

## **God's Gifts to the Church**

Ephesians 4:7-11

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, June 14, 2020

Good morning and thank you for joining us for another Sunday morning service here at Grace Fellowship YouTube channel. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Jeremy Cagle and I'm the teaching pastor here at Grace Fellowship Chilliwack. We're a Bible teaching church located in Chilliwack, British Columbia, and like a lot of churches are doing right now we're recording our messages online. We're putting them on the internet for you to view and listen to this morning. A lot of our people are actually here, but quite a number are not able to make it due to the space restrictions; and so, we're placing it online for all of you to view that couldn't make it.

Before we get started in the sermon this morning, I want to tell you that next week we're going to have a special treat for you. We're going to have a special event, and that is that one of our elders, Quentin Smith will be preaching for us. Quentin will be starting a three week series on the subject of how to tame the tongue. As some of you know, Quentin and Kevin laser were ordained as elders at our church last summer, if you can believe it that happened a year ago, and one of the jobs of an elder is to teach. One of the jobs of an elder is to preach the Word of God to you. And Quentin will be doing that next weekend on a subject that we've all struggled with before, and that is how to tame the tongue. I think we all wrestle with our tongue, amen? We all get in trouble over that. Matter of fact, if you could take a survey and say, what's the thing that gets you in trouble the most, it would be your words, or your lack of listening. And so, Quentin is going to be talking about that for a few weeks starting next week.

We've been in the book of Ephesians for a while. We've been in this book for some time now, and this will give us a summer break for that and get your minds into another portion of God's Word. James says that we should be quick to hear and slow to speak and slow to anger; and that's an important lesson for us all. If you can't be here for that, we will be recording it on Saturday evening and putting it on our YouTube channel on Sunday morning; so please be looking out for that. You'll be very, very blessed if you do.

With that said, I want to invite you to open your Bibles to a book this morning that talks about that. It talks about biblical communication, biblical relationships, and that is the book of Ephesians. So if you would, take your Bibles with me this morning, and open them to the book of Ephesians. We're in chapter four. We're looking at Ephesians chapter four for today, and I would like to read part of this for the recording. We just read this a moment ago in our service this evening, but I'd like to read it for the recording. If you look in Ephesians 4:1, Paul writes,

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says,

“WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH,  
HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES,  
AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.”

(Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

We will talk about this in a minute but let me just say here that this is an important part of the letter. What we just read is an important part of the book of Ephesians, and that's because it marks a transition in it. It marks a break from what was said before because Ephesians can be divided into two parts; you could break it up into two sections. It talks about *your position* in Christ and *your practice* in Christ. It talks about *who* you are when God saves you and *what* you are to do now in response, and the break happens here. The transition in the book happens in chapter four.

The first half of the book, chapters one through three gives us our position in Christ. It tells us that God has adopted us and redeemed us and sealed us with His Spirit. That's who we are now. That's what we are in heaven. Then the second half of the letter, chapters four through six, tell us how to practice that. And they tell us how to do this in our marriage and our family and in our jobs. One commentator said, “In the first part of the book, Paul puts you in the heavenlies with Christ; and in the second half of the book, he tells you how to walk it out.” Like your mind is seated up in heaven with the Lord, but your body's still here on earth. And you've got to learn how to live like it. The shift of all this happens in this chapter. And with that in mind, Paul says this in verse seven of chapter four, Paul writes and he says,

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

That verse if you notice, it starts off with the word “but” which forms a contrast with what was said before because the passage right above this says that the church is one. Verses four through six tell us that we're united in Christ, but just so you don't get the wrong idea about that, just so you don't get the wrong impression, Paul says, “but now to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.” In other words, even though we're the same, we are different. Even though we're united in Christ, we are unique. We're not machines who go around mindlessly imitating each other. We're different because we've been given grace or a gift from God.

This word “grace” here is the Greek word *charis*, from which we get the word charismatic. It can be translated as a gift or spiritual gift because a Charismatic is someone who focuses primarily on the spiritual gifts. So, verse seven could be translated this way, “but to each one of us a gift was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.” In other words, God has given each one of us a gift because of Christ's gift. We have received grace because of His grace. It was measured out to us. We didn't deserve it. We didn't earn it. It was a gift of mercy, and it makes us different now. Paul's point is that it makes us unique.

