



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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THE TEACHING OF EPHESIANS 4:11-12 AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR LIFE OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORK OF THE UNDER-SHEPHERD

1. Introduction

One of the main thrust of Paul's letter to the Ephesians believers is to exhort them to walk as becoming of God's people in the light of what the gospel of Jesus Christ had done to their life (Eph 4:1). They are reminded of the calling out of that dispensation of sin into unity with the body of Christ, the Church with Him as the chief corner stone.

Having being brought into that body of believers, they are not to be independent of each other but rather inter-dependent of one another to maturing in Christ so that the Church, the Bride will be ready to meet the Bridegroom when He returns for her. Therefore before Christ returns again, He gave gifts to the Church to the end that they shall be filled with the fullness of Christ.

However in our present day and age of the church there seems to be a blurring of the distinction between those who are called to the ministry and those who are laities serving actively in the church. There is certainly nothing unbiblical to have laities labouring in the various ministries of the church like in the Sunday school and the fellowship groups but it has become apparent in recent years that the role of men particularly called into the ministry has been sidelined. What then is the scriptural pattern of a New Testament Church with regard to the gifts and offices of the church? Can anyone be pastors, teachers and evangelists? Is there and should there be a distinction of roles in the church?

In Chapter 4 of Ephesians, Paul in promoting the theme of unity in diversity among the Ephesians believers touched on this subject of gifts and offices which is our main focus. He is pointing the Ephesians Church and indeed us to Christ who will ultimately bind His chosen people together in Himself when He returns for her. Let us consider closely what Paul is teaching us from this chapter and in particular from verses 11 and 12.

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2. The Teaching of Eph 4:11-12

2.1 About the Gifts (v.11)

- a) The apostle begins chapter 4 with a foundational reminder to the believers of their calling to live a Christ-Centred life which is different from what they have been living before they came to know Jesus.
- b) The believer is no longer an individual with a separate identity but identify as one of the members of the body of Christ having a distinct part or role to play. This body consists of not only the Jews but also Gentiles who have embraced Christ.
- c) This was brought about at a certain point in history through the redemptive plan of God accomplished by His Son, Jesus Christ on the cross for His Church. Following Jesus' victory over sin and death for His people, the redemptive process continues in His sending the Holy Spirit to indwell the hearts of all those who believes and through the Spirit also gave gifts to individual believers for the edification of this body (1 Cor 12:7 & 8).
- d) Paul went on in verse 7 to present the great theme of unity in the body of Christ despite the diversity of her members and illustrated this in verse 11 that Christ in strengthening this unity gave to the Church, the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. This infers that the Lord Himself will give such gifts to whom He will give. No one can have such gifts if the Lord decides not to give; the prerogative is His, for in verse 7 of chapter 4 we are told, *"Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."*
- e) Each believer is given differing gifts and these vary from case to case. Some are more important and others are less important, but all are essential. It is necessary to bear in mind that though there may be inequalities in the gifts yet it should not upset the harmony of the church when each recognises the function they are call to for the benefit of the whole body. Paul in teaching the Corinthians Christians brought up the same point in 1 Corinthians 12:23 *"And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness."*
- f) At the same time we must recognise that though there are inequalities in the gifts, yet Paul is not advocating a hierarchical structure in the church where those in the lower function bow to the leadership of the higher. In fact contrary to this idea is the teaching of Peter that those who are overseers of the Church should be an example to the flock instead of being lord over them (1 Peter 5:3).
- g) God has at various point of the life of His Church bestowed different gifts which He deems necessary for her growth such as the appointment of apostles at a specific period and this can be seen at the establishment of the early church. The appointment of men to the office of apostles is a gift which may be described as extraordinary but not to be repeated in the...

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later period of the church life but it was necessary for her to have that office in order to establish her foundation. In other words, once the church has matured in that area, those particular gifts cease. However this does not mean that the office of apostle and even prophet have ceased in a sense that God cannot once again send such gifts but that the life of the Church at this point in time no longer needed this gifts. So it is the same as the gift of prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

- h) The gift of Apostles – these are men who have the special function of preaching and church planting especially in the early church. They are distinguished by: Christ appointment of their office, being a witness of the resurrection, being given supernatural revelation of the Word, being given supreme authority and the power to perform miracles.
- i) The gift of Prophets – They are also specially endowed men who preach and expound the scripture under the immediate impulse and influence of the Holy Spirit like the case of Agabus in Acts 11:28.
- j) The gift of Evangelists – They are classified as working under the direction of the apostles as itinerant preachers whose task is to spread the gospel in new places, for example, as did Philip the evangelist in Samaria and Caesarea (Acts 8:5).
- k) The gift of Pastors and Teachers – These are men called to be minister of the Word of God with dual function of preaching and teaching. They are to guide and feed the flock over which they have been set. But it is to be noted that those who teach are not necessarily call to preach.
- l) The building up of the Church can be illustrated by the way a building is being constructed. Once the foundation is done, the substructure can begin and each level is supported by the one below. In the building process, temporary structures like props and scaffoldings are needed for the initial part of the work but once the structure takes shape, all those props and scaffoldings can then be removed because the structure has become self-supporting. In the same way as the church matures, there are certain gifts which are necessary earlier, are no longer needed now but for her continuous growth to maturity, other gifts like in our present period, pastors and teachers are given.
- m) We must not forget that these gifts mentioned in verse 11 are not exhaustive but is used as illustration to the theme of unity which will culminate in Christ return.

