

The Portrait of the Church: Unity Part 2

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Preacher: Don Coleman

[0 : 00] All right, well, I'm going to go ahead and begin tonight like I did last time as I do most of the time and that is look over and read over our text the text for tonight.

! Chapter 4, verse 1, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all.

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, he says, when he descended on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men.

Now this, he ascended. What does it mean that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

[1 : 59] And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.

But speaking the truth in love may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effect of working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body of the edifying of itself in love.

All right, so there is again. And just maybe just by way of a little bit of review, I hate to give out a worksheet or not a worksheet but a study guide where I start with point number four.

And you don't have in front of you points one, two, and three because we covered that last week.

Some of you might not have been here last week. And though I'm not going to give a kind of full-blown review, I do want to kind of remind us of some things as we've started this chapter.

The purpose of chapter four, verse one, all the way through chapter five and verse 21, that's going to take us a while to get through all of that, but the purpose of that block of Scripture is to provide a portrait of the church.

[3 : 52] I kind of go back to the very beginning and say that Ephesians really is intended to define for us, describe for us this new society that God has created.

It's a new thing. It's the church. And so in these passages we're going to be studying for several weeks, we have a portrait of the church. That's the theme here, starting with the beginning of chapter four.

And so these verses deal with, and then we could say, a new standard or the new standards that God has given to his new society, the church.

And these standards are unity and purity. Remember, we talked about that last week. Unity and purity, or oneness and holiness.

And so those are the two things that Paul is going to be teaching us in that block of text, out of Ephesians, from chapter four, verse one, all the way to the 21st verse of chapter five.

[4 : 59] Now, unity and purity. All right, so last week we started to look at what Paul wrote concerning unity or oneness, the oneness of the body of Christ, the unity or oneness of Christ's church.

And that's what we just read about, verses one through 16 of chapter four. All right, so I'm going to share with you four things about that. We looked at the first three last week.

And just to remind you, first of all, there is the exhortation to unity. In verse one, verse one says, I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.

This is the call, kind of the call, the exhortation to oneness. He's speaking to the entire body of Christ here. Second, the prescription for unity.

Again, we looked at this last week, verses two and three. And in those verses, verses two and three, Paul listed five virtues that really these virtues will always exist in the church that is unified.

[6 : 12] The church that is enjoying this oneness as it should be enjoying or experiencing. And so there are five virtues. There's lowliness, gentleness, long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

That's what he says in verses two and three. Now, I'm tempted to expand upon that, but we've covered all of that, so I need to move on. Number three, and again, we looked at this last week, the description of unity.

The description of it, verses four through six. And I'm not going to read the text again, but here's where he says, here's how he describes this unity. One body of believers.

We're one body of believers. One Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the regenerator and unifier of the body. One hope of your calling.

That calling being to salvation. And not just salvation, but Christ-likeness and also glory, all of which is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. One Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Savior and He is our absolute Master.

[7 : 28] One faith. And again, to remind you, it's not faith as a thing we have or do. It's faith in the sense of the faith.

The body of doctrinal truth. We have one body of doctrinal truth. And we don't have to look anywhere else but right here in the Bible.

It's one body of doctrinal truth. We have that. This is the description of our unity. We have one faith. One body of doctrinal truth.

One baptism. And this is a reference to water baptism. By which the believer publicly confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We have one God and Father of all.

Who is, who in His Son, we've been given the right to become His. He has given us the right to become children of God. Because we believe in His name.

[8 : 27] And He's above all. He's through all. He is in you all. Because He is our one God.

One God and Father. All right. So that's a quick, kind of quick review of what we looked at last week concerning the unity or oneness of Christ's church.

So exhortation to unity. The prescription to unity. The description of unity. And then there's one more. And we're going to spend our time tonight on this one. The expression of unity.

The expression of it. Oneness or unity in the church is expressed by the gifts given by Christ.

