also points out the similarity between Paul’s discussion of the body in connection with spiritual gifts, both in Eph 4 and in 1 Cor 12; as well as different emphases between Eph 4 and these other texts.

Last week (10/29) I wrote out a quick outline of 4:7-16:

II. Ephesians 4:7-16 Spiritual Gifts: Diversity

1. 4:7-10 Christ gave gifts to each one of us in fulfillment of OT

2. 4:11-16 Spiritual Gifts in the church:

a. what are the gifts and what's their purpose? v. 11-12

i. list of 5 different gifts (v. 11)

ii. purpose: to build up the church (v. 12)

b. what are the results of the gifts? (v. 13-16)

i. spiritual maturity (v. 13), not immaturity (v. 14)

ii. growth: vertical unto Christ (v. 15), horizontal building up each other (v. 16)

There are many points of agreement between my outline and Hoehner’s, though they do vary at some points.

**Ephesians 4:7**

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

῾Ενὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

As Hoehner (521) points out, Paul’s emphasis is on unity in 4:3-6, but here he switches to our diversity: each one of us has received different spiritual gifts in the church. This passage is similar to Romans 12:6-8:

**Rom 12:6**  ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἴτε προφητείαν, κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως,

**Ephesians 4:8**

*Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”*

διὸ λέγει· ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ᾐχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν καὶ ἔδωκε δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

* “*Therefore it says*” Here Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18 (LXX 67:19):

**Psa 67:19**  ἀνέβης εἰς ὕψος, ᾐχμαλώτευσας αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔλαβες δόματα ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ, καὶ γὰρ ἀπειθοῦντες τοῦ κατασκηνῶσαι. κύριος ὁ θεὸς εὐλογητός,

This is one of only a few quotations of the OT in Ephesians (4:25, 26; 5:14, 31; 6:2-3), but unique in that only here and in 5:14 does Paul explicitly reference the fact that he is quoting from the OT.

* “*When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men”* The problem with Paul’s citation of Ps 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8 is the changes he makes to the original LXX version, 6 in particular as Hoehner (524) explains. The most obvious is that Paul changes “receiving” to “giving”, instead of God receiving gifts from men (i.e. captives paying tribute to a king), Paul changes the Psalm to read that God is giving gifts to men. There is a ton of literature on Paul’s use of the OT in Ephesians 4:8. Hoehner (526ff.) summarizes the different views and concludes that Paul is not attempting to quote Ps 68:18 verbatim, but is summarizing one of the major themes of Psalm 68 as a whole: God’s provision for His people. Hoehner (528) lists the various “gifts” God gives to his people in Psalm 68. As Hoehner (530) explains, Paul is saying that Jesus’ victory over the “captives” of Satan, sin and death has resulted in Him giving spiritual gifts to us, His church/body. Lincoln (243-44) links Psalm 68 with the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, which Jews celebrated the giving of the Torah on Mt Sinai (Hoehner disagrees and believes this is a later development of Judaism). The parallelism for the church is obvious: Just as Moses ascended on high to Mt Sinai to receive the Law, then descended back down to give the law to Israel, as celebrated at the Jewish festival of Pentecost, so Jesus ascended to heaven, then gave spiritual gifts to the church through the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost…pretty cool!
* “*he led a host of captives*” As Lincoln (242) mentions, Jesus’ victory over dark powers, setting the captives (us!) free took place at the cross, which is even more explicit in Colossians:

**Ephesians 1:21-22** *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (22) And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,*

**Colossians 2:14-15** *by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (15) He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

**Ephesians 4:9**

*(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?*

τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστιν εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη πρῶτον εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς;

* “*he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth*” Hoehner (533) interprets this as referring simply to the incarnation. He rejects Lincoln’s view that “descent” refers to Pentecost, since that confuses Paul’s order here (1st descent, THEN ascent, not vice versa). He also rejects the view that “lower regions” refers not merely to the incarnation but to Jesus’ death, burial and descent into Hades. I disagree and think the natural reading of τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς is that Paul is referring to Jesus’ descent into Hades, the depths of the earth, between his death and resurrection:

**Romans 10:7** *“or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).*

**1 Peter 3:18-19** *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, (19) in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison*

Hoehner (535) does actually conclude that it is not Hades, but Jesus’ death which Paul has in mind with τὰ κατώτερα τῆς γῆς here:

**Ephesians 1:20** *that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places*

Thus, I agree with Hoehner that Paul is referring here to Jesus’ death on the cross, His grave and burial, as the place where He set the captives free before being resurrected and ascending back into heaven.

**Ephesians 4:10**

*He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

ὁ καταβὰς αὐτός ἐστι καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα.