Some of you have told me that you come from churches where everyone looks alike and talks alike and dresses alike. And you show up on a Sunday morning and you're all wearing the same thing. The men wear dark suits and the women wear long dresses and no makeup or jewelry. And I want to say that's not a biblical idea. That's really a wrong way to approach church because this passage says we're supposed to be different. We don't all look the same. God has seen to that. God is not mass-producing Christians. He's not putting us on an assembly line and stamping us with a rubber stamp. He's saving us one by one. He's bringing us into heaven one by one. And He's given us different gifts. God is a creative God and he likes variety, Amen? So, he has made us accordingly.

This phrase, “each of us” it's an important phrase here because it means, by the way, I could just maybe add this to that point. There's big upheaval in the States right now over the issue of race. We talked about that last week. And a passage like this one shows you how God looks at an issue like that. Christians are united, even though they are different. They have different spiritual gifts. They have different colours of skin. They're different, and God saves us all.

And this phrase, “each of us” in verse seven, it's important as well, because it means that no one is left out of this and no one is left behind because Christ has given a gift to everyone in the church. No matter how small or insignificant you are, you have a job to do. No matter how unworthy you feel or how recently you got saved, you have a role to play. I hear people say from time to time, they don't know what they're supposed to be doing in church. They show up week

in and week out and they're just kind of in a fog. Well, that's not what God wants for you. He wants you to know you have a place in the church because He has given you a gift.

To explain this further, kind of walk through this passage a little bit, in verse eight, Paul quotes Psalm 86, to say that "When He ascended on high, [Jesus] led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men." which it sounds a little mysterious, but the idea here is simple. And that is, Jesus can give gifts to us because He died for that. Jesus can give gifts to whomever He chooses because He defeated the devil at the cross. Even the powers of hell can't stop Him from putting you in the church because He led captive a host of captives. Verse nine, says He descended into the lower parts of the earth, that means the grave, then He ascended into heaven to show He was victorious over that. It was a custom of a general at this time to give gifts to his people when he won a major victory. He would go through the streets of a city and pass out money or gold or silver. And behind him he would lead a host of captives behind him in the victory parade; he would lead a group of captured soldiers to show that he defeated them. They were finished. Paul says Jesus did that at the cross. He finished the works of the devil, so that he can give gifts to men.

A lot of times people say, "I'm not worthy of my salvation. I'm not worthy to serve in the church." No, you're not, but that has nothing to do with it. They say, Well, I can't serve in the church. I'm too tempted. Temptations too great for me." No, it's not, and it says so right here. That's all lead captive now. That's all in chains. Which means if you want to see how serious Jesus is about your gifts, you need to look at the cross. If you want to see how serious He is about you serving the church, you need to look to Calvary because that's what He died for. He didn't die just so you would show up at church. He died so you would serve it. He didn't die so you would just pop in and make an appearance every once in a while, He died so you would be involved. That the church would be in your blood because it was in His.

I think one of the greatest tragedies in the modern church today is so many Christians don't get this. One of the saddest points in modern Christendom is so many don't understand, because they don't serve a church. They're not involved. We call them CEO Christians – Christmas and Easter only Christians because that's the only time you see them. They come in on the holidays. Or we call them the fence sitters because they're always riding the fence. They're never really in the church. They're just kind of on the periphery, and the tragedy is that God doesn't want you to do that. He wants you to do something more than that. He wants you to be all in with the church. Attendance is not a spiritual gift. You don't see it that way in the Bible. You've got to do more than attend.

To say it another way, the church would not be the same if you didn't do this. The church would not be the same if you didn't use your gifts because there would be a space left to fill. There would be a hole in the church. So many times people think they're not hurting anybody if they

don't come to church. They're not hurting anybody if they skip out on it and never commit, but that's not true. They think nobody will notice, but God notices. God can see it because He gave you a gift, and He wants you to use it.

