**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**Walking Worthy: Diverse Gifts to Build His Church**

**Ephesians 4:7-10**

**February 23, 2020**

David Taylor

 We are in the second half of our series, Brought to Life, Brought Together, based upon the New Testament letter of Ephesians. Ephesians has six chapters. The first three chapters describe what God has done for us in Christ; last three chapters describe how we are to live out what God has done for us. The theme of chapters four through six is Walking Worthy of our Calling or Walking Worthy. In these chapters, Paul tells us to walk in unity (4:1–16), walk in newness of life (4:17–32), walk in love (5:1–6), walk in the light (5:7–14), and walk in wisdom (5:15–6:9).[[1]](#footnote-1) Today we look at Walking Worthy: Diverse Gifts that Build his Church. The main point of the section is that God has given each of us gifts to build up the local church (7-16). The main point today is that God has secured the gifts he gives us by his triumph over his enemies (7-10).

 We saw last week that God has united us together as one in Christ by his Spirit and he calls us to maintain that unity (1-6). But now he tells us that unity does not mean uniformity. Christ has given different gifts to every member of his body to build up his church to maturity. He finds support for this Christ in Psalms 68 which describes God defeating his enemies and giving gifts to his people (68:18). In a greater fulfillment, God in Christ has defeated his enemies and secured these gifts to give to his people (8-10). Then he describes five gifted people God has given to the church to equip the individual members to serve the church with two goals (11-12). First, by using our gifts God builds up his church so that it becomes more unified and mature, described as the fullness of Christ (13). The second goal describes this more fully, by using our gifts God causes the church to no longer be immature but to grow up in every aspect in Christ like a healthy human body (14-16). Now Let’s go back and look at 7-10 in more detail. What we see is that the triumphant Christ has secured and so given gifts to his church.

1. Christ Gives Gifts to Every Christian (7)

 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift (7). But tells us that Paul is transitioning from the unity God created by reconciling enemies, Jews and Gentile’s, into one new humanity, thus making enemies into friends and family. What binds us together is not our diversity but our common unity in Christ. One reason Paul prayed twice for the church to know God’s power is because the church needs God’s power maintain the unity! God’s power is available to help us work through the inevitable relational difficulties.

 But unity does not mean uniformity. God did not create us like standardized products that come out of a factory. God created his church from a group of broken people with diverse backgrounds, personalities, and ethnicities that he has brought to life and brought together in Christ. The gifts he gives to each of us are described as grace. This is not the grace that saves us or the grace that sanctifies us but grace in the form of spiritual gifts (3:2). The emphasis on each one of us is in contrast to the corporate oneness described in vs. 1-6. So every Christian has been given gifts(s) (1 Cor 12:4-11, Rom 12:4-8). Know and use your gifts to build up the church.

1. Christ Gives Gifts as He Determines (7)

 Christ gives gifts to each of us and he gives these gifts are as he determines. We see this in the latter half of verse seven, gifts are given according to the measure of Christ’s gift (7). That is, Christ has measured out a portion of gifting to each of us as he sovereignly determines. That means different people have different gifts and different people have different proportions of gift (s) (1 Cor 12:11). So, Christ has given each of us gifts as he determines or sovereignly chooses so that we use these gifts to build up his local church. Our church family is made up of individuals who are at various stages in following Christ so I want to make some observations about gifts.

 First, Christ is committed to the church. He loves the church, He died for the church, and He lives to serve the church. The church is at the center of his purposes. He wants us to love and serve his church the same way he does. If you love Christ, you will love his church. If you love Christ, you will serve his church. Know your gifts and use them to serve his church.

 Next, God expects us to use our gifts faithfully (1 Cor 4:2) and to developed our gifts (2 Tim 1:6).

 Third, gift tests can be helpful but gifts are best identified and confirmed by the church.

 Last, gifts do not mean you are spiritually maturity. You can be very gifted yet very immature. This is one reason Paul warns the church to be slow to affirm gifted people (1 Tim 5:22).

1. Gifts have Been Secured By Christ (8-10)

 Christ has secured the gifts he gives by his death. Paul sees Psalm 68:18 as the basis for Christ giving these gifts. The Psalm describes God’s triumphant ascension up mount Zion after he defeated Israel’s enemies and delivered his people. He sees the Psalm as having a greater fulfillment in God’s greater triumph in Christ (1:20-23). Christ’s ascent implies that he first descended to the earth (9).[[2]](#footnote-2) Christ’s descent refers to his incarnation while his ascent refers to his exaltation far above all things. He defeated death and sin and all powers and principalities. This defeat is celebrated in his exaltation to the throne of God parading his defeated enemies as prisoners of war and giving the spoils of war as gifts to his church.[[3]](#footnote-3) When kings defeated their enemies in war, they led their prisoners through the country and the king rewarded his people with the spoils of war. Christ is the triumphant Messianic King and Lord exalted high above all powers and principalities, securing our salvation and our gifts and then gave them to us.

 Finally, his exaltation ensure that he rules over all (10). The purpose of Christ’s victorious exaltation is that he might fill all things, the universe (1:22-23) by uniting all things in him. Christ presently exercises his Lordship through the church. As each member uses their gifts, the church is built up and the mission of making disciples expands. As we proclaim the gospel, we call people to follow king Jesus in discipleship. As we make and multiply disciples, the Lordship of Christ, his power and his presence, fills the universe.

**Life Group Questions:**

1. What does unity in Christ means?
2. How does unity not mean uniformity?
3. What do all believers share in common? What should all believers pursue?
4. How are believers different? Is this good or bad?
5. Explain the relationship between the ascension of Jesus and the distribution of gifts to the church.
6. What responsibilities do you have as a member of a local church?
7. How does this apply to discipleship?
8. How does this help me in making disciples?

1. Frank S. Thielman, “Ephesians,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 819. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This verse has been variously understood but the best way is to see the lower regions as further described as the earth. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Paul adapts Psalm 68:18 from God received gifts from among men to he gave gifts to men following the Jewish Targum. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)