“*far above all the heavens*”

* “*He who descended is the one who also ascended*” Lincoln (244ff.) discusses 3 interpretations of what is meant by Christ’s descent here: 1) His descent into Hades, 2) His incarnation, 3) His descent “in the Spirit” at Pentecost. He rejects 1) and accepts both 2) and 3) as valid, siding especially with 3). I reject 3) because Paul makes it clear in 4:9 that His descent comes first before His ascent (τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστιν εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη πρῶτον εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς). As explained in 4:9, I agree with Hoehner that the best interpretation of descent is Jesus’ death on the Christ. Too much discussion of His descent into Hades should be avoided. However, the question is whether I should also mention 3), maybe not endorsing it as the actual interpretation of 4:9-10, but mentioning the parallelism described above between Moses’ ascent and descent with the law in Ps 68 and Pentecost as the celebration of that, and Christ’s descent (death), ascension, and pouring out of the Holy Spirit, including spiritual gifts, on the day of Pentecost and beyond. I think this is worth mentioning.
* “*far above all the heavens*” Isn't “far above” superfluous here? No, because Paul talks about dark/evil spiritual forces “in heavenly places” throughout Ephesians (1:20-21; 3:10; 6:12). ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν means that Jesus’ new position and authority is way above and beyond that of any other spiritual/heavenly power (e.g. gods/goddesses, demons, etc.)
* “*that he might fill all things*” Hoehner (537) provides a great summary of the meaning of this phrase. *plērōma* is a common theme in Ephesians, something Paul has already expounded on (1:23; 3:19). A beautiful picture is being painted here: now that Jesus has received the fullness of authority, He is filling the earth with His fullness, the fullness of God, the fullness of God’s glory. Lincoln (248) notes that there is another parallel here with 1:22-23, namely, Jesus’ filling all things as a result of His (death, but mainly) resurrection and triumph victory over all powers:

**Ephesians 1:21-23** *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (22) And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, (23) which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

**Ephesians 4:11**

*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,*

καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκε τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους,

Hoehner (538) notes that Ephesians 4:11-16 is the 7th of 8 long sentences in Ephesians, being 125 words. He provides a very interesting discussion on the difference between a gift and an office, a question I’ve been wondering about for a long time. I’ve often interpreted Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 as referring to spiritual gifts, whereas Ephesians 4 may be referring to offices, but Hoehner rejects this interpretation. He notes 6 distinctions between gifts and offices (539), which is worth rereading. This inspired me to do some of my own study. The term “office” is the noun *episkopē* in the NT; referring to the office of an apostle in Acts 1:20 and that of a church elder in 1 Timothy 3:1 (though it's translated "visitation" in Luke 19:44 and 1 Peter 2:12). *episkopē* is of course very similar to *episkopos* ("bishop", "overseer"), used to designate an elder/church leader in the NT in Acts 20:28; Php 1:1; 1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:7 and of Jesus the Bishop in 1 Peter 2:25 (see also *episkopeō* in 1 Pet 5:2). I agree with Hoehner that there is no explicit discussion of what exactly an office is in the NT, whereas spiritual gifts are discussed in several passages in the NT. The former thus seems to be specific titles, offices, jobs, positions to which select people were specifically appointed to in the early church, whether as an apostle (Acts 1:20), an elder (1 Tim 3:1) or a deacon/deaconess (Acts 6:3). Gifts, on the other hand, are given to all believers without distinction, immediately upon conversion, and can be used by them at any time. Thus, I concur with Hoehner that Ephesians 4 should not be interpreted as referring to specific offices, as if there was one person appointed to be “the apostle” in a local church, another appointed “the prophet” and so on and so forth. We have no record of this in the book of Acts or in the NT. The offices mentioned in the NT are 1) apostle (but only in 1:20 in regards to the original 12), and, most commonly, 2) an elder, and finally sometimes also 3) deacons. But apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, pastoring and teaching are gifts to be exercised freely and spontaneously by people in the church, not offices/titles to be presided over by one individual or another.

* “*And he gave*” note that Paul continues here with the original thought expressed in 4:7, i.e. that Christ has given gifts to us. 4:8 was a proof text quoting the OT to validate Paul’s statement in 4:7 about spiritual gifts, and 4:9-10 a parenthetical explanation of 4:8 (Jesus descending and ascending). But finally in 4:11 Paul continues where He started in 4:7, that Jesus has given gifts to each one of us.
* “*the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers*” compare this list with 1 Cor 12:28

**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.*

Both lists begin with apostles and prophets, but then Paul inserts evangelists and shepherds/pastors in Ephesians before listing the 3rd gift of 1 Cor 12:28: teachers. This is where Paul stops in Ephesians, but in 1 Corinthians he lists 5 other gifts. Note the rest of 1 Cor 12, which specifically refutes the (Pentecostal) teaching that all Christians have all spiritual gifts:

**1 Corinthians 12:29-31** *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? (30) Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? (31) But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.*

