



Empowering People to Change the World

The Empowered Church II

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The Empowered Church II
A People Who Know Their God-Given Gifting and Walk in It

Ephesians 4:11-16

We are living at a time of the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit since Pentecost.

Peter so prophesied at Pentecost in Acts 2:16-21.

“But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

***‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.
And on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
And they shall prophesy.
I will show wonders in heaven above
And signs in the earth beneath:
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.
The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.
And it shall come to pass
That whoever calls on the name of the Lord
Shall be saved.’”***

The New Covenant of Christ has been poured out upon the Church as Christ ascended to heaven and poured out His Spirit upon us.

- If Christ had not died on the cross and then been resurrected, He would not have the power and authority to distribute gifts to His people.
- Verses 8-10...The gifts of the Spirit are for the purpose of “filling all things” beginning with our lives.

- In other words, the gifts of the Holy Spirit have been given in order to fill our lives with Christ; to fill our lives with serving others through the gifts we've been given.
- Thus, when we serve others, we are serving Christ. They see Christ shining through our lives as the spiritual gifts we've been given flow out to them!

Ephesians 4:11

Some pastors and theologians speak of the “Five-Fold Ministry” based on this verse.

We don't know for sure, but these might be classified as the leadership gifts of the church because of the nature of the verses that follow.

Spiritual gifts defined: A spiritual gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church.

Apostles literally means “sent out ones.” There are “capital A” Apostles and “small a” apostles. Apostles are those individuals empowered by the Holy Spirit to plant and build churches and ministries.

- “Capital A Apostles” are the Lamb's Twelve: those who had visibly seen the resurrected Christ in His inner circle.
- “Small a apostles” are the men God calls today to plant churches and oversee other churches; a wide leadership of seeing over the well-being of pastors and spiritual movements.

Prophets can be variously translated. It has the idea of “forthtelling” and “foretelling.”

- Forthtelling has the meaning of the teaching of God's Word. You are prophesying whenever the Word of God is accurately preached.
- Foretelling has the meaning of speaking to individuals about what God is going to do in the future.
- Ex. Romi Zarit and our call to Colorado Springs...

Evangelists are those individuals empowered by the Holy Spirit, who have been gifted to effectively tell others about Christ and see them get saved.

- An evangelist loves to talk about Christ and give others the opportunity to become Christians.
- They are “inviters and includers.”
- This is the one spiritual gift that all of us are to take part in.
- Great Commission given by Jesus was given for all of us:
- Matthew 28:19-20
“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
- The Bible tells us that we should all “do the work of an evangelist.”
- But not all of us will see the same scope and success in witnessing.
- This is my axiom for evangelism: “Share your faith in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results up to God.”

- Just be faithful...and God will make you fruitful!

Pastors are those individuals empowered by the Holy Spirit, who have a heart for caring for people.

- They love to visit the sick, bring meals, and make sure everyone is taken care of.
- Becoming one of our leaders of a community group would mean that you must have the gift of pastoring.

Teachers are those individuals empowered by the Holy Spirit, who are gifted to study, prepare, and teach God's people for the glory of God.

Spiritual gift lists in the New Testament are not exhaustive, but are examples.

- And there are many other spiritual gifts given in other lists in the Bible.
- There are six different passages in the New Testament with a list of spiritual gifts.
- No one list has all the gifts, and no gift but prophecy is mentioned on all the lists. Paul is not giving us exhaustive lists, but rather examples of the many different gifts.
- Wayne Grudem, in his book, *Systematic Theology*, on spiritual gifts: "Spiritual gifts are not as mysterious and 'other worldly' as people sometimes make them out to be. Many of them are intensifications or highly developed instances of phenomena that most Christians experience in their own lives."

Romans 12:6-8

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

- I don't want the Five-Fold Ministry at The Road, but the Fifty-Fold Ministry!

