



BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

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Spiritual Gifts

Ephesians 4:1-16

~ Brent Russell ~

- We continue today to talk about the spiritual gifts
- Know your gift, use your gift, enjoy your gift is our churches focus
- You are going to hear about spiritual gifts this year until you
- **Know what your gifting is**
- **Until you love your gift**
- **And until you are actively using your gift serve the church**

Let us read Ephesians 4:1-16

- Jesus has given gifts to the church and there are a **great diversity of gifts**
- Some are very **service oriented** - mercy, helps, hospitality
- Others are more **charismatic** - manifestations - tongues, healing
- And others still are oriented towards the **church as a whole**
- Universal Church
- Perhaps more oriented towards the '**bigger picture**'
- Paul here tells the church in Ephesus about these four gifts
 - **Apostleship**
 - **Prophecy**
 - **Evangelism**
 - **Pastors and teachers**

- As I read this passage I believe that these gifts are given to the church as a whole - **these are universal gifts that see God's bigger picture**
- These gifts are often **visible in the local church**
- But their **scope is much bigger**

- If we continue with Paul's metaphor of the body
- We find **Christ at the head**
- Then one may describe these gifts as the **skeleton of the body**
- They **support the other body parts** so that they may work properly
- They provide the **basic framework** around which all the other gifts operate
- Let us take a closer look at these gifts

What are these Gifts?

- What are these gifts
- **Apostleship**
 - It literally means to send out, or **one who has been sent**
 - **Missionaries** would be a prime example of those having the apostolic gifting
 - Apostles are those who have the gift of being able to **start new ministries or churches**
 - In many ways Apostles are the very **foundation builders** of the church
 - They can move into areas and begin to start churches in the midst of unbelievers

- **Prophetic**
 - These people are gifted in a way to **bring God's message and his truth to the church**
 - The prophets see things as **black and white, As truth or lie**
 - **Desmond Tutu** has been a great prophetic voice in our country

- He has brought *God's word* to the nation
 - He **spoke against the apartheid** heresy propagated by the previous government
 - This gift is one that helps **keep the church on the straight and narrow**
 - **One recalls the prophets through out the OT trying to keep Israel in line**
- **Evangelists**
 - The Evangelists are those who have the ability to **share the gospel truth** in a simple way and through whom the spirit leads people to faith
 - **Billy Graham** is one of these - no great theological truths, just simple gospel messages that shed light on the darkness in peoples hearts
- **Pastor and teacher**
 - **These two are used together in the Greek - they are not necessarily separate gifts although they can be**
 - Pastor comes from shepherd
 - A person with this gift is someone who **cares for the flock** - he body
 - This person guides the church and **encourages and protects** them
 - The teaching aspect clearly is the ability to **open up the scriptures in exciting, relevant** ways that impact the life and work of the church
 - The two go hand in hand because to **guide and protect from spiritual attack** the pastor will need to be able to teach the **scriptures clearly and truthfully** to those under His care
 - Perhaps more than the others this gift is very evident in the life of the **local congregation**
 - **Rod is our pastor teacher**

- But sometimes if one looks at great Pastor Teachers like **James Dobson** this gift may well be used beyond the boundary of just one congregation.
- Immediately that we see these **four areas of gift as being the skeleton of the church** we can see that all of them are needed to make the church successful
- **Both locally and on a more universal scale**
- Who would the prophet speak to if the Apostle does not begin the ministry?
- To what church would the evangelist bring those who hear the message?
- Without the pastor and teacher how would the church develop and grow?
- Without the prophet how would we be challenged and encouraged by God?
- Clearly the gifts need to work together for them to be effective

Why has Jesus given these gifts in particular?

