

Ephesians 4:7-16 – Diversity and Ministry

A. Introduction

- How do we work out the implications of our glorious salvation (4:1)?
- The first application is to the church – it has a God given unity which we must work hard to maintain (4:2-6). What will that look like?
- Paul addresses this in Ephesians 4:7-16 – every Christian to be committed to the church and to use their spiritual gifts for its growth.

B. Every Christian has a gift

- A gift is “*a capacity for service given to every Christian without exception for the good of the Body of Christ*”.
- Every Christian has at least one gift (4:7,16). The word used here is “**charis**” or grace – something we do not earn. Both salvation (2:4-8) and spiritual gifts and free and generous gifts we did not deserve.
- There are five lists of gifts (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Peter 4:10-11). They can be dramatic or comparatively mundane, but every Christian has at least one gift.

C. The gifts come from Jesus

- Paul tells us three times that the gifts have been given directly by Jesus (4:7,8,11). When Jesus ascended to heaven after the resurrection He defeated His enemies and like a mighty conqueror He distributed gifts to His followers (4:8-10; Psalm 68:18). The Ascended Christ gave the Holy Spirit to the church and with Him comes spiritual gifts (Acts 2:33).
- If the gifts are given by Christ we cannot boast about them but neither should we despise them in ourselves or in others.

D. Gifts include leadership

- Amongst the various gifts there are the gifts of leadership which Paul spells out here (4:11). The first two – Apostles and Prophets – are foundational (2:20; 3:5). Their ministry is now particularly manifest in the on-going exposition of the Scriptures which they authored.
- The evangelist is a messenger of good news. A pastor-teacher (one gift/office/ministry), is sent to shepherd the flock and to feed them with the truth (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

E. The job of leaders is to mobilize the flock

- 4:12 is the key verse. What are leaders for? What is their job description?
 - ⇒ To **equip** the saints – the word can be used for mending nets (Matthew 4:21). It means to restore, complete and enable.
 - ⇒ So that the saints can do the **works of service** – they are to help God’s people to recognize and use their gifts both within the church and in our work place, neighbourhood etc.
 - ⇒ So that the body of Christ can be **built up** – the result is that the church grows into maturity.
- This is the opposite of a one-man band. If the leaders try to control everything and refuse to equip and mobilize others, then the church will be paralysed and petrified.

F. This is the only the way to reach maturity

- Three blessings follow from this – unity in relationship, growing knowledge of Christ and maturity of character (4:13).
- Christians grow to maturity in the truth so that they are not led astray by false teaching but speak the truth in love (4:14-15). The church grows up into what it was meant to be (4:16).