* “*apostles*” I like Hoehner’s discussion here. We must distinguish between the office and the gift of apostleship, the former being the 12 + Paul, the latter being a gift which many in the early church had (cf. Hoehner’s list, 541-42). In Ephesians 4:11, Paul is speaking about the latter, i.e. the gift of apostleship, which we today would associate with church planters or especially missionaries. The local church in any region, country or people group begins with the “sent ones”-we call them missionaries-who go first to that region, preach the gospel, make disciples and start churches. That is why Paul always lists them 1st.
* “*prophets*” I don’t fully agree with Hoehner here, who stresses prophets as teachers or encouragers and fails to acknowledge the predictive or spontaneous element (542). This is the most difficult of all 5 of these gifts: how will I interpret it? I must not simply look to varying theories of its meaning today (i.e. Pentecostal vs. non-Pentecostal), but also at the early church: what were prophets like in the early church? If I take any hints from the *Didache*, they were a lot like teachers, itinerant speakers.
* “*evangelists*” Hoehner (542-43) concludes that evangelists are also missionaries to a certain extent. I agree with him that “some of these functions seem to have overlapped”. I don’t think Paul’s purpose is to provide a crisp, clear distinction between 5 totally different kinds of ministries. Indeed, some missionaries today are more evangelists than apostles in that the foundation has already been laid for the gospel, but their ministry is to proclaim the gospel of Christ and win more to faith in Him (e.g. my ministry in Austria wasn’t an apostle as much as an evangelist).
* “*shepherds and teachers*” Whether Paul here is describing two separate gifts (pastoring and teaching) or one and the same can be debated. Note that Paul’s use of τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν in 3:20 does not mean that the gifts of apostleship and prophecy are one and the same thing. I agree with Hoehner (545) that while all pastors are teachers, not all teachers are pastors. Again, it’s critical here for us to understand that Paul here is not speaking of offices here, but gifts. How many Christians are aware today that a pastor is first and foremost a gift, not an office? A church may only have one pastor (office), but numerous pastors, i.e. Christians with an obvious shepherding gift. Again, I don’t agree with Hoehner’s (546) conclusion about the gift of prophecy, my theology is somewhat more charismatic than that. It’ll be interesting what I say Sunday on the meaning of prophecy. Lincoln (249-53) also provides extensive discussion of these 5 types of gifts in the early church. He concludes that apostles and prophets are past ministry whereas evangelists, pastors and teachers are present, in other words, the apostles and prophets were prominent in the early days of the church, but their importance passed in the 2nd generation and beyond and gave way to evangelists, pastors and teachers as being more prominent in the church. I disagree with this interpretation since the 2-3 division is arbitrary based on an anachronistic reading of church history into the text rather than truly trying to ascertain what Paul is actually saying. Once we start to determine which of these 5 are more for today and which are not, then the interpretation is left to each individual: some people prefer to exalt pastors and teachers over and above the others, some (LDS) apostles and prophets, etc. The proper reading of Eph 4:11 must consider all 5 of these as being equally promoted by Paul as relevant for the growth of the church. It’s important to remember that each of Paul’s 3 lists of spiritual gifts in Rom 12, 1 Cor 12 and Eph 4 are different, which means that none of them is meant to be the definitive list. Lincoln shows how the various titles in the church changed and were different from place to place. For example, the book of Acts talks about the church in Jerusalem being led first by the apostles, then later the elders (11:28), also mentioning prophets and evangelists. The church in Antioch was led by “prophets and teachers” (Acts 13:1). The church in Philippi was led by “elders and deacons” (Philippians 1:1). Then of course there are the 5 gifts listed here, and don’t forget the other lists in Rom 12 and 1 Cor 12. The conclusion is that we do not see a uniform church structure in the NT, instead it seems there were commonalities (e.g. founding apostles, elders) but a lot of variation in church structure from place to place.

**Ephesians 4:12**

*to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,*

πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

* Hoehner (547) discusses 4 different interpretations of 4:12, particularly of the 3 prepositions πρὸς, εἰς, εἰς. I agree with the 4th interpretation that πρὸς refers to the ultimate purpose of the gifts, whereas εἰς refers to the goals achieved by them. In other words, the purpose of spiritual gifts is “to equip the saints”, through which the goal is achieved that they do “the work of the ministry” and, ultimately, “build up the body of Christ”. As Hoehner notes, interpretation #1 of a distinct clergy is not supported by the context, particularly 4:16, but rather every-member ministry is here in view. Lincoln (253) would probably agree, seeing 3 functions/purposes of the gifts listed in 4:11: 1) to “complete” the saints, so that they can 2) do the work of ministry, and 3) build up the body of Christ
* “*to equip*” *katartismos* is used only here in the NT, though the verb *katartizō* is used 13x and is a good word study. I like the picture of it being used to describe the furnishing of a living space. *katartizō* is mostly translated “to perfect”, Lincoln translates it “to complete”. What do we “perfect” the saints for? “*the work of ministry*” or “service” (*diakonia*) and “building up” (*oikodomē*) the church; a word commonly used by Paul (Eph 2:21; 4:12, 16). The equipping is not merely in a direct sense of training someone specifically for a certain ministry (e.g. children’s ministry training), but instead in a more general sense of training Christians to be spiritually mature. As we grow spiritually, we will automatically be more enabled to minister to others and build up the church.

**Ephesians 4:13**

*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,*

μέχρι καταντήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἑνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

* “*until we all attain to*” the preposition εἰς, used 3x in 4:13, is important to understand its meaning. Christ has given us different gifts (v. 11) so that the saints/body/church would be built up (v. 12), until every one of us arrives at (μέχρι καταντήσωμεν οἱ πάντες) 3 goals: 1) “*the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God*”, 2) “*mature manhood*”, and 3) “*the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*”
* “*the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God*” note the genitives make it clear that “knowledge” also qualifies “the unity”, i.e. “the unity of the faith and the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God” (τὴν ἑνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ). Thus, the purpose of spiritual-gift ministry is that all believers would be united together in the faith, the one common faith of Christianity as expounded by Paul in 4:4-6, as well as that we would be united together in the knowledge of Jesus-the Son of God. Lincoln (256) discusses the similarity between 4:13 and Col 1:28:

**Colossians 1:28** *Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*

Hoehner (554) notes that this is the only place where Jesus is referred to as the Son of God in Ephesians. I agree with him that both of these are dynamic, not static, that our knowledge, learning and instruction should not merely have information and orthodox theology as its goal, but a true knowledge or experience (*epignōsis*) of Christ, a continuously transformative relationship with Jesus Christ.

