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WHEN CHRIST ASCENDED HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 39
EPHESIANS 4:11-13

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EPHESIANS 4:11-13 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"

This is one of the accomplishments of Christ when he ascended. In our last study we had an explanation of the term "filling up the deficiency." The deficiency had to be made up and the only thing that will make up the deficiency is the inhale of Bible doctrine. It is impossible to live the Christian life effectively without the daily intake of Bible doctrine.

Today we will study the missing link. Every believer is in full time Christian service, and in order to run the motor in the Christian way of life, the believer must put the gas of Bible doctrine in the tank daily. How can you get doctrine from the Word of God, the Bible, into the soul of the believer? Even when the life is filled with the Holy Spirit, there is still something missing. There must be a communicator to teach the believer priest so he will be equipped to live the Christian life.

Now this concept is not new in the Church Age. Even back in Old Testament times there was the prophet, and he communicated the written Word of God. Then we also had prophets who wrote part of the Scripture. They also had the priest and he communicated the written Word and he led in the explanation of the rituals of worship. There was a third force in imparting truth from Scripture and this force came from parents who taught their children.

Today we come to a study of the missing link. Before the Canon of Scripture was completed, the work was carried on by those called apostles. They not only wrote most of the New Testament but they were communicators of truth also. They had authority to organize churches and they had authority over the churches. Now the prophets didn't have this function. The prophets could be male or female, but the apostles had to be male. In that era there were temporary gifts, but once the Canon of Scripture was completed these temporary gifts passed away.

The evangelist is a public speaker who is charged with the responsibility of communicating the gospel. The pastor-teacher is to function as the final authority in the local church and he is to communicate Bible doctrine from the Word of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:11 "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." The "He" here is God the Holy Spirit. Now God the Son did this before the Church Age got going and before the Canon of Scripture was completed. But once the Church Age got under way, God the Holy Spirit took over this task.

God the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts and these appointments are grace appointments. No one ever earns or deserves these gifts. (No man is a pastor because of something great he has done.) Some would make the call to the ministry some super special miracle. To hear some talk, you would think in order to be a preacher, one would have to be struck with a bolt of lightning in the right shoulder blade or have some super duper experience up in the mountains or some such ridiculous thing. Any man who ends up in the pastorate isn't in the ministry because of his charm or his speaking ability or his great genius. But he is in the ministry because God the Holy Spirit placed him there and imparted to him a spiritual gift. He didn't earn it, work for it, or deserve it, but it came to him by grace. Pastors never earn their calling. Neither are they super spiritual beings. Pastors aren't in a world all to themselves.

You will often hear someone speak on the subject "My call to the ministry" or "That moment when my mother's prayers were answered" or some such subject. Or hearing some speak, you would conclude they were speaking on the subject "How I became a great pastor." Well, remember that 1 Cor. 12:11 is a part of the Word of God and it says that the Holy Spirit gives the spiritual gifts and no one earns or deserves such gifts. "He gave" and that means God the Holy Spirit.

1. Spiritual gifts are given to communicate doctrine that is contained in the Word of God. It is given to make up the deficiency and that deficiency is doctrine.
2. In this way the deficiency of the soul of the believer is filled.
3. Such deficiency is described by the Greek verb "pleroo."
Ephesians 3:19
Ephesians 4:10
4. A second deficiency is mentioned in Ephesians 5:18 and this is the filling of the Holy Spirit.
5. The Greek verb "pleroo" describes the deficiency and the verb "he gave" describes the mechanics of how we receive the gift.
6. The mechanics for the implementation is found in Ephesians 3:18 and 19.
7. The purpose of the gift of pastor-teacher is to communicate doctrine from the Scripture to the soul of the believer priest. This does not mean that the believer priest is inferior to the pastor. (Ministers also are human.)

What is this we call "The dignity of the clergy?" It is the insufficiency of a minister hiding behind the cloak of pseudo authority. A minister may communicate "hot air" beautifully but it is still "hot air" and many just call it the dignity of the ministry. There is really no such thing. If a clergyman does his job, he communicates in the language of the people so they can understand and he doesn't need to hide behind a lot of academic effervescence. He doesn't need to hide behind some dignified self-righteousness and pose to be something that he isn't. No preacher needs to try to make everybody feel inferior or

guilty. Some ministers wear a certain uniform or some conservative style of dress. The dignity of the ministry is what superficial preachers rely on and cling to. But it is superficial and self-righteous and does far more harm than good. They want to appear dignified, and the dignity of the clergy is an antique going somewhere to happen.

