

GIFTS FOR THE CHURCH

Eph. 4:11-13

Our Saviour went back into Heaven. He poured out rich gifts upon His church.

Paul called these gifts "spirituals", I Cor. 12:1 and in V. 4 "charismatic gifts".

Here in our text He calls them presents.)

Exp Idea, a victorious general has won a battle and he distributes the spoils to his Army. Each man is given a victor's gift, part of the spoils.

The Lord is pouring out these gifts -- He gives the gift of wisdom, discernment, understanding.

The Lord gives ministers to his church. When he ascended, he did not desert but enriched the church.

I. HE GAVE SOME APOSTLES - GREEK MEANING WORD - ("To send forth").

Their authority ran through out the whole church.

Apostles included more than the twelve.

Acts 14:4, 17 - Barnabas was an Apostle.

I Cor. 15:17; Gal. 1:19, James.

I Thess. 2:6. Silvanus.

Rom. 16:7 - Andronicus and Junia.)

I Cor. 9:1; Acts 1:21, 22 - Paul.

The word applied generally to these on the mission frontier.

Two qualifications

- (1) Seen Jesus.
- (2) Be a witness of the Resurrection and the risen Lord.

II. PROPHETS - V. 11

"To speak forth". "A foreteller". Prediction the word prophecy is secondary.

Main to proclaim - speak out - speak forth. Picture - a man stands up and delivers God's message. God's will.

Message was held to be a direct result of the Holy Spirit.

They went from church to church proclaiming the will of God.

This gift or office vanished:

- (1) Times of persecution, Prophets were first to die.
- (2) They became a problem, as the church grew it developed a local organization with its own permanent minister. Resented these wandering itinerant Prophets.
- (3) Office abused. They had prestige and made it an excuse to live a comfortable life at the expense of the congregations they visited.

III. EVANGELISTS

Greek word evangelist is found in the New Testament. Three times. Philip - Acts 21:8.

Timothy. / 2 Tim. 4:5. and here in V. 11.

Bringers of Good News.

Rank and file missionary of the church and took the Good News to a world which had never heard it.

IV. PASTORS

Three words in New Testament describe the office.

1- Bishop - literally overseer.

2- Elder - refers to the dignity of the office.

3- Shepherd - A relationship with his people.

First, remember they had few books in the early church. Every book had to be written by hand - no printing! The story of Jesus transmitted by word of mouth, it was told long before it was written down.

Second, people came into the church straight out of heathenism. Knew literally nothing about Christianity.

Third, the churches were like islands and needed a Shepherd. In constant danger, relapsing. John 10:11, 14. He sought the wandering sheep and defended them.

V. TEACHERS

Gifted didactically.

- Fitted or intended to teach - Di doctis - instruct -

The open God's Word and teach it so people understand and grasp God's revelation. Explain great doctrines, faith to converts.

VI. GIFTS CONTINUE - V. 12-13

Jesus went back to Heaven.

Poured out gifts - men who speak under the action of the Spirit.

Seek the lost - gifted souls who make known the word of the Lord.

These gifts have been riches of the church through the centuries.

Every generation he pours out these gifts of God.

Apostles -- Deacons -- evangelists -- Pastors.

John Huss - Hugh Latimer - William Guthrie - flaming minister of Christ. Martin Luther - Calvin - John Knox - Roger Williams - William Penn - Wesley - Edwards - Whitefield - Brainard - Carey - Judson were God's gifts upon his church. Moody, Finney, Broadus, Livingstone, Sunday, George Truett, Lee Scarborough, and Billy Graham - enrichment of gifts in every generation.

Old Testament - Elijah was carried up to Glory. His mantle fell upon Elisha.

Picked up the mantle, went to Jordan. "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" Waters parted - dry ground.

School of prophets saw the spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha.

John Wesley - (Westminster Abbey) a monument in his honor. "The world is my Parish."

Anglican Church not open her doors to him.

One man lays the burden down, another takes it up and carries it on.

Not natural gifts but endowments of Heaven.

Gifts to missionaries to (Mark Alexander) to carry on thriving church in Argentina.

