

The Gifts of Grace

Equipping the Church

Part 4

By Nick Bibile

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

We shall continue from last week. When you look at how God had arranged things so perfectly in the heavens and on this earth, we realize his how orderly with his infinite knowledge he has arrange all things. Look at the heavens, the sun has its function day by day, so does the moon and the stars. God gives rain, sunshine, given us the air to breath. The mountains, seas, rivers, vegetation all are beautifully arranged. God is a God of order. He in his infinite power had arranged everything orderly and he governs them precisely.

In the same way the church belong to him, and he has set things in orderly manner in the church. Christ is the cornerstone of the church; the doctrine/teaching comes from the apostles and the prophets. The entire Bible consists of what God have told to the prophets and what Christ has told to the apostles. How come the apostles were able to remember in detail what Christ taught them?

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

It is he who has given the gifts and put them in their place so the church will function effectively. He did not give all these gifts to one person to bear but distributed them according to his will. Last time we studied on apostles and prophets and we will continue today with evangelists, pastors and teachers.

The apostles were great importance; here in order they become number one, even before the prophets, why? Because Christ himself called them and appointed them, furnished them with extraordinary gifts and the power of working miracles, and delivering the truth without error. (John 14:26) They performed miracles confirming the truth. Christ sent them to spread the gospel and to plant and govern churches.

The prophets expounded the writings of the Old Testament, and foretold things to come. The evangelists were ordained persons (2 Tim. 1:6), whom the apostles took for their companions in travel (Gal. 2:1), and sent them out to settle and establish such churches as the apostles themselves had planted (Acts 19:22), and, not being fixed to any particular place, they were to continue till recalled, 2 Tim. 4:9.

Then once a church is established there are *pastors* and *teachers*. This can be one office. Teaching

pastors. Who will shepherd the body of Christ.

Evangelists

As we saw the beginning the evangelists were companions of the apostles and assisted the apostles. Philip, Luke, Titus and Timothy were some who helped the apostles in their work. The duty of the evangelist is to proclaim the gospel from going place to place; they travel and preach the gospel, unlike the pastors they are not in one local place. Today we see missionaries falls into this category. Missionaries go beyond the boundaries to preach the gospel, till a local church is planted. Usually evangelists like the missionaries travel to places where the gospel has not preached before.

The message of the evangelist is to preach the gospel of grace to convict the hearers of their sin and guilt before God and that they would leave their sins and turn to God. One of the greatest and most remarkable evangelists who preached the gospel with power was George Whitefield (1714-1770). Charles Spurgeon who lived about hundred years later said Whitefield was his role model, Spurgeon said, "Often as I have read his life, I am conscious of distinct quickening whenever I turn to it. He lived. Other men seemed to be only half-alive; but Whitefield was all life, fire, wing, force. My own model, if I may have such a thing in due subordination to my Lord, is George Whitefield; but with unequal footsteps must I follow in his glorious track."

John Armstrong writes in his new book "Five Great Evangelists", one of the most remarkable evangelists that ever lived. He was called the lightning rod of the great awakening. Unlike the modern day evangelists Whitefield did not build a big ministry but he was a traveling evangelist. Without modern travel by airplane Whitefield made 13 trips across the Atlantic Ocean, meaning he spent two years of his life on water. He was preaching in England and in the U.S. With the grace of God, he helped two nations back to God on both sides of Atlantic. He spent 24 years of his ministry in England and about 9 years in the U.S and he lived only 56 years. There were no microphones or sound systems during his time but it is said that his voice could be heard a mile a way as his voice was amplified without a microphone or speakers. There were no advertisements on T.V or radio. There were more than 100,000 in one gatherings. He preached more than 18,000 sermons in his short life time an average of 500 a year, ten a week. Never gave an altar call or told the people to repeat a prayer. He did not use human manipulation or sensational gimmicks instead of depending on man's will Whitefield depend on God's freeness of grace and people were truly saved by the power of the Holy Spirit and waves of rival spread in England and in U.S

Unlike the modern evangelists he was not a star in the world but to the world he was an enemy. Whitefield said, "I was honored with having stones, dirt, rotten eggs and pieces of dead cats thrown at me."

Mt 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Mt 5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

He preached hour and half without music, just preaching. Sometimes he preached morning and

evening the same day. Whitefield was against those rich in America and preached against slavery as he saw the cruelty and suffering of the slaves. He was warned by the rich to stop preaching but many black African Americans became friends with him was converted to Christ. Benjamin Franklin who became a friend of George Whitefield. Benjamin Franklin said of Whitefield, "He is a good man and I love him." There was an uproar caused in 1740 when George Whitefield wrote an open letter to Benjamin Franklin concerning the slaves.

2Ti 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

What is the difference between modern day evangelists and Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards and Asahel Nettleton? The difference is their revivalism was God centered and today we see evangelism on man centered theology.