The gifts that He's given to His body. These are gifts given to the church. That's the expression of this unity. And I guess I should qualify that.

[9 : 28] The gifts are the expression of our unity if indeed we have discovered those gifts as we should be able to. And even more importantly are exercising those gifts.

Using those gifts in the body. This is the expression of oneness. All right. So there are three things to see about that here in these verses.

First of all, we have the description of the gifts. Excuse me. The description of the gifts. Verses 7 through 10.

Now, first of all, to whom are the gifts given? Well, that's easy to figure out, isn't it? Verse 7. But to each one of us.

Each one of us. God has given gifts to each one of us. And this is interesting. I don't know if I put this in your notes or not.

[10 : 30] But the word but there at the beginning of verse 7. But it's more than just a contraction. Or excuse me, not a contraction.

A conjunction. It's more than just a conjunction. It's meant to contrast something. And it's meant to contrast what he's about to say with what he has said in verse 6.

And it's a contrast to the word all in verse 6. Remember, he's God the Father of all, through all, in you all.

That's kind of all conclusive. And so after Paul makes that statement. Then he begins verse 7 with the word but. And it's meant to make a contrast.

All right, so here's the meaning. Yes, God is the Father of all. Yes, God is the Father of all. And he is above all. And he's through all. And in you all. Just like verse 6 says. But on the other hand.

[11 : 35] Paul is saying. We could say it this way. God is the Father of each one of us. That brings it down to something more personal. Because what he's about to say is personal.

It's individual. God is the Father of all. But he's also the Father of each one of us. He is then above each one of us. He is through each one of us.

He is in each one of us. So this brings it down to the personal. And this is kind of a contrast.

Between kind of an overall statement. A very general statement. About who God is.

In relation to the oneness and unity of the church. And who he is in relation to each of us individually. Now he's not leaving this issue of unity.

Because if God is the Father of each one of us. Then he is acting in such a way. In the lives of each one of us. So that then collectively.

[12 : 36] We are a body. And there is unity. God is bringing about unity. And so God has gifted each one of us. Every single one of us. Meaning unity does not mean uniformity.

When we say unity. Unity doesn't mean that we all have the same gifts. It's not uniformity. But rather unity means diversity.

There's a diversity of giftedness. It's one God and Father of us all. Every single one of us. And for each and every single one of us.

He has gifted us. Individually. Now he has a big picture in mind. And a big purpose in mind. And all of our individual gifts come together.

To fulfill that big purpose that God has for his church. But Paul is causing us to turn our thinking to ourselves.

[13 : 39] In the sense that he is. I can say he's my father. And he has gifted me. And each one of you can say that. And so if he has gifted each and every one of us.

Then we're important. Not important in and of ourselves. But we are important to the overall purpose of God. In the church. And so it makes it. Even here at the outset.

Before we get into it any deeper. It makes us realize how important it is. That we are doing what God has gifted us to do. Each one of us.

And when we don't. Then there's a problem. And we'll touch on that here in a little bit. Alright so. To whom are the gifts given? To each and every one of us.

According to what are these gifts given? Meaning. Meaning. Is it according to my education?

[14 : 37] Or according to my devotion to the Lord? Is it according to my just. You know. God kind of born with talents?

Or according to how big a brain I've got? Yeah. What is it according to? Well verse 7 says grace. Grace was given to the measure. So there's the answer.

According to what are these gifts given to each and every one of us? According to grace. Now by definition. Grace is free.

It's free and undeserved. Right? Or it wouldn't be grace. So. So. This takes it away from any worthiness that we have. Or any kind of.

Special features about each of us individually. It really takes it away from. What we might even become. If we work hard enough. This is something God has determined.

[15 : 38] Within himself. And he grants. Each one of us. Gifts according to his grace. So. It's grace. Remember.

God's mercy. We're talking about mercy. God's mercy. God's mercy withholds what. What we deserve. But God's grace grants us what we. Could never deserve.

