

Fully Mature Believers

Ephesians 4:11-16

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

Paul quoting Ps 68:18 A conquering king returning from battle w/ the spoils of victory, demanding gifts from the people. *Thou hast received gifts among men*, Yet Paul reversing emphasis--Jesus a benevolent, loving, humble King giving gifts

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

He gave – 1st C church there were local & wandering gifted believers.

Church is **one** yet diverse--each person, by God's grace, is given gifts. *Not toys to play w/ but tools to build w/*. If not used in love becomes weapons to fight w/. Jesus won the victory thru the cross *'it is finished'* given HS to believers as seal of redemption & gifts to every believer so the church can do the work of the ministry—perfecting the saints, building up body. **Gifts** also listed 1Cor 12:4-11; 27-31 Rom 12:3-8; and here. **Not complete list**.

Apostles--set apart & sent out as ambassadors--unique 12 1-foundation-teaching & doctrine--church built upon **Eph 2:20**; 2-miracles **2Cor 12:12**; 3-eyewitness to resurrection **Acts 1:21,22** – None after. Today role of apostle is modern missionaries—*apostles* 'ones sent forth as ambassadors of Christ. Barnabas, James, Andronicus & others—*Didache 'the teaching of the 12 apostles'* 100 AD – stay, money, meal

Prophets for edification, exhortation, comfort **1Cor 14:3** – proclaiming word of God *foretelling* - Agabus a prophet *'forthtelling'* future events must be 100% accurate.

Evangelists traveling ministers at home & abroad--declaring the good news to the nations *'do the work of an evangelist fulfill, carry out, proof, duty as servant of God....2Tim 4:5*

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Pastor & teacher- one office – ‘some’ not repeated indicating a single office to feed the flock of God – Shepherd Ez 34 false shepherds, didn’t feed but dominated and scattered—God will raise up-Peter ‘feed my sheep’ 3

x’s—1Pet 2:2 like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 2Tim 4:2-4 preach the word.....

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 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.

For equipping – set a bone, put joint back in place also mending nets--idea is to put a thing into the condition it intended to be– healthy body growing together – free-lancers-roaming missionaries looking for support--I’ve come to test the spirit in those who call themselves Christian. Invisible church give check w/ invisible ink. *Work of service diakonia* practice service

Paul sees the church on two levels--one growing in spiritual maturity ‘attain to...fullness of Christ’—evidence of that is Christ-likeness. A settled unity of the faith & oneness w/ bro/sis. **Notice:** Truth is never set aside for sake of unity

14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

Result is maturity, grounded in God’s truth—cults prey on weak Christians – *trickery* or skill at manipulating the dice. clever arguments to lure naive believers away. **Second** level is stability, staying the course not falling for every fad or quirky wind of doctrine that blows thru. Newest thing—if it’s new it’s not true

John Stott on unstable & immaturity believers “They never seem to know their own mind or come to settled convictions. Instead, their opinions tend to be those of the last preacher they heard or the last book they read, and they fall an easy prey to each new theological fad.”

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Cults and false teachers go after weak sheep, ungrounded in the word of God. Baby Christians need protection, they are curious they put everything in mouth-*cockroach*. Fascinated w/ novelty & newest fads. **Holy laughter, slain in spirit, barking, barfing demons, word/faith name it and claim heresy**

15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Spiritual growth is truth is joined w/ love. Truth w/o love can be brutal but love w/o truth is foolish. Truth can hurt & at the same time heal. This is why it needs to be delivered in love. ***'Faithful are the wounds of a friend but deceitful of the kisses of an enemy' Pr27:6 Have I therefore become your enemy by telling you the truth? Gal 4:16***

Fully mature believers, like a coordinated body all parts cooperating w/ one another, working together as the head sends signals, messages to all the parts. Love is circulatory system giving **(related to blood in body or sap in a tree giving life)**. Church is not an organization but a living organism. Not an institution but a habitation alive w/ believers in Christ.

If outside body will not grow—***those who separate themselves seek their own way & quarrel against all sound wisdom Pr 18:1--***they become their own god doing what they want. **Coal separate goes out quickly**. Isolation means spiritual death.

Back in the 13th C, the king of Sicily, Frederick II, conducted a diabolical experiment intended to discover what language children would naturally grow up to speak if never spoken to. He thought it would be either Hebrew, Greek, Latin or Arabic. So King Frederick the Great took babies from their mothers at birth & placed them in the care of nurses who were forbidden to speak in their hearing. A second rule was imposed, as well: the nurses were not allowed to touch the infants. To his great dismay, Frederick's experiment was cut short, but not before something significant regarding human nature was revealed. The babies grew up to speak no language at all because they all died. In the year 1248, an Italian historian named Salimbene recorded, w/ an air of scientific observation, "They could not live w/o petting." The babies literally died for lack of touch.