I remember meeting an older man in a church in the country several years ago and I asked him what he did there, what he did for the church. He kind of humbly said, "Well, I built this church. 40 years ago, I built the building that we're in. The church had already started, it had already begun, but they didn't have a place to meet yet. They were meeting in someone's home, and so I said, 'Well, I can't do much for the Lord. I can't sing or teach or be up front, but I can swing a hammer.'" He said, "I know how to build." So that's what he did. He built the church. And I remember looking at that old man and thinking, "What would the church be like without him? What would it be like without people like that?" And that's what this passage is talking about. That's what Paul is saying here. The church would not be the same without people who use their gifts, whatever they are.

There are other passages that talk about this. There are other passages that talk about the spiritual gifts, and they list them out for you by name; but this one actually doesn't do that. It doesn't list the gifts by name, but it focuses on something else. And if you look in verse 11, as Paul goes on, he says this,

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.

In other words, God didn't just give gifts to us, but He gave gifts to the church as a whole. He didn't just give gifts to individual Christians, although He did that. But He gives gifts to everybody at once in the form of leaders. To my knowledge, this is the only passage that talks about leaders in the sense of gifts. But Paul says He gives gifts to all of us in the forms of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. We often don't think about this, but our leaders are a gift to us. They're a gift from the Lord. And I don't just mean the leaders of our church, I mean the leaders of any church. Every church – past, present and future because verse 12 says they equip us for the ministry. This is what leaders do. They show us how to use our gifts. If they're doing their job, they're showing you how to plug into the church. You couldn't do that on your own; you might not know how. So, it's their job to show you how. They take you by the hand, and they get you committed to the local church.

The New Testament commentator Matthew Henry. He says, "The apostle now tells us what Christ's gifts are; and the greatest gift that He gives us is our leaders because they show us how to use our other gifts. They show us how to serve one another. The offices that He gave to the church were of two sorts." We'll talk about this in a minute but, "temporary ones such as apostles

and prophets, and permanent ones such as the evangelists and pastors and teachers. But how rich is the church that He's given us such a variety of gifts." Matthew Henry says, "How blessed are we to have such a treasure."

And I think we would all agree with that this morning. We would all say "Amen" to that. It's a treasure to have this. The church would not be the same without its leaders. We've all been impacted by their ministry. I've said this before, but many of you did not come from our church. For many of you, this is not the only Body of Christ you have been part of you've been part of other ones as well, and they've been God's gift to you. The men who lead in those churches were God's treasure that He put into your life, and you need to remember that and see it that way. Which is what we're going to talk about this morning.

This morning, if you're taking notes in Ephesians 4:7-11, we're going to look at four gifts that the Lord gives to the church in the form of leaders. That's our outline for today. That's what we're talking about. If you're taking notes and in Ephesians 4:7-11, we're going to look at four gifts the Lord gives to the church in the form of leaders. As Paul goes on in the book of Ephesians, and as he continues writing this letter, he comes to a break in the book. He comes to a transition, and he goes from talking about our position in Christ to our practice. And he says the people who help your practice the most are your leaders. The people that impact our lives in this area are the apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors, teachers, because they equip us for the ministry. This may be a difficult thing to talk about today because so many Christians have not been a blessing to the church. So many leaders have not been a blessing to the church. So many have failed and let us down. But Paul says if a leader is doing what he's supposed to do, he will do this. He will be a blessing. And we're going to talk about that with four gifts the Lord gives us in the form of leaders.

The first one is the apostles. The first gift the Lord gives to his church by way of leadership is the apostles, which refers to the men who were sent out personally by Jesus. The apostles were the men who were sent out directly by Him while He was on the earth. And if you read on verses 7-11, it says,

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.  
Therefore it says,

"WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH,  
HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES,  
AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

And if you skip on down to verse 11 it says,

And He gave some as apostles

I asked you to skip a little bit ahead in that passage, because as you read that, you can tell that verse 11 picks up the thought of verse seven. It picks up where the previous verse left off, so you could translate the passage like this, “but to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift, and He gave some as apostles.” In other words, this is Christ's gift to you. This is one of the things He gave you. He gave you the apostles. Verses 8-10 are just a footnote to that. And the word “apostles” here in Greek, it's the word *apostolous*; and it means a messenger or someone who was sent out.