No man can say "I'm going to be an evangelist." It is a gift.

God endows - I look back on seminary and fellow students - does God make mistakes? Unpromising students - as time passes - review memory - some Chaplains. Bill Tagurt - history as flying preacher wrote a book, others played ball with Professors, teachers. One evangelist.

It is God who makes the gifts shine.

Thomas Chalmers - Scotland - Barren ministry. Had experience - church expected dry, dull services - sudden a burning flame in front of them. Church amazed - overwhelmed.

Wesley came to America to win Indian in Georgia to Christ. Left discouraged, failed! Writes of (Aldersgate) experience in London. "I once called and they did not come. But I call now and they come" - gift.

Moody - ordinary ministry - walked down Wall Street, N. Y. electrifying experience,

rushed into the room of a friend and finally after hours said "God, stay your hand or I will die."

He said "I preached the same sermons, I used the same words, and I gave the same invitation. But before they came ones and twos, afterwards - they came by thousands and thousands." It was the gift of grace - something God does - an enrichment of His church.

Whitewright, N. Central Texas, a young fellow barely 20 studying law. The congregation of the church met and said "God called you to preach young man and we are going to ordain you." He said, no, I'm studying law, I'm not going to be a preacher.

But they said "God has his hand upon you and we are going to ordain you."

His mother said, "Son, these are God's people. If they believe God has called you to the ministry, that is the voice of God." They set him apart for that holy purpose - His name was George W. Truett. God's gift.

He takes weakness and makes it strong.

Moses - "Lord I cannot speak." The Lord said who made your mouth and your tongue?

Jeremiah - "I am a child, I am afraid of their faces. They frighten me." God said I will make you strong.

Peter said "I am sinful". God said, "I'll make you a fisher of men."

Paul had a thorn in his flesh.

John Wesley was barely four feet ten inches tall. Not only that, he had a wretched marriage. One day a friend came to see him and did not knock at the door. Instead the friend just walked into the house and there was the wife of John Wesley dragging him all over the house by the hair of his head. Yet that man was a flame for Jesus.

English professor to listen to D. L. Moody. I listened to your sermon. There were 17 grammatical errors that you made. If one were to read your sermon uncorrected he would not believe a man could speak that poorly. Moody replied, "Sir, I do the best I can for Jesus. Do you?"

George Whitefield, one most eloquent men who ever lived. Ben Franklin said, "I want to hear him but I am going to leave all my money home because he will get it all, they tell me, if I come with anything in my pockets."

Ben Franklin went to hear Whitefield and left his money home. While Whitefield preached Franklin turned to a neighbor and said, "Sir, will you loan me some money that I can give to George Whitefield?"

Another man said, "Whitefield could pronounce the name "Mesopotamia" and bring a vast throng to tears, just by pronouncing the word.

Whitefield was asthmatic. When he preached he gasped for breath.

When he came to Newberry Port, Conn. the villagers knocked at his door at midnight and said to the host - "Would you ask Mr. Whitefield to come and preach for us." So

he got out of bed and stood on the bottom step of the stairway and preached the message of Christ to people in the hall, on the proch, out in the yard. He held a little candle in his hand, when it burned out, he led a benedictory prayer, went back to his room, lay down, and died with an attack of asthma. How could a man be such a preacher? God does it with gifts. Power from Heaven. Something God does.

Unto everyone of us is given a gift - some of you can make money for his church. That is a gift. Some of you know how to guide an organization. Some know how to teach. Each of you can be a personal soul winner. Some can sing.

V. 12 - Aim that members of the church be fully equipped. The word equipped - a word used in surgery for setting a broken limb - for putting a joint that is out of place back into its place.

Net - mending - putting a thing or a person into condition in which he or it ought to be.

Aim is that the work of service may go on. Preaching, teaching, is not argue - body of Christ is built up.

Gifts are for construction not destruction. Aim is building up never disruption.

What is your gift in the church? "Edifying" - building up - towards this end every believer has a contribution to make.

*I'm not qualified - can't sing - Teach -
This is for all. God places you there -
no spectator -
existing concept -*