- Why did Jesus give these gifts in particular?
- Let us look to verse 12 for the answer
- The gifts are to **prepare God's people for works of service**
 - Story about a man from **Rural village**
 - Milk powder, Orange Juice powder, Baby powder
 - **There are no instant Christians**
 - We don't come to faith and immediately become powerful believers
 - We are **not immediately ready to serve in full**
 - We need to be **prepared**
 - We need to be **disciplined**
 - If we are **going to war we get recruits**, they become part of the army but they are not yet ready for war unless they have been instructed in weapon use and trained up in fitness

- These four skeletal gifts are used so that we may be made ready for service
- **These gifts are there so that we all can use our gifts properly**
- Those who have the gifts of apostleship, prophecy, evangelism and pasturing - teaching are there to support the rest of the church in it's ministry
- **The carer needs the evangelist to provide new believers for them to care for**
- **The person who has a gift of administration needs the Apostle to start a church for them to administer**
- **Those with gifts of compassion need to be spurred on through the prophets**
- **And those who have gifts of wisdom need to be taught and guided into using that wisdom for the good of the church by the pastors and teachers**
- These skeletal gifts are there so that all the other gifts within the church can serve in the way that that need to
- **Secondly these gifts are there to build up the body**
 - To edify
 - **Build up with regards to purity, holiness, happiness and wisdom**
 - These gifts have been given so that the church may grow not only in numbers but in depth of love
 - **Quantity is good but we need to look at quality too**
 - These four spiritual gifts are there to develop the church spiritually
 - To make us **strong and sure in the faith**

What is the goal of these gifts

- We now know why Jesus gave them to the church
- **But what is the goal of these gifts - where are they taking us too?**
- When I used to sell shoes we used the acronym **FAB**

- **Feature, advantage benefit**
- Hard rubber, less wear, longer lasting shoe
- **Gifts, prepare church for service, benefit is what?**

- There are three benefits given in vs 13

Unity in the faith

- The goal of these gifts is to bring about the **unity of the church**
- **Without it we might have a bunch of bits and pieces running around**
- And in certain areas we may see this
- Counseling courses held in this area - they are not affiliated to any church
- They believe they have found the truth and **reject the authority and accountability of any church**
- Because these four gifts are not being used properly we find in fact **not unity of the spirit**
- **But division of the spirit**
- These gifts are given so that the church may be united with each part in it's proper place
- If you can imagine a **body without a skeleton**
- **A quivering mass that looks like a body but cannot function**

Knowledge of the Son

- The goal of these gifts is to **increase our knowledge of the Son**
- Any church ministry **without Jesus has been emptied of it's power**
- How often do you hear people **talk and talk about church and this and that**
- **But is has no Jesus in it**
- We may be going to church
- We may even be doing good deeds

- **But when these gifts are operating in the church to their fullest extent we will be bringing people into the knowledge of Jesus**
- **Not making them feel good about themselves**
- **Not doing things to be popular**
- **But bringing people to the knowledge of the Son**

Fullness of Christ

- **But it does not stop there**
- **We need to develop and mature as believers**
- **We need to not only know Jesus**
- **But we need to know him more and more deeply**

- **We need to not be like infants tossed back and forth by every wind and waves**
- **We need to grow and become mature believers who despite the wind and the waves stand strong in Jesus**
- **In a storm young trees are blown about by the wind**
- **But we need to develop to be like giant trees with roots deeply planted in the ground**
- **Our fullness in Christ only really comes when we to are readied for service**
- **When we are using our gifts, whatever they may be**

Conclusion

- **Folks we all have been given gifts**
- **Not all will have prophetic, teaching, pasturing, evangelistic or apostolic gifts**
- **But we will all have gifts**
- **Clearly though these four gifts are of paramount importance in the life of the church**

- They are gifts given by *God* particularly but not exclusively to the wider church
 - The universal church
 - They serve particular purpose in the church and the life thereof
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- If these gifts are not being practiced to their fullest extent then the church will be in trouble
 - It will be divided
 - It will be immature
 - It will have no strength or foundation upon which it may stand
 - If all the gifts in the church are not being used as *Jesus* intended the church will be weak

Nicolo Paganini, *Genoa*

If we do not use these gifts as *God* intended the church will become like Paganini's violin full of holes and broken and useless for performing the service for which it was intended - *Glorifying God*