What is undeserved. And so God has graced. Each one of us. With gifts to be used. For his kingdom. And for his glory. These gifts.

Are given. He says. By measure. And this is important. They're given by measure. And it's not. It's not. From our.

Vantage point. Perspective. It's not. Necessarily. Equal. He gives by measure. God measures out. The exact proportion.

[16:33] Of each individual. Believer's gift. And so. Therefore. We can't. You know. There's no room. For envy. Even though. Envy does exist. Doesn't it?

Within the body of Christ. But there should be no room. If. If. It's according to grace. That God. Gives. Gifts. To each one of us.

And he gives according to measure. Then there's no room for. Envy. Because no single person. Is more deserving. I mean. You can look at someone. And envy the gift.

That that person has. And. Role that person has. And how God is. Using that person. By some measure. And you can be. Envious of that person. But there's no room for it.

Because that person. Didn't deserve it. Any more than you. You could deserve it. So. No single person. Is more deserving. Every single person. Is undeserving. So God measures.

[17:26] The gifts. According. To his. Predetermined will. And. So. Therefore. It is. Completely. And totally. According to grace.

Jesus. All right. Then. Who has given these gifts? I mean. These are questions. We can answer. Without even looking at the text. But. Well. It's. It's Christ.

Gift. Verse 7. Christ. Gift. The giver of gifts. Is. The ascended. Lord Jesus. Now. Here's where we're getting into. About to get into. One of those troublesome passages.

In the Bible. And. Lee. Reminded me. That I've touched on this before. Early on in my ministry here. We. I think we were answering difficult questions out of the Bible.

And this was one of the questions. Came from this text. And some other passages. And. So. Let's just get into it. But. But. Before we get into. Those troublesome.

[18:23] Let's. Let's. Let's. Get this established. Christ is the giver of the gifts. And so. That leads us then to. How can Christ.

Give these gifts. Now. This troublesome passage. We're about to look at. There. In verses 8 through 10. Really. Are. Just. Simply. Designed. To answer the question.

About. How can Christ. Give these gifts to us. I mean. How can he do that. And so. Verses 8 through 10. Let me read it again. Therefore. He says.

When he ascended on high. He led captivity captive. And gave gifts to men. And then. He makes this parenthetical statement.

Which answers. Asks a question. Answers one. This is. This. This. This whole idea of he ascended. I mean. You can kind of hear Paul's thoughts. As he's writing. You know. And he's kind of parenthetically.

[19:19] He says. Now. Now let me stop here a minute. This. He ascended. What. What does. What does it mean? What does it mean? that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth.

He who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens that he might fill all things. Alright, so what Paul is saying without getting into the real meat of it, just on the surface, he's saying this is how Christ can give these gifts.

Because he descended and he ascended. Alright, now we need to get into the passage because you may have some questions. In the first place, you should note that the quote in verse 8, when he ascended on high, he laid captive and gave gifts to men.

I think I had me there. That's a typo. It's supposed to be men. You caught that though, didn't you? Well, this is a quote from Psalm 68 and verse 18.

And the psalm there, Psalm 68, basically, if you could sum it up in a sentence, it describes God's mighty victory over his enemies.

[20:38] It's really a marvelous psalm. In fact, it opens with these words. And they're familiar. I think there's even a psalm. This has even been put to music. But let God arise.

Let his enemies be scattered. Let those also who hate him flee from him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away. As wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. It's very graphic in it. Smoke can just be driven away so easily. Wax so easily melted with fire.

That's how the psalmist is calling upon God to do this with his enemies.

But then he says, But let the righteous be glad. Let them rejoice before God. Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly. It just goes on from there for 35 verses. And it's a thrilling psalm.

Psalm 68. And it's out of this psalm. In fact, it's verse 18. That Paul pulls this quote. But now, the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to interpret this passage as prophetic.