In the first century, they didn't have emails or telephones like we do today. They didn't have modern communication, so if they wanted to talk to someone, they had to do it in person. You had to send a messenger. If it was not important, you could probably send a letter or a parchment; but if it was an important thing to communicate, you had to send somebody. You had to send someone called an apostle. Kings had their apostles because when a king wanted to send a messenger to another court, he would send a trustworthy member of his court to do that. They would carry the king's banner, they would carry the king's seal to show everyone they could speak for the king. What they said, he said and what they communicated, he communicated. Religious groups like the Pharisees and Sadducees had their apostles and Jesus did as well. This is how Jesus started the church. He did it with a group of men called the apostles.

You guys are probably familiar with the 12 apostles. The Gospels give us their names. The Gospel of Mark says

[Jesus] went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve [to be apostles]... Simon (who had the name Peter), James, the son of Zebedee, John the brother of James, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who would betray Him.

It's an interesting list of guys because if you're thinking about starting a company, they probably wouldn't be it. I mean, if you were starting a business, you know, these guys were kind of blue-collar guys. They weren't really that impressive. One of them was going to betray him, but this is who he began with in the ministry. And it might interest you to know that these were not the only apostles. Barnabas was called an apostle in Acts 14. He was given that title as well. So was James the brother of the Lord, he was called an apostle. First Thessalonians 2:6 says that a man named Sylvanus was an apostle. So was Paul. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 15:8, Paul says he was an apostle untimely born, because he was appointed after Jesus died; so he was after the fact, so to speak. But the point is that these men were all sent out personally by Jesus. They were all given a special commission by Him, and they were told to do several things.

The apostles had several jobs to do. One thing was they laid the foundation of the church. That's one thing these men did, they went out and set the standard for everyone to follow. There was no church before these guys. The church did not exist before them, but after them there were churches everywhere. They also wrote the New Testament. That was another thing the apostles did. They gave us the Bible because as they started a church, they wrote letters, like the letter to the Ephesians that we still have with us today. And we might add this, this is an important point to mention as well, when they died, it was over. When these men died, the Office of Apostle was closed because there was no succession plan for them. There was no replacement plan. That's why the office of the Pope is a made-up office in the Catholic Church. There is no Pope because there's no successor to the apostles because you only lay a foundation once, right? You only get started once, and then you don't do it again.

And let me tell you what this means for us today. Just to make this practical, let me tell you how this applies to our life. For one thing, it means we should be grateful for men like this. We should be grateful for the Lord giving them to us because can you imagine what the church would be like without them? Can you imagine what the New Testament would be like without these men? There would be no New Testament. These are the guys who put it together, and they paid a price to do that. Might add, they gave you the Bible at a huge cost.

When I first got saved, a friend of mine gave me a list of how the apostles died. It made such an impact on me that I kept this thing. I've had it with me for 20 years, kind of a ragged piece of paper now, but it's been so encouraging to me because it says this. Here's how the 12 apostles died. It says, "Bartholomew was nailed to a cross, skinned alive and then beheaded in Armenia. Andrew was crucified in Greece. Stephen was stoned in Jerusalem. James, son of Zebedee, was beheaded in Jerusalem. James the Less was thrown from the highest point in the temple in Jerusalem, but he didn't die, just broke his legs so the chief priests ran him through with a sword. John the Apostle was placed in a pot of boiling oil in Rome. He didn't die, so he was banished to a prison labour, Alcatraz type island called Patmos. Philip was either crucified or stoned to death in Sumeria. Matthew was nailed to the ground with short spears and beheaded in Ethiopia. Jude, brother of James was beaten to death in Edema, a small country outside of Iran. Simon the Zealot was crucified and tortured by a governor in Syria. Paul was beheaded in Rome. Peter after watching the crucifixion of his wife was crucified in Rome upside down because he said he wasn't worthy to die as Jesus did.

My friends, I just want to tell you, that's how you got your New Testament. That's how it came to you. It came to you with blood on the pages. You know, I've heard people say, "Wouldn't it be great to be an apostle for a day?" I don't think so. It doesn't sound very safe; but this is the kind of sacrifice they made. This is the kind of men the Lord gave us. They all ran away from him on the night He was crucified, and yet they all died like that. Some scholars say that's why you

know the resurrection is true, because there's nothing that would have changed these men like that. Which leads to another way this applies to our lives.

