

CHRIST'S GIFTS TO HIS CHURCH

Ephesians 4:7-11

People like to receive gifts!

When I go on a trip, I look for something to bring back –esp. for our grandkids. Our trips have produced collection of kangaroos & koalas at our kids houses, & Wally Wallaby in Helen's puppet collection!

It's fun to give and receive gifts.

In olden times, privilege of winning a war was to collect booty from defeated city; bring gifts to friends & family.

When Christ came to earth to fight against forces of evil & set His people free, *HE* received right to distribute booty of battle to HIS friends & family.

Eph.: God has eliminated basis for distinctions, we should live in way that reflects what God has done.

1-3 Hymn of praise because we, who used to be separated, have become members of God's family.

4-6 Implications of that truth

Call to unity because of **great work** God has done in us

When church comprehends greatness of God's plan, we'll live IN UNITY & glorify Him.

Literary device helps us follow argument.

Structure marked by parallel phrase "**therefore walk.**"

Each recurrence indicates result of 1st part of book.

#1 WALK IN UNITY 4:1-16

1st implication of what God has done for us: we should walk in unity. **4:1** "**therefore**, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to **walk** in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called"

What does that look like? How will I know one when I see one? **2-3** "...with all humility & gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST 4:1-6

By God's design, the church *has* unity.

DIVERSITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST 4:7-11

Within that unity, by God's grace, the church *has* diversity

God didn't make us all alike.

This isn't a "one-size-fits-all" deal.

God made each of us *different*—so that *together* we might glorify Him

CHRIST HAS GIVEN GIFTS 7 "Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift."

He has given gifts to each of us.

He's given gifts in accordance with His plan "according to the measure of Christ's gift"

Everyone who is part of that body he's talking about—each of us individually—has been given a gift. according to what *HE* wants to give us.

1 Cor 12:11 “All these are empowered by 1 & the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills”

v. 18: God arranged the members in the body; each one of them, as he chose.”

Gifts are given “according to the measure of his gift!”

He gives out the gifts.

He gives them the way people give gifts.

How do we give gifts?

When I give a gift, I let Helen decide!

Really. When we give gifts, we look at each one.

We give them something we think *they can use*.

But **WE** decide what we’ll give them.

We try to give best gift we can think of—for them!

That’s how Jesus gives gifts.

He’s the giver. He makes the decision.

But He gives us gifts we can use!

Christ gives gifts to every member of His Body!

Paul follows up with object lesson—picture of war.

Like great general goes to war & wins battle...

Christ has won battle & distributed the prize –booty or spoils of war

4:8-10 “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, & he gave gifts to men.”⁹ (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill [complete] all things.)

When Christ came down & did battle with the enemy of our souls, He defeated the enemy; He won battle over sin, ...judgment, ...death, & Satan.

He’s victor over every enemy that would destroy us!

“He arose a victor from the dark domain;

now He LIVES forever, with His saints to reign!”

Then He returned from battle to distribute results—the booty, to those on His side.

Christ came down & defeated the enemy.

He took captives.

He distributed gifts.

He ascended victorious (back to rt hand of Father.

Paul gives a little more explanation in **9-10:** (In saying,

“He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)”

Confusion has arisen from not understanding his thought

1st misunderstanding: “He led a host of captives”

*lit., "he led captivity **captive**."*

He didn't *release* captives!

He *took* captives! He took prisoners! Result of war!

When general came home, there was great celebration;

Captives were paraded before victorious people at home.

2nd misunderstanding: Where did He go?

NOT to lowest parts *OF* earth (as if hell were a deep hole underground where He went after death.)

He came down *TO* lowest parts, *that IS*, earth

Jesus had to come from heaven to earth to win battle.

He had to come down to lower regions first!

But He didn't *stay* here!

The One who *descended*, then *ascended*

He came down to fight battle; then ascended to complete what He started—*lit., "to complete all things!"*

He finished process by distributing goods—the booty

Spoils He distributed are gifts of the Spirit.

11 *He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds & teachers*

CHRIST HAS GIVEN A DIVERSITY OF GIFTS.

He didn't give same gift to everybody!

He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors & teachers

1 Cor & others indicate He gave others also.

Each had its own use!

Some years ago a pastor was called to large church, after 8 yrs ministering in Eastern Europe. Things had changed a lot, especially in technology: cable TV, VCRs, computers, cell phones. He complained to his secretary that the paging device they wanted him to wear wasn't working. She gently pointed out that he was wearing his garage door opener! *That* explained why his pager wasn't able to open his garage door!

There's another lesson to notice in v. 11:

We refer to spiritual gifts as functions God gives to **us**

The *functions* are the gifts—That's true in 1 Cor. 12.

In Eph. 4, it's **NOT** *function* that's the gift; it's **us**—*the people!* **We are** God's gift to His church!

Because God loves church & Jesus died for church...

Because Christ was victorious...

...He has given US as His gift to His church.

He gave some apostles.

He gave some prophets.

He gave some evangelists.

He gave some pastors & teachers.

He gave other gifts too!

WE are God's gift to His Church!

Christ continues to give gifts to his church!

He still gives them on the basis of grace.

He still gives them to each of us.

He still gives them according to His plan.

He still gives diversity of gifts.

He still gives them as His gift to His people for the good of His body.

God has given **US** many gifts—evidence He's victorious.

We're grateful to each of you who faithfully serve Him as His gift to us in **this** body.

THANK YOU!

If you haven't yet found your place, as God's gift to His people, I want to encourage *you* to find out where *you* belong & get involved.

Talk to one of our staff or one of the elders.

We'd be delighted to help you find your niche, so **YOU TOO** can be part of God's gift to His church.

Ex. **Charlie Davis**; grandparents on nursery floor

Ordinary people make themselves available to God & let Him work through them!

—they are Christ's gift to us!

How about you?

Are you taking your place as Christ's gift to His church?

Each gift is different but Jesus has given each of us as His gift to His church!