Three Thoughts on Spiritual Gifts:

1. (Remember verse 8) God is the One Who gives gifts to us, so God gets all the glory for our effectiveness. There is also no need to compare. God sovereignly gives gifts to men to bring Himself more glory.
2. (Remember Acts 2:17, “I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.”) God is the One Who enables and empowers us through the power of the Holy Spirit to effectively exercise our spiritual gifts. So, the closer and more intimate we walk with Him, the more pronounced and effective our gifts will be.

3. Spiritual gifts mean very little if your character is not being transformed. All gifting flows through and is packaged in your character.
 - a. Ex. Like the hose that delivers the water. The hose is our character; the water is our spiritual gifts. The water flows through a hose. If the hose has holes, splits, and cracks in it, how well will the water flow?

Understand the purposes of spiritual gifts. What are the purposes of the spiritual gifts flowing in the church?

Verse 12a

The first purpose of spiritual gifts, rightly administered, is the equipping of the whole congregation for ministry.

- “Equipping” means to “make fit, prepare, train, and perfect.”
- In classical language, it means to “set a bone” during surgery.
- The Great Physician is making all necessary adjustments so that the church is not out of joint with herself.
- This is the church’s purpose...not to just exist, but to “do the work of ministry.”
- “Ministry” literally means “to serve.” The church is supposed to serve the community! Jesus came to serve! The church is to serve each other, and the community! We are serving our community through the ministries of this body...Easter Production...Sports Camps...VBS...

Verse 12b

The second purpose of spiritual gifts, rightly administered, is that the whole church is edified.

- Edify means to “build up and strengthen.” This is the word from which we get “edifice” or a “building.”
- The word is *oikodome*, from which we get the word “family” as the root.
- Two meanings: 1) The church is to be a family of “building up and strengthening” each other; and 2) The family is to be like a church of “building up and strengthening” each other.
- Jonathan Edwards once said, “every home is a little church.”
- Is your home like a church? I think we are nicer at church than at home! Do you have the same listening heart at home as you do at church?

Verses 13-14

Thirdly, spiritual gifts, rightly administered, build unity and maturity.

- The more mature you are in the character of Christ, the more unified you will be in the body of Christ.

Don't be childish in following self-promoters and self-proclaimed prophets.

- Be especially careful of Christians on the Internet, blogosphere, twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, who are always self-promoting and cutting down others.
- The self-promoters are dangerous.
- The self-proclaimed prophets are dangerous when you don't know their character, their fruit.
- Anyone can make a statement and say it was from God. But how do you know? Are these people in a local church? Are they submitted to a board, elders, etc.?

- Churches that are maturing in God's Word are not tossed to and fro by the “latest greatest spiritual gimmick.”
- There will always be new “winds of doctrine” coming around...some new formula for growing churches, some new doctrine that challenges the theologians.
- Be careful! New doctrines today are popping up all the time that challenge biblical and historical Christianity.
 - Ex. I have watched some wonderful churches chase the latest and greatest craze...only to be split and splintered in the aftermath. You know why? Often it feeds our flesh, not our spirit!

Verses 15-16

Spiritual gifts, rightly administered, grow us up in love for each other.

- You know why? Because when we can understand that God gives certain gifts to people, we can glorify God as we see them using their gifts!
 - Ex. I love to go to the Inman's home. Jan has the gift of hospitality. Jay has a gift of teaching.
 - Ex. I love what Andy and the Facilities Team do.
 - Ex. I love to know our books are kept and administration is happening with our finances, thanks to Nelly Mayer.
 - Ex. I love to hear about all of the small groups we have in our church being led by teachers.
 - Ex. I love to go in the kitchen and see Della and Darryl, Matt Wilcoxson, and Ricky Bobby doing their thing.

- These gifts help us see love in action! Don't we all want to see more love?
- When you see love, you see Jesus! In our homes; in our churches!
- Everyone is doing their part! Each joint providing the nutrients and vitamins to grow!
- "Every part does its share." I love that! Not the paid staff! Not just the pastoral staff! Everyone is equipping and doing their share!

Let's take Communion together.