Another application of this and that is that you should be grateful this office is closed now. We should be grateful that the New Testament is finished, and people are not still adding to it today because it would be very confusing if they were. It would be very confusing if there were apostles, legitimate apostles, still among us, because it would be a mess. It's very common to hear people say today that, "The Lord is speaking to me," and "The Lord told me to do this or that," outside of the Bible, outside of the Word of God. And it's very confusing. I've heard people do things like look at a tree and say, "Lord, if you make that leaf fall, I'll be a missionary in Africa. No, Lord, not that leaf; I meant that one. No, Lord, not that leaf; I meant that one." It's just confusing. We don't have to be confused because the Bible is closed. This office is finished.

Thomas Watson said, "To prefer the light within us over the light of the Bible. It's like preferring the light of a glow worm over the light of the sun." And a lot of people are doing that today. A lot of Christians are doing that when they don't have to. You have the light of the sun right here.

The story is told of a couple that came in for premarital counseling and, and when they were asked, "What is wrong?" The man said, "Well, when we were dating, I felt God speaking to me. I felt like He was calling out to my spirit; and He told me if you would walk around this woman seven times, just like Joshua did at the battle of Jericho, her walls would come down and you would win her heart. So, I did. I walked around her seven times, her walls came down and we got married; but it didn't work. Unfortunately, we've been fighting ever since. Can you help us?" It's kind of a funny story, but friends, isn't it good to know you don't have to do that today? Isn't it good to know you don't have to be confused, because this office is finished now? The apostles told us all we need to know. We just need to read the Scriptures, and it gives us the Word of God.

Which leads us to another part in this passage; it leads us to another gift the Lord has given the church in the form of leaders. The first one is the apostles. These are the men who were sent out personally by Jesus. They were sent out directly by Him while He was on the earth to start the church. The second office is that of the prophets. The second gift the Lord has given to the church in the form of leaders, for us to consider this morning, is the prophets, which refers to the men who spoke the Word of God to you. This refers to the men who gave us the Word of God, before the Bible was finished.

There's a little overlap here between the apostles and prophets because the apostles did this as well. But the difference is that the prophets were not sent out directly by Jesus; they did not have that distinction, but they still served the church in a neat way. And if you look on verse 11, this is what it says.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets.

Just to say a few words about this, as you read on in the text, you can see there's a progression of thought here. Paul is building up to something because he starts off with the highest office in the church and then he goes down from there. He starts off with the office that has the greatest authority, that of the Apostles, and then he tells us who came under them because a prophet was under the authority of an apostle. He was under their leadership. That's why you don't hear as much about them.

The word "prophet" here it's the word *prophētas*, which means a preacher or an interpreter of oracles. It referred to someone who told the future because that's usually what a prophet did. You had prophets in the Old Testament, we talked about a prophet this morning named Isaiah. But you have Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, all those guys. Even in pagan society, you had prophets too who would look at the stars or they would look at the bones or the blood of an animal sacrifice and kind of dig around in there and tell you the future. That was their job. They were fortune tellers. But in the New Testament, they did more than this. In the church the prophets were more than just fortune tellers because they talked about the present as well. They told you what God expected for us today.

In a time before the Bible was finished, this was the only way you could hear the Word of God. This is the only way you could hear what God expected. Someone had to tell you. If you were in a church like Ephesus, you would have the book of Ephesians; but that was all you would have. You wouldn't have Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; you wouldn't have Acts or Romans. You had this book. And so, a prophet would come, oftentimes a traveling prophet, and give you the Word of God for the day.

This is why this office died off in the first century as well. This is why we don't have prophets today because once the Bible was finished, so was this office. But at this time, it was still going on. If you read in the book of Acts, you can see men like Agabus in Acts 11, who proclaimed a famine in the ancient world. That was one of his jobs, he warned the people of starvation. Another interesting instance of this here, Acts 21:9 mentions the four daughters of Philipp the Evangelist who were prophetesses. So, you had prophetesses in the New Testament as well. They would not teach men, that was not allowed, but they did obviously have some kind of ministry in the church. Acts 15:32 mentions the prophets, Judas and Silas, and we know very little about them. In fact, we know little about any of these prophets in the New Testament. They all kind of served in obscurity because they were ordinary people, which leads to another office to talk about in this passage.