Now God makes all ministers different. Probably you saw a movie once and they presented the minister as a very pleasant "won't hurt a flea" type of individual and you got it in your mind that this is what a preacher ought to be. You got the idea that he must speak in subdued tones and out in society be able to balance a teacup just right and hold his little finger out at the right angle. Now that's an erroneous idea of a real pastor-teacher. Now, to be sure, some pastors are like that. Some pastors are run by the women in the church and some are run by a little clique of men in the church. Then there are pastors who run the church themselves. Some are good speakers and some are poor speakers. But you remember this--THE MAIN EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON HIS MESSAGE. The content of his message should be on the Word of God and an explanation of the doctrines of the Word of God.

EPHESIANS 4:11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers;" Here in this verse we have four gifts. We can write off the first one called apostles, for in our time, there are no apostles. In the first century there were apostles and it was a gift of authority and dictatorship. An apostle had authority that does not exist in our time. Paul had authority over churches in that time that does not exist now. Before the Canon of Scripture was finished there were apostles and the writing of the Scripture was also their task.

Then there was the gift of prophets and they had a gift of communication. But once the Canon of Scripture was completed, they passed off the scene.

Next was the gift of evangelists. The gift given to the evangelist is the proclamation of the saving gospel. All too often the evangelist speaks with too little Scriptural accuracy but people are saved in spite of their mistakes. This is a grace operation. God used evangelists in many great ways and in my judgment Angel Martinez is the best church evangelist in this nation. I believe Billy Graham is the greatest general evangelist of all time.

The missing link--The pastor-teacher.

Once a person is born into the kingdom of God, immediately they need a pastor-teacher to lead them and direct them and teach them. The main job of the pastor-teacher is to impart doctrine. And to do this the pastor-teacher must study, study, study.

The language here is pastor "kai" teacher. It means pastor and teacher all tied together in the same man. Pastor is the word that suggests the authority. What does this word "pastor" mean?

Let me suggest that you should not call him "reverend." That makes him appear high above the people looking down on them from his superiority. And don't call him "Father." The Bible says, "Call no man father upon the earth." The word "Bishop" comes from the Greek word "Episcopas" and it means the same as pastor. Then there are words you call the pastor when you are mad at him, but we will skip those by just now.

What do you call a minister? They called Paul just "Paul" and they called John just "John." What am I trying to say? I am saying that you should not put him up on a pedestal and call him some high sounding name of reverence and adoration.

I like the word "Pastor" and it means shepherd. So this simply means that the flock in a church is made up of sheep and the shepherd is in charge. He doesn't own the sheep. The Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, owns the sheep. But the pastor is responsible for the sheep and he is called pastor. The authority of the pastor is explained in certain passages like the following:

HEBREWS 13:7 "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

HEBREWS 13:17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12 "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;" He functions as a teacher. The word "teacher" explains his function.

EPHESIANS 4:12 "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:" Why do we have pastors? His responsibility is to communicate. So keep your eyes on the message and not the messenger. The responsibility of the pastor is outlined here in this verse by three prepositional phrases. The little word "pros" and "eis" introduces these prepositional phrases.

"For the perfecting of the saints." The word translated "perfecting" is from "katartismos" and it means equipment. The purpose of the pastor is to equip you with doctrine in the soul.

"For the work of the ministry." The word for "work" is "ergon" and it means a full-time production line. Every believer is a priest and is in full-time Christian service. The pastor is to impart truth so that the individual member will grow in Christ likeness.

This word "Ministry" is used in several ways in the Bible.

"Ministry" is used for a leader in a state in Romans 13:4.

"Ministry" is used for the work of a pastor in 1 Cor. 3:5 and 1 Tim.1:12

"Ministry" is used for all believers in 2 Cor. 4:1, 5:18, 6:3 and this passage. Every believer is in the ministry and is in service. Production from every member in the congregation is what this second phrase means.

"For the edifying of the body" means "to build you up." The word is "oikodomi" and it means growth, moving on toward maturity.

EPHESIANS 4:13 "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" Following these three purposes outlined in verse 12, we now move on to the objectives. This is mature, stabilized Christianity.

"We all" here refers to every believer.

"Come" is from "katantoo" and it means to arrive at a goal, to attain a goal. "Eis" means "for the purpose of the unity of the faith."

"The faith" means doctrine categorically learned and stored away in the soul.

Please notice closely how this is attained. It is translated "Knowledge" and comes from the Greek word "epignosis" and it means full, complete knowledge. This is maximum doctrine in the soul.

"Unto a perfect man" and the word for perfect is "teleios" and it means "mature." We need to grow up and become mature. The word used here for man is "aner" and this means a noble man. The noble Christian man is the man who is mature in doctrine.

The word for "statue" is the word that means "standard."

So let us close this study with a correct translation of this verse--

"Until we all arrive at the goal unto the purpose of the unity of the faith, and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, unto the mature nobleman, unto the standard of maturity of the full development accomplished by Christ."

The pastor is to dedicate himself to one task and that is to grow his members into mature believers.