

“Equipped for Ministry; Gifted for Unity”

“Ephesians” — Part 10

Ephesians 4:7-13

1. The perfect picture of the church is diversity in unity.

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.
Ephesians 4:7

- “to each one of us” means you!
- Each person working in his or her unique capacity toward a common goal
- Too many Christians settle for “saving grace.”
- God has also given “enabling grace.”

***“On the ship of the church there are no passengers;
all are members of the crew.”***

Church of the Savior, Washington DC

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:8-10

2. The descent and ascent in the work of Christ

This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."

Ephesians 4:8

When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men...

Psalms 68:18

- After Christ's death and resurrection, Christ led His people to freedom and ascended in victory.
- When Christ ascended, believers were seated with Him spiritually in the heavenly realms.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:6-7

(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) Ephesians 4:9-10

Two views on the descent of Christ:

- ⇒ Perhaps the descent refers to Jesus coming from heaven to take on a human body and nature. After Jesus was crucified, He descended into the earth or the grave when he was buried in the tomb.

...Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

⇒ Perhaps the descent refers to the time between Jesus' death and resurrection. Many Christians believe that after Jesus' death on the cross, He descended into the place of departed spirits, proclaiming victory and leading Old Testament saints on a victorious ascent to Paradise.

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison...

1 Peter 3:18-19

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Colossians 2:15

There is great agreement on Christ's ascent:

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Acts 2:33

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

John 16:7

3. Spiritual gifts, their purpose and result.

Definition: Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities that enable a believer to perform a specific function in the body of Christ with effectiveness.

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers... Ephesians 4:11

Note: Ephesians 4 is one of four passages that describe various kinds of spiritual gifts that have been distributed among all believers. The others are Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and 1 Peter 4.

Facts about spiritual gifts:

- Every believer has at least one spiritual gift.
- Spiritual gifts are given with our salvation and are used to fulfill God's calling for us.
- The gifts are varied and fulfill different roles.
- Some are more visible than others, but all equally important.
- All gifts derive their power from the same source—the Triune God.
- Spiritual gifts are not given for one's own edification but for the common good.
- All gifts are meant to give glory to the One who lavishly bestowed them.

...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
Ephesians 4:12-13

The purpose and intended result of gifts:

- Leadership gifts: evangelists, pastors and teachers are given to prepare God's people for works of service.
- Gifts are given by God to build up the church.
- Gifts were given to produce unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God.
- Gifts are given so that we all might grow and become mature.

***Spiritual growth results in:
changed lives,
love for fellow believers,
and a drive for evangelism and missions!***

Application: How does a believer discover and develop their spiritual gifts? The best and only true way to learn what your spiritual gift is and sharpen your spiritual gift, is ministry experience! We discover our gifts in fellowship and participation in the church.

**Roll up your sleeves and get to work in a ministry!
Do you see a need? Step in and help!**