Another gift the Lord's given to the church, and that is the evangelists. So just going on the list here, a third gift the Lord has given to the church in the form of leaders is the evangelists, which refers to those who preach the gospel to the lost. This is those who preach the gospel to the unsaved. These other offices were for the saved; they were for the church. This is an office that was for the unchurched. And if you read on verse 11, it says,

And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, and some as evangelists.

Which is the first permanent office in the church. As Matthew Henry said, "These are the offices that are still with us today." We would call the evangelists, the missionaries of the church; someone who goes out to plant churches. They didn't start the church, the apostles did that, but the evangelists built on it. They built on the foundation. In fact, the word "evangelist" here literally means bearer of good news or glad tidings, because that's what they do. They go from town to town, bringing good news to the lost. And when people get saved, they put them in the church with other believers.

Paul did this. He was an evangelist. In all the New Testament epistles that he wrote, he's always traveling around giving the gospel. Apollos did this, so did Timothy, and Priscilla and Aquila, different people that did this office; and we could add, this is something people do today. In fact, I counted it up the other day; and in our time together as a church, we've had five evangelists come through our church. I don't know if you guys have thought about this or not, but we've had five missionaries come through, and they've been from everywhere. I don't know if you guys remember some of these, but they've been from Japan, Ireland, South Africa, India and the Philippines, and they said they were all doing this. They were all planting churches. In fact, one thing that's been a blessing, if you can say it this way, one thing has been a blessing of the Coronavirus, is that you're able to track their ministries because they're doing it online. I got to hear a good Irish sermon the other day from a missionary from Ireland. But they weren't just passing out tracks, they were putting people in churches. They weren't just having a Bible study in a coffee shop, although they did some of that, they got them plugged into a local church.

The idea of a missionary has fallen on hard times today. The idea of an evangelist, it's fallen on hard times. It's not an office you talk about a lot because it's been so abused. We often think of an evangelist, at least from where I'm from, as almost synonymous with a tent preacher, who comes in and gets everybody worked up for the weekend, and gets them to pray a prayer and walk an aisle and then he disappears. You never see him again. In some circles they're often times not very moral people and can be very dubious, but that's not what this word means. That's not what this office is referring to. In the Bible, an evangelist is someone who was tied to the local church. He didn't work separately from it; he worked together with it. He would evangelize and when someone was saved, he would put them in the church.

Let me tell you what this means practically. Just to talk about a practical application for this. For one thing, this reminds you someone did this for you, didn't they? I mean, one way this applies to our lives is someone evangelized you – either in this office or as a friend. So, we should go out and do the same for others. You are in this church because someone told the gospel to you, either they told it to you from a pulpit, they told you out in the street, they told you in a coffee shop; and so we should have a heart for this as well. We don't think about this much because there's so many Christians in Chilliwack. We don't think about the need to evangelize because we live in the Bible-belt. We need to remember the church would not exist if someone didn't do this. There would be no Christians if someone did not share the gospel with the lost.

Another way this applies to our lives is that everyone has a role to play in the church. Another application we see here is everyone has a job to do because even if you're not an Apostle or a prophet, you could still be an evangelist. And even if you're not an evangelist with a capital 'E', you could be an evangelist with a lowercase 'e.' We can all evangelize. We can all share the gospel with an unbeliever.

In fact, not only that, there's a million different ways you can serve in the church today. There are a million different things you can do for the Lord. I mentioned a moment ago that there are several lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. There are two to be exact. There's one in 1 Corinthians 12 and there's another list in Romans 12; and when you add it all up, there are 15 gifts in the list. If you put all the spiritual gifts down a column, there are 15 that we see in the Bible; but that doesn't cover them all because you can have multitude of gifts. That doesn't cover all the gifts because you can have a mixture of them. One author said that the gifts are kind of like your fingerprints. Everybody has a unique fingerprint, and everyone has a unique combination of gifts. So, you can all do something for the Lord. That's the point. We can all serve Him in some way. No one is left out of this. No one is left behind because each of us have a gift, and so we need to serve the Lord

Warren Wiersbe writes, "When you were born, God gave you certain abilities, perhaps in mechanics, art or music. In a similar way, when you're born again, God gives you certain spiritual gifts and gives you a certain abilities. You need to remember that He gives them to you as tools to build with not toys to play with." In other words, you need to be using your gifts. A lot of people say, "Well, how do I know what my gifts are?" Well, the answer is simple. You serve and you find out that way. They say, "Well, I need to take an inventory." Well, maybe you can do that. That's fine, but the greatest way you find your gifts is by just plugging into the church.