[21 : 44] As prophetic. And it is prophetic then. How Paul uses it. It's prophetic of the risen Lord Jesus. Ascending back to heaven.

And he's ascending back to heaven victoriously. Leading captivity captive with him. And giving gifts to men. Though there's some trouble in the psalm itself.

In verse 18, it says receiving rather than giving. But you have to look a little bit deeper. Customarily, when kings would have a great victory and they would take captives and all kinds of riches.

They would receive them. But then they would also give them to their people. So, the idea is still the same. And so, Paul is taking that passage and he's applying it to Christ.

The risen Christ. And so then, the phrase, leading captivity captive, is a reference to his victory over Satan, sin, and death.

[22 : 53] That's what this is a reference about. Not, by the way, as some teach, not the liberation of Old Testament saints from Sheol. Remember, we studied this idea of Abraham's bosom.

We kind of touched on that in Luke 16 when we were talking about that parable of Lazarus and the rich man. And based upon that parable, some have to kind of develop this whole theology of an intermediary place between heaven and hell.

And it's Abraham's bosom. And in Abraham's bosom, we have two compartments. We have paradise on one side and we have Sheol, or, excuse me, the place of torment on the other side and a great gulf affixed and so forth.

And so, there are some who would take this passage to mean that when Christ died, he went down to Abraham's bosom and led all the Old Testament saints, all that were saved by faith prior to Christ, prior to the cross, and led them out to heaven.

And there's some pretty well-known conservative scholars who hold to that. I just don't think so. I don't think that's it at all.

[24 : 19] It's not a reference to leading some people out of a place of captivity. It's a reference to the victory of Christ over Satan, over sin, and over death.

See, you have to look closely. I mean, some of it's just so obvious. If we would just pause a minute and look at it closely. It is captivity itself that Jesus led away captive.

Do you see that? He led captivity captive. It's captivity itself that Jesus has led away captive, not the captives of captivity.

And that makes all the difference in the world in this passage and in the conclusion about theology.

And I really like W.A. Criswell's explanation, so I think I gave you this quote, didn't I, Dr. Criswell.

He said, To me it means that the risen Christ took captive what had tried to make him and all of us captive. Sin and the world, death and the grave, Satan and the kingdom of darkness, all things that are against us, he has taken away and forever and taken away and forever we are free.

[25 : 34] Just a great quote. And I think he nails it right on the head about what this is talking about, what Paul is talking about. See, Christ was able to accomplish this because he ascended on high.

That is, he was able to give gifts because he ascended on high and he took his rightful place at the right hand of the throne of God. But notice something else here.

It says that Christ ascended because he first descended into the lower parts of the earth. All right, so he ascended but that he first descended.

Now, again, Paul is not referring to hell here. Jesus did not go to hell after he died, when he died for a short period of time.

Hell is not located in the lower parts of the earth. All right, it's just that just take it logically and take it as Paul writes it.

[26 : 37] If he entered into the lower parts of the earth, is that where hell is located? I know we always talk about hell. Well, hell's down there, you know, where the fire is. That's what we were taught since we were little kids. But hell's not located on this planet.

All right? And so, he's not talking about hell here. Paul is referring to the incarnation. In fact, he's referring to all aspects of the incarnation of God the Son.

That's what he's talking about when he talks about descending to the lower parts of the earth. He's talking about the incarnation, Christ leaving heaven and coming to this earth.

And I just kind of tried to list all aspects of the incarnation. There's more to the incarnation than just that Jesus, God the Son, became man.

There's all aspects of it. Leaving His glory in heaven. Humbling Himself by becoming a man. Clothing Himself in human flesh. Submitting to the limitations of human life.

[27 : 39] That's part of the incarnation. Can you imagine? You're God the Son. And now you have, by your own choice, limit, put yourself under the confines and limitations of human life.

Enduring the pains and problems of the human condition. Jesus Christ endured all the things that we suffer, the physical things that we suffer because we're human, part of this fallen world.