Pastors and teachers

Jer 3:15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Pastors are those who have the charge of a particular flock. Pastor's job is to govern the local body of the church. Pastors are the shepherds of the flock and at the same time there are elders who can be teachers, they may be gifted brethren in the church who will assist the pastor. The chief calling of the pastor is to preach and teach the word of God in its fullness, to feed the flock.

Ac 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

Pastor should preach the sermon to his own heart before giving to others. He needs to be digested by the word of God first if not he can feed poison to the flock. The great puritan John Owen said, *"It is an easier thing to bring our heads to preach than our hearts to preach"*

Every sermon should be centered on Christ and God's grace. The grand rule of the pastor is to search the mind of God what is revealed in the Holy Bible and preach and teach to people in simplicity so they can understand. He is to preach the revealed will of God not what his opinions or not even what people would like to hear.

2Ti 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

1Pe 4:11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Pastors preach the word so there will be conversion of souls who come to the church and the believers in the church would be sanctified.

Ro 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

The word of God is the sword of Spirit. The Holy Spirit has made the word and shaped it as a sword. The pastor has the weapon of the sword which the Holy Spirit has put into his hands; he will not abuse this weapon but use it effectively. This double edged sword will be used to remove sin and to heal.

The pastor is to preach the word with authority in the Spirit's power with boldness. Not words of human wisdom and juicy words that tickle the flesh.

1Co 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

The pastor should preach only the truth not his experience nor give entertainment only the truth can save the sinner and only the truth can bring sanctification and holiness to the body. It is only the scripture can penetrate the heart not human manipulations. It was preaching of the truth that the Reformers turned Europe upside down. But we are living in the days of apostasy where people would not like to hear the truth of conviction and many evangelists, pastors are teaching what people like to hear.

Remember king Jehoshaphat who wanted to hear what he liked to hear and not the truth? All the other prophets told him what he liked to hear except the true prophet of God Micaiah. The king complained of Micaiah and said, "Did I not tell you he would not prophecy good concerning me but evil." (1Kings 22:18) King put him in prison as he did not want to hear the truth.

Pastor is an expository teacher, exegesis of scripture, the word exegesis means exposition or interpretation of scripture. Not interpreting according to the opinion of the pastor but according to context.

Love for the Bible should be promoted by the pastor. Honoring the Bible pointing to the Bible and not to psychology or human wisdom. The center of his preaching is Christ alone. The focus of the church is not the pastor but Christ; the center of the stage is not the pastor but Christ.

Joh 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

1Co 2:2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Lu 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

2Co 4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

Pastor not only feed the flock but pray for the flock. Pastor knows his sheep well, knows who are growing and those who are weak, he is concerned of the sheep and pray for them so they will be united in Christ in one accord and the desire of the pastor is that they will be strong in the Lord,

they will not just sit and listen but be obedient to the word. Pastor is concerned for the souls and encourage the flock to witness and to make disciples.

The pastor's motive should be right before the Lord. There are many pastors who are fleecing the flock. Their motive is money just like any other worldly business. They want the church to grow so they will become rich, they would do every possible worldly ways to accomplish this purpose.

1Pe 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

But sad to say that in many mega churches the star of the church is the pastor, the pastors are being honored and glorified more than Christ. Charles Spurgeon said, "Let God send the fire of His Spirit here, and the minister will be more and more lost in his Master. You will come to think less of the speaker and more of the truth spoken...."

A Minister told young Spurgeon, "From every town, every village in England where it may be there is a road to London." Spurgeon replied, "From every text in scripture there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures that is Christ."

Today there is a seeker sensitive movement in America. There is no conviction of sin preached. Sin is decorated with chocolate, vanilla and cream. There are newly invented excitements, amusements which produce a worldly watered down gospel. People are entertained instead of convicted of sins. This was beginning to show during the time of Spurgeon, and this is what he said.

"Dear friends, we know that souls are not won by music, if they were it would be time for preachers to give way to opera singers."

He also said, the church has come down to the level of the world.

"Jesus said, 'Preach the gospel to every creature.' But men are getting tired of the divine plan; they are going to be saved by a priest, going to be saved by the music, going to be saved by theatricals, and nobody knows what! Well, they may try these things as long as ever they like; but nothing can ever come of the whole thing but utter disappointment and confusion, God dishonored, the gospel travestied, hypocrites manufactured by the thousands, and the church dragged down to the level of the world."

Where is the sound doctrine? But only practical sermons are preached with entertainment. Spurgeon said, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers .., for the work of the ministry" (Eph. 4:11-12). Where do entertainers come

in? The Holy Spirit is silent concerning them. Were the prophets persecuted because they amused the people or because they refused? The concert has no martyr roll.

We are living in the days of apostasy and pray to God that he will pour out his Spirit again so there will be true revival, true repentance the church of God will be holy and be different than the world.

1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

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