In of the preaching magazines that I read it tells a story of two men who graduated from law school in Chicago. They both received their law degree, and the interesting thing about them is that one was blind and the other one had no arms. They were both disabled in that way. But they

became friends when they realized that one of them could carry their books, and the other one could show them around campus. And that's how they got through school. That's how they graduated. One of them made up for what the other one lacked.

Paul says here that this is how the church works. This is how the church operates. We make up for what each other lacks. We help each other in the areas where we're deficient. You know, I've had people tell me in churches, "I don't feel comfortable being up front." Hey, that's okay; we need people that are not up front. We need people serving behind the scenes. Others will say, "Well, I can't sing." That's fine. We don't need everybody's singing, not up front anyway. There are lots of ways you can serve. You just got to plug in and get involved. You can see that in this list of leaders – Apostles, prophets, evangelists – they all did different things. They were different people, and God uses that to build up his church.

It leads to one more point to talk about for today. A final gift the Lord has given to the church in the form of leaders. Just to review these other ones, the first we see is the apostles. This refers to the men who were sent out personally by Jesus to start the church. They wrote the Bible; they wrote the New Testament that we have and paid a high price to do that. Second, there were the prophets, the men who spoke the word of God to us. Men, and women actually, who gave us the Word of God before the Bible was written. Third gift, third office is the evangelists. These the ones who preach to the lost; missionaries that go out to the unsaved. Bold people, we might add, courageous people; and it leads to one more office we see in here.

One more gift the Lord has given to the church in the form of leaders and that is the pastors and teachers. A fourth and a final gift the Lord has given to the church in the form of leaders is the pastors and teachers which refer to those who lead the church today. Those who shepherd and guide the church on an ongoing basis. I've said quite a bit about pastors or elders in previous years. We've talked about elders a lot in this series on Titus, so I won't say much here, but in verse 11 it goes on to say,

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.

As Paul goes on the list here, again, he's going from kind of highest to lowest in a sense, but he comes to the office that's the most recognizable one today. It's the one that we probably think about the most, and that is the pastors because they stay put. Evangelists go from place to place; they're not staying oftentimes in the same location, so this is what we often think of.

The phrase, "pastor and teacher" actually refers to one office because there's only one definite article here in the Greek. So, in other words, it's not *the* pastors and *the* teachers, it's *the* pastor-teachers – same position. Some of your translations will say shepherd teachers, which is a great

way to put it; but these are the men who stand up and preach the Word of God to you every week. These are the men who bring the Scriptures to you week in and week out. The word “pastor” here means shepherd. It actually has the idea of a protector or a guardian; that’s what a pastor is. He’s one who watches over the church like a shepherd would. I bought a book recently called *Watchfulness*, and it’s about the theology of being a watchful leader in a church. That’s what this person does. The word “teacher” just means teacher, someone who instructs you. So, these are the two sides of the office. These are two sides of the coin. On one side the pastor shepherds you, gives you care and comfort and exhortation like a shepherd would. Sometimes he builds you up, sometimes he’s got to tear you down some; that’s what they do. On the other side of the coin, he teaches you the Bible; he instructs you in the Scriptures. And Paul’s point here is that they do this for a reason. They do it for a purpose. Verse 12 says they do it “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.” In other words, this is what God gave you pastors for. This is what God gave you these leaders for, is to equip you for the work of service.