* “*to mature manhood*” or “to adulthood/an adult person”. The ESV “mature” is the interpretative translation of *teleios*, which is almost always translated “perfect” in the NT. Here Paul is referring to a mature adult as opposed to a child, as in 4:14. Hoehner (555-56) makes a great point: the spiritual maturity here spoken of by Paul is not individual but primarily corporate. I agree now that I see this! Paul doesn’t talk about “mature men” in Christ but “a mature man” plural, which in context refers to the one body-Christ’s body-the church. In other words, Paul isn’t talking about each one of us individually growing spiritually, but all of us together. Wow, this is powerful! You may think you’re a Christian hot-shot, that you know so much and are so mature, but if you are part of a church where there are constant divisions and conflicts, you’re not mature! If you are spiritually mature, then use your giftedness to help the body-the church as a whole-to become healthy, don’t just remain content with your own growth while the church dies! Powerful
* “*to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” Hoehner (556) notes that *hēlikia* was mostly understood as “age” (i.e. arriving at a ripe old age), though “stature” is a good translation here. This 3rd goal actually interprets the 2nd: spiritual maturity or adulthood is Christlikeness. Once again Paul uses *plērōma*. Since the fullness of Christ is the fullness of God (Eph 1:22-23), as the church grows into the fullness of Christ, so we also grow into the fullness of God, that God’s fullness may fill the earth.

**Ephesians 1:22-23** *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, (23) which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

**Ephesians 3:19** *and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

A cool thought inspired by reading Lincoln (257): the church is filled with Christ so that we may be full of Christ. Jesus fills us with His fullness (1:22-23) so that our lives may be filled with Jesus (4:13). Cool! Hoehner (558) discusses whether this goal is to be accomplished now or in the future. I agree with him that this is part of the realized eschatology or already-but-not-yet worldview of the NT; i.e. that the lofty goal set by Paul in Ephesians 4:13 is our present task, yet we understand that it will never be accomplished fully this side of eternity. How fitting it is that only at Christ’s return will HE accomplish this work of perfecting the entire body and not ourselves.

**Ephesians 4:14**

*so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*

ἵνα μηκέτι ὦμεν νήπιοι, κλυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας, ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης,

* “*so that we may no longer be children*” *nēpios* is used literally to refer to children, but also figuratively to refer to those who are spiritual immature or babes in Christ (1 Cor 3:1; Gal 4:3; Heb 5:13).
* “*tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine*” Hoehner (559) does a good job of unpacking the word picture painted by Paul here. It begins with 2 passive participles κλυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι, which paint a picture of someone lost out at sea, being thrown around by the waves and carried or turned/whirled around by the currents. Paul adds to this picture “*every wind of doctrine*” (παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας). In other words, just as the wind seems to come from every direction in the midst of a storm, so for the immature believer every new doctrine or teaching which comes around in the church seems to confuse them and cause them to be made unstable in their faith. Hoehner (561) writes, “Pastor-teachers bring stability and unity whereas these teachings came from every direction and brought only confusion, turmoil, and disunity.” Lincoln’s interpretation (257ff.) largely agrees with Hoehner, that this is a word picture painted by Paul here.
* “*by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes*” As Hoehner (562) points out, the 3 prepositions ἐν, ἐν and πρὸς should guide our understanding of Paul’s meaning here. The first word *kubeia* lit. means “dice-playing and so connotes trickery. Example: gambling, people think they’ll win, but they lose = trickery (Hoss!). The next word (*panourgia*) really is synonymous and interpretive of the first and means “craftiness” or “deceit”. It’s used elsewhere in the NT of those who try to set a trap for s.o. to fall in (Lk 20:23). The last part, πρὸς τὴν μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης, could lit. be translated “towards the strategy/method of error/leading astray.” In other words, leading people on a false path was the MO of these false teachers, almost like a deliberate strategy. Example: LDS fits perfectly with Eph 4:14-the LDS missionaries prey on weak Christians, children in the faith, who are carried away with their cunning deceit, with the scheme of false interpretation of Scripture the Mormons use to discredit the Bible and get people to believe their cunning lies about the priesthood, Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, etc.