2.2 The Purpose of the Gifts (v.12)

- i) For the perfecting of the saints.
- ii) For the work of the ministry.
- iii) For the edifying of the body of Christ.

- a) Dr Lloyd Jones puts it succinctly like this, *“the ultimate purpose of all these offices and divisions of labour in the Church is the perfecting of the saints; and the way in which the saints are to be perfected is through the gift of the ministry, the function of which is to edify the body of Christ. There is an ultimate objective, and there are more immediate objectives.”*
- b) This brings us back to the beginning when Paul talks about the body of Christ which consist of many members that make up this body. Therefore the gifts are to be used for the perfecting of each member thereby perfecting the whole.
- c) The work of the ministry would refer to those who are called to be ministers of the Word and their function is to use the gift of ministering to edify the body of Christ. The edification of the body requires the minister to build up each members of that body with the pure Word of God without adulteration and he must do it without the dictates of those sitting in the pews, in other words, with no fear or favour but neither is he to determine but the Head of the Church.

3 The significant of this teaching for the Church and the work of the Pastor

- a) The Church is Christ’s bride that comprises individual members who are given with diversities of gift by the Holy Spirit, not for their own selfish gain but rather for the betterment of the whole body of Christ. Each member must recognise that their gifts come from God who is the giver of every good and perfect gift and not to squander it.
- b) The Pastor, who is called to be minister or shepherd of the Church must likewise exercise his gift of ministering for the building of this body that Christ, the Head of the Church has entrusted to his care.
- c) The Pastor must seek to maintain this unity of the members within this body by encouraging each to use their individual gifts for the benefit of one another. They must be brought to realise that this unity cannot be maintain and build up to her potential unless everyone sees the bigger picture – that it is the Will of God to for members of the body to make this unity visible for the world to see as a testimony of the true Church.
- d) The Pastor must help each member to grow and impress upon them through the ministry of the Word that no matter how small or insignificant their gifts, they are essential for the whole body. No one is above the other but all one in the Lord, each fulfilling their appointed functions.
- e) The whole process of unity and building up of the body is to be understood as an ongoing process until Christ returns to receive His bride and so every members of the body must not lose sight of this end and press on in the edification of one another and provoking each other unto love and good works.

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON
CHURCH THEME: WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR
AND TREMBLING. (Philippians 2:12)

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	<i>Today: 01/06/2008</i>	<i>Next Week: 08/06/2008</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Mr and Mrs Liew, and Esther Choi to our evening worship service last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	Pr Mark Chen	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Philip Eveson	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	The Church's Message	Be a Shining Testimony for Christ!	
<i>Text:</i>	Romans 1:16-17	Philippians 2:14-18	
<i>Organist:</i>	Anthony	Grace	
Evening			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Chairman:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	John Poh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome: We would like to welcome Rev Philip Eveson, our speaker for this Lord's Day. He is the principal of LTS, director of the John Owen Centre for Theological Study and Lecturer in Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, Canon and Text of Scripture and Bible translations. • No Prayer Meeting: Please note that there will be no Prayer Meeting & Bible Study next Saturday, 07 Jun. • School of Theology at Metropolitan Tabernacle: The theme for this year programme is "Stand Fast in the Faith". It will be held from 8th – 10th Jul 2008. For further details, please help yourself to the application form available at the Book Table. • Sabbath School: Leaflets are placed on the book table to encourage children of ages 6-12 to attend Sunday School. Please feel free to distribute those leaflets to any child, especially yours, who may be interested in joining in. Please note that class will be held at the Library after the morning worship service. • Rooms to Let: There are rooms available to rent in Colindale. Please refer to the notice in the Fellowship Hall for more information.
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Philip Eveson	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	The Church's Captain	For He who finds Me finds Life	
<i>Text:</i>	Joshua 5:13-6:5	Proverbs 8:32-36	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Sophia	Joy	
Other Duties			
	<i>Today: 01/06/2008</i>	<i>Next Week: 08/06/2008</i>	
<i>Ushers</i>	Chin Kiong / John	John / Everlyn	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Carol	Hui Min	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Maureen	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	Catechism Class	Catechism Class	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 06 Jun	7:30pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Led by Pr Mark Chen	
Sat 07 Jun		Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: No Prayer Meeting & Bible Study	
<u>Last Week's Worship Service Collections</u>			
Offering: £311.51		Lunch: £35.20	
<h2 style="margin: 0;"><u>Memory Verse</u></h2>			
<i>Last Week (May 08 Wk 3): Psalm 139:4</i>			
For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.			
<i>This Week (May 08 Wk 4): Psalm 139:5</i>			
Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.			