We'll talk about this next time we're in Ephesians, but you actually see four verbs in this passage. Four action verbs because pastors and leaders and teachers are there to help you act. They're there to help you do something with your gifts and what you learn. They're not here for you to say, “Nice sermon, pastor. Give me another one.” They're not here for you to say, “Nice service this week, I really enjoyed it. Now I'm going to go home and take a nap.” No, they're here to help you do more than that. There's a connection here between verse seven and verse 12. That is that you've all been given grace, you've all been given a gift; and the leaders of the church are there to help you exercise it. I told you before that if a sheep doesn't exercise, it gets sick, it gets bloated and unhealthy; and a Christian is the same way. We need to exercise what God has given us. That's why He's given us pastors and teachers. That's why He's given us apostles, evangelists, and all of that.

Which leads me to ask the question, do you understand that today? I feel like I'm preaching to the choir because I'm looking at our brothers and sisters who are here today, and they do a great job of this. We have a very active church, but let me just do you come to church with this mindset? Do you come to church with the attitude of saying, “Let me do something, let me act on this”? Is that your heart? Is that your passion? Because that's the passion of God. That's what He saved you for, not just to attend, but to get involved. Not just to show up, but to do something with what you've learned. He wants to get you plugged in.

To ask us another way. Is there anything holding you back from doing that today? Is there anything keeping you from using your gifts and serving? Is there some hidden sin in your life that needs to be dealt with? Is there some idol of the heart that you need to give over to the Lord? I ask you that because you're going to have to make a sacrifice in order to do this. You're going to have to make a sacrifice in order to exercise your gifts. Are you willing to do that? Do you

come with that mindset to church? Do you come to church with the mindset of "I've got to get rid of this sin so I can get busy for the Lord"? That's God's heart as well. That's what He wants for you. Are you doing that today?

When you read this list of these men, these leaders, apostles, prophets, all these men, one word that comes to my mind, and we talked about this, is sacrifice. All of them sacrifice. Most of them died a violent death. Almost all of them worked in the church for free because the churches were so poor. Do we come to church with that kind of thinking?

I couldn't find this information for Canada, but I read somewhere this week that when the United States was founded, 56 men signed the Declaration of Independence. Fifty-six men committed their lives to it, and they paid an incredible price for that. Because five were later captured by the British and killed, 12 had their homes burned, four lost their sons in the war, and nine died while fighting. Yet they said it was worth it because they believed in the cause. They did it because in their eyes their country was worth fighting for.

Could we say the same thing about the church? Do we believe the church is worth fighting for today? I'll tell you what, you turn on the news and Christians are getting caught up in all kinds of stuff, right? Our minds are being pulled in all kinds of directions. Every day on social media you wonder what disaster just happened while I was asleep. Paul says our attention needs to be directed toward the church and using our gifts and blessing our brothers and sisters in Christ. Is the church worth sacrificing for? I would say it is and I would say God does as well; and I pray you would say the same thing. Let me close us in a word of prayer and pray for God's help to think of the church in this way. Let me pray.

Father, we do pray for Your help this morning in coming to a passage like this one and in drawing out the meat of it, drawing out the lessons in this text. God, we all fall short of serving the way we should. We all fall short of using our gifts to the degree that You want for us, but at the same time Lord, we know there's grace. And so, I pray as we've study this that my brothers and sisters here this morning would be encouraged by what we read. They'd be encouraged to serve You more. That You have gifted each one in the church in a unique way. You have blessed them, and now they can go out and be a blessing to others. I pray Lord, that You would help us to do that today.

Lord, I do thank you for the men that have led us in the past and the present as well. We praise You Lord, for the apostles and what they did, and all the prophets and the evangelists because they did pay a price. God, will we go out now with a sense of gravity over that. Lord, help us to turn away from our sins if we have secret things that are keeping us from serving You.

Thank you for the privilege of having a church. I pray for those brothers and sisters that are watching here this morning on the internet from Grace Fellowship, would you help them serve the church, Lord? For those who are from other churches or looking for a church, would You help them to plug into one as well? Father may Christ be glorified as His body is built up and we pray that this morning in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, we thank you for joining us this morning at our YouTube channel. If you would like to see more resources, you can do that by typing in Grace Fellowship Chilliwack in the search engine. Also, you can find us online at [gracefellowshipchilliwack.com](http://gracefellowshipchilliwack.com); and may the Lord bless you and have a great day.