**Ephesians 4:15**

*Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,*

ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλή, ὁ Χριστός,

* “*Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up*” As Hoehner (564) points out, 4:15 is in stark contrast to v. 14 in that the “truth” is being spoken instead of lies and deceit, we are growing up instead of being children, etc. Hoehner interprets “in love” as Paul’s reminder that it’s not just what we say but how we say it that counts. Just because we are right and they are wrong does not gives us license to be a jerk, but we must speak the truth in love. This is the only way of true growth in the body of Christ.
* “*in every way*” inspiration from Lincoln (260-61), similar to my thought at the end of 4:13: Jesus fills us up completely so that our lives may be filled completely with Him. What area(s) of your life are not filled with Christ? What area(s) do you need to give over to Him? He has filled you with Himself, now it is time for you to be filled with Him.
* “*into him who is the head, into Christ*” as in 4:13, so here Jesus Himself is the standard of growth/maturity that we as Christians are to grow towards.

**Ephesians 4:16**

*from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

Ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον διὰ πάσης ἁφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ᾿ ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἑκάστου μέρους τὴν αὔξησιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ.

* “*from whom the whole body, joined and held together*” the Ἐξ οὗ is referring to the “Head”, Jesus Christ, mentioned in 4:15. Jesus is not only Himself the standard and goal of Christian growth, but the source/outlet/power from Whom we receive the ability to grow up into Him. This verse is very similar to Colossians 2:19:

**Colossians 2:19** *and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.*

Once again, Paul uses 2 compound verbs with *sun*- here to emphasize the unity of the church: *sunarmologeō* and *sumbibazō*. Hoehner (569) discusses the meaning of both of these verbs, the 1st Paul already used in 2:21, that powerful image of the church being “fitted together” like stones were fitted together in an ancient temple. Speaking of Ephesians 2, whereas there the emphasis on unity was on Jew & Gentile, in ch. 4 the emphasis is on the role of spiritual gifts in uniting us together as one. The 2nd verb isn’t found elsewhere in Ephesians, but is found in 2:2 and 19 in a very similar context as here.

* “*by every joint with which it is equipped*” 4:16 is one of those verses that it’s really handy to be able to study the original Greek. Hoehner (571-73) provides an extensive discussion of ἁφή, noting that it’s classical usage was not “joint” as most translations suggest, but “contact”; thus speaking of contact or connection between members of Christ’s body with one another. Second, *epichorēgia* could be translated “support” or even more accurately “supply”. Here is where one’s understanding of ἁφή determines your interpretation of this passage. Rather than trying to picture joints in a human body supplying strength to the body, διὰ πάσης ἁφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας is literally translated “through all contacts of supply”. What Paul is referring to here is every interaction between believers which is helpful, encouraging, comforting, edifying, etc. This interpretation makes perfect sense in light of Paul’s emphasis on the gifts in this passage. God has given spiritual gifts to each one of us so that in our contact or interactions with others in the church, we may use these gifts to encourage, comfort, teach, instruct, build up, minister to one another so that we all grow up into spiritual maturity, into Christ. Lincoln (263), however, makes a convincing case for the traditional understanding of ἁφή as “joint” here, which seems to be clearly “joint” and not “contact” in Col 2:19. He then goes on to explain what the entire verse means.
* “*when each part is working properly*” κατ᾿ ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἑκάστου μέρους is more accurately translated by Hoehner “according to the working in measure from each individual part” (574). Paul’s focus here is on the fact that we all need each other, there is no single superhero who can accomplish everything in the church, but the body is healthy when each and every one of us actively work/serve in the church according to the gifts God has given us.
* “*makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love*” the conclusion of the whole. When each one of us is ministering to one another according to our gifts, through the meaningful interactions we have with one another, then we together as one “body” grow and build ourselves up “in” or through the exercise of God’s *agape* “love”. Again, Paul’s focus throughout this whole passage has been body ministry, not the gifts of a few superstars, but the whole body, growing into Christ from/through the strength which Christ gives. What a beautiful picture of the church!
* In his concluding explanation, Lincoln (267) writes of Ephesians 4:1-16, “no other section of the letter is so directly and intensively devoted to the Church’s life and purpose”. Inspiration from Lincoln (268-69): it’s remarkable that Paul’s major concern for the church is not outreach but spiritual maturity, not numerical growth but holiness, not church plants and missions but orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Lincoln’s understanding of Paul’s view of evangelism here is that not only the church, but the whole world would be filled with Christ’s fullness. It’s important for us to understand Paul’s perspective here: our priority as a church is being the unified, loving, holy, powerful, Christ-filled church God has called us to be…evangelism seems almost an afterthought.

**OLD EPHESIANS 4:7–16 PREACHING NOTES**

**Epheser 4,1-16 Hauskreis (16.04.2010)**

1. ***Neuer Abschnitt (Kap. 4-6): Wie sollten wir nun leben?***

1 So (Kap. 1-3 = Unsere Identität in Christus) ermahne ich euch nun, ich, der Gefangene in dem Herrn, dass ihr der Berufung würdig lebt, mit der ihr berufen seid, (Kap. 4-6 = Ethik = wie wir als Christen leben sollen)

*Wie leben wir unserer Berufung würdig? (v. 2-3)*

2 in aller 1) Demut und 2) Sanftmut, in 3) Geduld. Ertragt einer den andern in 4) Liebe 3 und seid darauf bedacht, zu wahren die 4) Einigkeit im Geist durch das Band des Friedens:

*Was haben alle Christen gemeinsam? (v. 4-6)*

4 1) "ein" Leib und 2) "ein" Geist, wie ihr auch berufen seid zu 3) "einer" Hoffnung eurer Berufung; 5 4) "ein" Herr (Sohn), 5) "ein" Glaube, 6) "eine" Taufe; 6 7) "ein" Gott und Vater aller, der da ist über allen und durch alle und in allen. (7-fache Einheit d. Christentums)

1. ***Geistesgaben: jeder Christ ist einzigartig (v. 7-16)***

7 Einem jeden aber von uns ist die Gnade gegeben nach dem Maß der Gabe Christi. 8 Darum heißt es (Psalm 68,19): »Er ist aufgefahren zur Höhe und hat Gefangene mit sich geführt und hat den Menschen Gaben gegeben.« 9 Dass er aber aufgefahren ist, was heißt das anderes, als dass er auch hinabgefahren ist in die Tiefen der Erde? 10 Der hinabgefahren ist, das ist derselbe, der aufgefahren ist über alle Himmel, damit er alles erfülle.

*Welche Gaben hat Jesus gegeben?*

11 Und er hat einige als 1) Apostel eingesetzt, einige als 2) Propheten, einige als 3) Evangelisten, einige als 4) Hirten und 5) Lehrer,

*Warum haben wir Geistesgaben/Dienste in der Gemeinde?*

12 damit 1) die Heiligen zugerüstet werden (wozu?) zum Werk des Dienstes. Dadurch 2) soll der Leib Christi erbaut werden, 13 3) bis wir alle hingelangen zur (Ziel): 3a) Einheit des Glaubens (Gemeinschaft) und 3b) der Erkenntnis des Sohnes Gottes (Nähe), 3c) zum vollendeten Mann (Reife), 3d) zum vollen Maß der Fülle Christi (Charakter), 14 damit 4) wir nicht mehr unmündig seien und uns von jedem Wind einer Lehre bewegen und umhertreiben lassen durch trügerisches Spiel der Menschen, mit dem sie uns arglistig verführen (Definition d. Unreife).

*Wie erreichen wir diese Ziele?(Strategie)*

15 Lasst uns aber 1) wahrhaftig sein in der Liebe und 2) wachsen in allen Stücken zu dem hin, der das Haupt ist, Christus, 16 von dem aus der ganze Leib zusammengefügt ist und ein Glied am andern hängt durch alle Gelenke, 3) wodurch jedes Glied das andere unterstützt nach dem Maß seiner Kraft und macht, dass der Leib wächst und sich selbst aufbaut in der Liebe.

**Diskussionsfragen:**

1. (v. 1) Warum hat Paulus immer mit unserer Identität in Christus angefangen und danach über unsere Werke gesprochen?

Antwort: Unsere Werke sind nicht das Fundament Gottes Gnade, sondern das Dach; sie sind nicht die Quelle, sondern das Resultat von Gottes Gnade.

1. (v. 2-3) Wie leben wir unserer Berufung würdig? Wie präsent sind diese Eigenschaften in deinem Leben?

Antwort: Je mehr wir Jesus kennen, desto mehr wird unser Charakter nach seinem bzw. diesen Eigenschaften geprägt

1. (v. 4-6) Was haben alle Christen gemeinsam?

Antwort: Dreieiniger Gott, gleiche Hoffnung & Glaube, ein Leib & eine Taufe

1. (v. 11) Welche Gaben gibt es sonst? Welche Gaben hast du?

Antwort: vgl. Römer 12 & 1. Korinther 12. Ich habe die Gabe als Lehrer, Leiter, und Pastor.

1. (v. 12-16) Warum haben wir Geistesgaben/Dienste in der Gemeinde?

Antwort: Der Schwerpunkt von Versen 12-16 ist nicht auf ein „Klerus“, eine geistliche Elite (z.B. Pastoren, Missionare, usw.), sondern auf die Leien, also jedes Mitglied in der Gemeinde. Die Hauptaufgabe dieser Gemeindeleiter (Aposteln, Propheten, usw.) ist es nicht, das Werk des Dienstes zu tun, sondere die Gemeindeglieder dafür zu trainieren, damit sie es tun.

1. Was für ein Glied des Leibes Christi bist du?

**TRINITY PREACHING ASSIGNMENT (09/2008)**

**Sermon #2: The Key to a Healthy Church (Ephesians 4:7-16)**

**I. Introduction**

I’ll never forget that day in my 7th grade science class. “Today we’re going to learn about the human cell”, the teacher announced. Then she gave us a piece of paper with a picture of a factory on it. “What does this have to do with my body?” I thought. She began to teach us about body cells using our worksheet: “This is the nucleus, it’s the brain of the cell; all tasks are controlled here”. “These are the chromosomes; they are the instruction manual on how to run the factory”. “These are the mitochondria; they are the power source for the whole factory”[[1]](#footnote-1). And on and on she went. “How big is a cell?” “How many cells do we have in our body?” We started peppering her with questions. I was amazed to find out that such a complicated organism was so small that it was virtually invisible and that there were approximately 100 trillion of them in each of our bodies. I walked out of class that day with a new respect for my body and the God who created it.

What does this story have to do with my message? Well, I’d like to talk about how to have a healthy church today. Just as cells are key to a healthy human body, so there is a key to the health of this body; the church. Let’s turn to Ephesians 4.