He endured those things. He, experiencing the full measure of sin's temptation. Now, Jesus never sinned, but He experienced the full weight of temptation, and yet was without sin.

Can you imagine enduring the full weight of temptation? I mean, we're tempted, sometimes very strongly, and except for the grace of God, we would sin every time.

and there's always a limit to what we can endure. But there was no possibility of Jesus sinning, and so He experienced the full weight, the full power, of the temptation of sin, and yet did not sin.

[28 : 58] I mean, these are all part of what He experienced, all part of the Incarnation. He, you know, He was obeying, He was suffering the pain and abuse of wicked men.

Obeying, He was obeying the eternal plan requiring death on the cross. Taking the sin of mankind upon Himself. Can you imagine that? This is all part of the Incarnation.

receiving the full wrath and judgment of God the Father. Dying the death of a condemned sinner.

You say, well, He wasn't a sinner. Well, He took all my sin and your sin.

He became sin for us. And He died the death of a condemned sinner so that I would not have to. And resting His dead corpse in a borrowed tomb.

This is all part of the Incarnation. And so this is what Paul has in mind when he says that He descended to the lower parts of the earth. And that's what Paul means by that.

[30 : 03] Oddly enough, I was looking at all the various translations and I think there's no secret that I'm not a big fan of the NIV. Some of you have the NIV.

It's not a heretical version. I just don't prefer it. And sometimes I think it's more of a commentary than it is just a literal translation of scripture.

But oddly enough, the NIV, I think, gets this right and this is what it says. He also descended to the lower earthly regions. That's the idea.

And he didn't have to do that. Well, he had to according to God's plan. And I'm glad that he did. But he's God and he chose to lower himself, to set aside his glory and come to these lower earthly parts and suffer all the things that he did suffer.

And he did that for us. And so, therefore, based upon that, Jesus then was able to ascend far above all the heavens because he first descended to the earth in the incarnation.

[31 : 18] See, the two go together. It's not automatic that Jesus would ascend to the right hand of the Father. He could only ascend because he descended. He became the victorious redeemer.

And so, then, he gave gifts to his redeemed church. That's what Paul is doing. He's answering this question. How can Christ give us these gifts?

Because he descended, and because he descended, he also ascended. And he gave gifts to the church. And by the way, this interpretation of the text fits well with something Paul wrote to the Philippians.

In fact, let me read it to you. It's a very familiar passage. But you have really the same basic truth being highlighted, being taught here in Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 and following.

Just listen to it. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, that is being God himself, literally, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.

[32 : 31] That is, he didn't consider it something he had to just take by force. but made himself, what did he do? He made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men.

What is that? That's the incarnation. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

That's still part of the incarnation. He descended to the lower parts of the earth. Therefore, why?

Therefore, what? Therefore, because he descended, therefore, God has also highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and the glory of God the Father.

See, the same logic, same idea. Well, it's the same reference to the very same truth, that he descended, and because he descended, he was then able to ascend in victory. And as the victorious redeemer, he gave gifts, gave gifts to the church. All right, so the distribution of the gifts, gifts, and now second, the description of the gifts.

[34 : 00] The description of the gifts, verse 11. Now, we might be expecting this long list of spiritual gifts given to the church as Paul has given in other places, Romans, for example.

But even though he's alluding to individual gifts, gifts, he's not going to list those gifts here. Rather, he's going to describe some very general gifts, in fact, they're gifts of leadership, given to the church to promote spiritual health and unity in the body.

All right, so then he's going to describe five gifts of leadership. These are gifts given to the church. The first one, apostles. The apostles.

Now, the term apostle is used in two senses in the New Testament, generally as well as technically. So there's a general sense of this word apostle, and it simply refers to men used by God in places of leadership within the church.

[35 : 17] For example, we have Barnabas and Silas and Timothy and there are others that are referred to as apostles, but not in the technical sense, but in a kind of general sense.

