

9.22.19 ~ Ephesians 4:8-13, Gifted for Service

See **Ephesians 4:7-8...** Paul compares God's gift of grace given to us in and through Christ, to the event of a warrior king returning from battle (taken from **Psalm 68**).

When a King of Israel was victorious in battle, he would return to Jerusalem in triumph, parading the enemy soldiers and the spoils of war through the streets, for all to see. He also displayed his own soldiers and countrymen who had been taken captive by the enemy for a time, only to be "recaptured" and freed by their own King.

2Corinthians 2:14, "Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."

Colossians 2:15, "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display [spectacle] of them, having triumphed over them through Him (or It), [i.e., through the Cross of Christ]."

What an awesome picture of God's victory over sin and His generous giving of forgiveness and eternal life to all those in His kingdom.

The devil himself opposes God, but the ultimate enemy of mankind is sin, leading to death and judgment.

Jesus defeated the devil by conquering sin, death and judgment, while providing eternal life and freedom to all who, by faith, believe in and follow Christ, for once we turn to Christ, we are captives of sin no longer, but have been set free, as sons and daughters God..

Galatians 3:22-26, "The Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

1Corinthians 15:55-57, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

See **Ephesians 4:9-10...** Christ descended from heaven to lowest parts of earth, and then ascended back into heaven, after His victory over sin, death, and judgment, having provided forgiveness and eternal life.

1Peter 3:18-20, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the

days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.”

Between His death and resurrection, Jesus went to proclaim His victory to the demons who disobeyed long ago, before the flood, and are being held in the abyss [bottomless pit] until the day of judgment..

Jesus Christ descended from the highest heaven, where He received glory and honor and praise; coming down to earth He put on flesh, only to be rejected and put to death by those He had come to save.

All this was part of God's great plan to leave heaven (where He received glory and honor) in order to descend to earth (where He would suffer and die on our behalf), after which He would ascend back into heaven victorious, after giving gifts to those who trust Him.

Philippians 2:5-11, “Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

God provides all we need to know and to grow in our relationship with Him, and to enjoy our life on this earth, as we wait to be brought into heaven with Him.

The gifts given by Christ to individual believers, are for the mutual edification and the common good of all believers, while bringing glory to God.

See **Ephesians 4:11...** Jesus gave specifically gifted men to His church, to lead and care for His people: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers.

The OT prophets passed from the scene after the completion of the OT Books, and there were then 400 years of silence, in which God did not speak. This silence was broken when John the baptizer announced the presence of Christ.

John 1:23, He said, “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.” **29** “The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him and *said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

During the time of the writing of the NT, there were apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers. As the NT Scriptures [the 66 Books of the Bible] were completed, the responsibility for proclaiming God's message moved from the

apostles and prophets (who passed from the scene), to the evangelists and pastor-teachers, who were put in place to serve the Body of Christ, the Church.

Are there any apostles or prophets on the earth today...NO! They passed from the scene with the completion of the NT Scriptures, just as the OT prophets did at the completion of the OT Scriptures.

Evangelists are now in place to proclaim the message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The Greek word for evangelist [evangelistes], simply means "proclaimer of the Good News." This man is especially gifted by God to reach the lost with the saving gospel of Christ.

Pastor-Teachers are now in place to proclaim and teach God's Word, in order to prepare God's people for works of service, as well as to oversee and care for the flock of God. The Greek compound word for pastor-teacher includes the words poimen [meaning shepherd] and didaskaloi [meaning teacher].

In **1Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:17, 28** the men called by God to servant-lead His Church, are referred to by three specific nouns that apply to the same man: for he is an elder, an overseer, and a shepherd.

Elder [presbuteros] **Who the man is:** He is to be spiritually mature and of noble character.

Overseer/bishop [episkopos] **What the man does:** He guards & manages God's church.

Pastor or Shepherd [poimen] **How the man serves:** He is to feed, lead, protect, and nurture those in God's family, by accurately, consistently, diligently, and comprehensively teaching God's Word.

It is no wonder that very clear qualifications for Elders are given in **1Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9**.

See **Ephesians 4:12-13...** Under the leadership of such men, those in the Church are to be equipped and exhorted to fulfill their purpose, and that is to represent Christ on earth, encouraging one another, as we also direct unbelievers to the Way, the Truth, and the Life in Jesus Christ.

God has given us all we need individually, as His children, and corporately, as the Body of Christ [the Church, of which Jesus Christ is the Head], that we might grow to maturity, encouraging one another, and bringing glory to God the Father by sharing the good news of salvation through God's Son.

Jesus Christ came down from heaven to earth; He put on flesh, in order to pay the penalty for all our sin [He bled and died for us]; and through His sacrificial death and sovereign resurrection He conquered sin, death and judgment, forever.

When Jesus completed everything He had come to do, He returned to heaven; but not before providing us with every spiritual blessing and gift, so that we might

know Him, trust Him, and serve Him on this earth, while we wait to be joined together with Him in heaven.

1Corinthians 12:4-7, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Colossians 2:6-10, "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority."

God is gracious, but He is also holy and righteous and must therefore punish sin. We are all sinners condemned to an eternal judgment, until we trust in Christ to forgive us.. Have you done that? What is your heart telling you?

2Corinthians 6:1-2, "[I] urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— for He says, 'At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.' Behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation.'"

God turns no one away, but you must come His Way

John 14:6, "Jesus said, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'"

Acts 2:21, "And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [for the forgiveness of sins] will be saved."

Pastor Mike

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