I’d like to study verses 7-16 with you today. The book of Ephesians is a letter written by Paul to a church that he started in Ephesus. Paul spends the first 3 chapters going into depth about what salvation is, what the church is, and what his calling is. In the last 3 chapters, Paul switches from the abstract to the concrete, from the theological to the practical. The first thing Paul tells us to do in chapter 4 is not to fight or be divided but to be united as one. In today’s text, Paul talks to us about spiritual gifts. Let’s read it. [read verses 7-16]

Paul plainly tells us his main point in verse 7: Jesus Christ has given spiritual gifts to every one of us. Note, he says “every one of us”, which means that every single Christian in this church has spiritual gifts. If there were any exceptions, Paul would have said so. What spiritual gifts do you have? [pause]

**II. Point 1. What are the spiritual gifts? (v. 11)**

Some of you may be thinking, “How can I know what gifts I have if I don’t even know what the gifts are?” Good question. This is the question Paul answers in verse 11. He names 5 gifts: an Apostle, a Prophet, an Evangelist, a Pastor and a Teacher. We know that there are more spiritual gifts than this, for there are two other lists of gifts in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. Between all three passages, I counted 19 distinct spiritual gifts.

Obviously, we don’t have time to take a thorough look at each of the gifts today. Instead, I’d like to ask you a series of questions about yourself. These questions have to do with who God made you to be; with what you naturally like to do and are good at. Please listen and answer each question carefully:

* + Do you ever dream of going to another country, to another culture and sharing the gospel there? (Apostle)
  + Has your heart ever burned to speak a specific message to someone in this church or to the whole congregation? (Prophet)
  + Do you love to share the gospel wherever you are? Do you find people respond to the gospel when you share it? (Evangelist)
  + Do you enjoy spending time with other Christians, helping them to grow spiritually? Do people naturally come to you with spiritual questions? (Pastor)
  + Do you love to spend hours studying the Bible and feel a great desire to share what you’ve learned with others? (Teacher)
  + Do you often see an opportunity where others see a difficulty, seeing hope in a situation where others don’t? (gift of Faith)
  + Do you like to counsel other Christians in difficult times? Do people naturally come to you and ask for spiritual advice? (gift of Exhortation)
  + Are you a “doer” type who just wants to help people in a practical way; e.g. doing odd jobs for old ladies, fixing things, buying food for poor families, etc.? (gift of Ministry)
  + Are you a generous person? Do you often spontaneously give of your money and time to help others? (gift of Giving)
  + Are you organized; the one that plans events and organizes things for others? (gift of Administration)
  + Are you a leader? Do you enjoy leading people and find that people naturally follow you? (gift of Leadership)
  + Do you feel compassion for people groups that most people seem to ignore (e.g. homeless, drug addicts, minorities, etc.)? Do you have a great desire to minister to these people? (gift of Mercy)

I think that most of us answered most of these questions with no. But I hope that every one of you could answer at least one of these questions with a yes. If so, then you probably have a spiritual gift. Each of these questions corresponds with a certain spiritual gift.

I hope that all of you noticed by my questions what variety of people and personalities we need in a church. True church ministry is by no means left up to a “professional” minority – to the Pastor and the worship team. True ministry is the collective effort of the majority.

**III. Point 2: Spiritual gifts are essential for spiritual growth (v. 12-14)**

Some of you may be thinking: yeah, so what? So I have a spiritual gift or two, what does it matter? Paul answers this question in verses 12-14. I’m going to sum it up for you: why does Jesus give us spiritual gifts? Because our church cannot grow spiritually without them.

Paul really wants you and me to understand what it means to be spiritually mature. He does this by contrasting an adult with a child. The word for a “perfect” man in verse 13 actually is the Greek word for an adult[[2]](#footnote-2). So the end result of spiritual gifts is that we would be spiritual adults. In verse 14, Paul compares weak Christians to children. So I think the symbolism is clear here: Just as each of us starts out as a child and then grows physically to be an adult, so Paul says we as Christians must grow spiritually to become mature.

How does Paul define spiritual maturity and immaturity? Spiritual maturity is defined as Christ likeness. So the more similar your character is to Christ’s, the more spiritually mature you are. According to verse 14, spiritual immaturity is characterized by inconsistency and by complacency. The immature Christian is unstable, sometimes hot for God and sometimes cold. It is easy for him to be led astray from following God by others.

Why do spiritual gifts help the church to grow spiritually? Well, just imagine for a moment that nobody in the church used their spiritual gifts. There would be no teachers to teach the Bible here in the sanctuary or the kids in Sunday school, no leaders to plan and lead the worship service, the Sunday school, the nursery, parking, refreshments after the service or any other meetings throughout the week. There would be no one who cares for you and other members of the church, no one to help out members with practical needs, no one sharing the gospel to people in our community or inviting them to services, no one with a heart to minister to people in our community, and no one willing to contribute financially to any of these ministries anyway. What would our church be? Nothing! We wouldn’t be a church at all, just an odd group of people!

Thus it is imperative that you use your spiritual gifts in the church because your and my spiritual growth depends on it.

**IV. Point 3: How to use your spiritual gifts effectively (v. 15-16)**

At this point you may be thinking: Okay, John, I realize that I have spiritual gifts and that it’s important that I use them, but how? Paul’s last point in verses 15 and 16 is to answer this question and thus it is my last point as well.

Paul emphasizes two things in verses 15 and 16: every member must minister and every member must minister in love. Notice that Paul begins and ends the passage with love; “speaking the truth in love” (verse 15) and “edifying itself [the body] in love” (verse 16).

Why is love so important? If we want our ministry to contribute towards others’ spiritual growth, we must minister in love. Paul said, “Knowledge puffs up but love builds up” (1 Corinthians 8:1). Without love, all “growth” will only be superficial. Newcomers looking for spiritual nourishment will find that our church offers them cotton candy: it looks nice and big on the outside, but as soon as they put it in their mouths it all turns to sugar.

What is the difference between ministry with love and without it? Well, a picture says a thousand words. For those of you who have experienced it, the difference between ministry with and without love is much easier to observe than to explain. In any event, people notice when you do ministry without love because your heart’s not in it. You’re doing it out of obligation, out of guilt, instead of out of an excitement to truly make a difference in people’s lives. Both enthusiasm and apathy are contagious, which means that each person’s attitude in ministry affects the rest of the church.

Paul’s other emphasis in verses 15 and 16 is that truly every Christian uses their spiritual gifts to minister to others. He uses the picture of our bodies. Just as there are numerous parts in our bodies, all with their own role, so every one of us has a role to play in this church. Just as the health of our body depends on all the parts working together to help one another function properly, so the health of this church is dependant on each of us not just knowing what our role in this church is, but fulfilling that role.

**V. Conclusion**

Let me close by asking you a question: do you know what cancer is? All forms of cancer are cells just like the cells my 7th grade science teacher taught me about. Only, there’s a difference between a normal body cell and a cancer cell: In a cancer cell, someone stopped doing their job. The DNA, the instructions for everything that goes on, gets tampered with[[3]](#footnote-3). Out of all the different parts of the cell, the Nucleus, Mitochondria, Ribosome, etc., it only takes one part not to do its job and the whole cell goes bad. This cell produces other cells like it, and that’s cancer; they find somewhere to lodge in the blood stream and next thing you know, you’ve got a malignant tumor. Isn’t that sad? 1 out of every 4 people in this room will die because one part of one of our 100 trillion cells decides not to do its job?

Just as it is deadly to the body when cells stop doing their jobs, so it is deadly to our church when even one or a few members decide just to sit back and put their Christianity on “cruise control”. I beg each and every one of you, for the sake of your own spiritual health and that of our entire church: discover what your spiritual gifts are, your role in this church, and get busy!

Let’s pray.

**Ephesians 4 Study (07/2008)**

I. Outline

1. Our unity in Christ (v. 4-6)

• One Triune God:

o The Father

o the Son

o the Holy Spirit

• One body, hope, faith, and baptism

2. Our Diversity in Christ (v. 7-16)

Since the time that He ascended to heaven, Jesus has given spiritual gifts to people in the church.

What gifts does he give? (v. 11)

• Apostleship

• Prophecy

• Evangelism

• Pastoral Ministry

• Teaching

What is the purpose of these gifts? (v. 12)

• the perfecting of the saints

• the work of the ministry

• the edifying of the body of Christ

What is the goal (i.e. ultimate end) of these gifts? (v. 13)

• Spiritual unity through a common faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ

• Spiritual maturity through Christlikeness (see also v. 15)

What will happen if we don’t use these gifts? (v. 14)

• Spiritual infancy

• Confusion about what to believe

• Following all kinds of false teachings

How do we use these gifts? (v. 15-16)

• Speak the truth in love

• Each member ministering to the whole church

II. Interpretation

• What are these different gifts?

• How do people know their gifts?

• How do they use them?

• How do they help others to grow spiritually?

• Are there any instances of people receiving gifts in the Bible? How did they know they had them?

• Are there instances of people improving their gifts by using them?

Moses: Exodus 4:11-12 – although God didn’t directly say that He was giving Moses a specific spiritual gift, God promised to speak through Moses. God never refuted his comment that he had a speech impediment; God simply said this was irrelevant for Him.

Matthew 10:1, Luke 9:1 – Here Jesus gives the 12 disciples “authority”, the gifts of healing, miracles and discernment of spirits.

How did they use their gifts? Jesus told them they had these gifts & sent them out to use them.

Mark 6:13, Luke 9:6: the apostles did practice the gifts JC gave them when he sent them out.

Matthew 17:16, Luke 9:40: it would appear that this wasn’t the first time the disciples healed alongside of JC. This time they couldn’t heal the boy. Jesus was there to further instruct them about their gifts.

Teaching: gift training should be on-the-job, that is, it shouldn’t take place in a classroom but in a ministerial situation.

Are there other scriptures where the disciples healed?

1. The information above was taken from an online copy of a 5th grade science textbook: <http://www.harlem-school.com/5TH/sci_pdf/sci.html> (September 3, 2008) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Gk. *Teleios*, see Strong’s number 5046. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The information on cancer above was taken from the American Cancer Society (ACS) web page: <http://www.cancer.org/docroot/home/index.asp?level=0> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)