But there's also the technical use of the word apostle, and it is to refer to those men specifically chosen by Jesus. So we could kind of delineate this type of apostle from the others by calling them apostles of Jesus.

They were chosen by Jesus, and there were thirteen in all, if you exclude Judas and you include Paul.

There are thirteen in scripture. These are apostles in the technical sense, and they're given to the church. Christ gave them to the church.

But now in our passage, Paul is referring to this technical sense. So the apostles of Jesus were given three basic responsibilities. Number one, to lay the foundation of the church.

[36 : 25] Ephesians 2.20. Now we're talking about the apostle using the technical sense. So number one, to lay the foundation of the church.

Number two, to receive and declare the revelation of God's word. Alright, so they received it. Revelation of God, they declared it. And then number three, to give confirmation of that word through signs and wonders, through miracles.

That was the purpose of miracles in the New Testament. Signs and wonders. They were evangelistic tools before the word of God was complete.

and the apostles, and also it was granted to some of the close associates of the apostles to perform signs and wonders to confirm the word of God because they had not yet been completed, not yet been written.

And so when it was completed, then those things ceased. There was no longer any need for that. And so the apostles of Jesus were not replaced after they died.

[37 : 41] You'll find anywhere in scripture after Paul, of course, being chosen to be an apostle. You don't see anywhere about successors to the apostles.

It ended with them. This technical sense of the word apostles. There aren't any apostles today. You say, well, I turn on the TV, hear about apostle this and apostle that. Well, either they misunderstand scripture or they're using it in a general sense, but I think really they're trying to use it in the technical sense, and they're at odds with the word of God.

There are no more apostles. And then you have prophets. The second one, prophets, and the word prophet refers to those men in first century church.

Well, it actually really refers to Old Testament prophets. And Old Testament prophets in the sense of an Old Testament prophet, in the foretelling of things, that ended with the last Old Testament prophets, but there were still gifts of prophecy given to the church, the early church, and these men were given the gift to receive God's revelation.

We sometimes refer to them as foretellers, being able to see God's word, but also given the gift to proclaim it, to proclaim that revelation.

[39 : 09] These were gifts of leadership given to the church, the early church, and these specific offices, this specific office, the office of prophet, ceased when God's revelation was complete.

We only have prophets today in the church in the sense of being gifted to proclaim and teach what God has already revealed.

How many more prophets? If we did, then we'd have to have Bibles with three ring binders so that we could open it up and add more pages to it. If God is still revealing his word, then we need to add it to scripture, but he's not.

That ended when the word of God was completed. And so apostles, in the technical sense, we have no more of those. No need for any more of those.

Prophets in that technical sense, in the sense of foretelling or receiving revelation from God, that has ceased. And all we have to do is go back to Ephesians 2, verse 20.

[40 : 21] The church was established, according to Paul, was established upon what? Upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

So once the foundation is laid, the work of the apostles and prophets was finished. It was finished. But still, Paul was giving us these gifts that were given to the church.

Then the third one we have is evangelists. And evangelists are those in the church who are uniquely gifted to proclaim the gospel to unbelievers.

Now, what I do on Sunday when I preach, I'm proclaiming the gospel because the gospel in the broadest sense of the word is the whole of scripture.

The good news of Jesus Christ and his plan is redemptive plan. But when I'm talking about teaching and proclaiming the word of God to believers, we're talking about those who are gifted, uniquely gifted, to explain and proclaim the word of God to unbelievers.

[41 : 31] And evangelists today, and they still exist today, are those who are sent out from the church to the mission field. That's one aspect of this, but it's not just that.

They can also include those who are inside the church, right here in the church, who are evangelists. And they have a role in the church to teach and to train, to lead God's people, to evangelize their community.

Because you see, in the broad sense of the word evangelist, we're all evangelists. We've all been given, the Great Commission, all been given a mandate to share our faith, to testify of the gospel to people around us.

But there are those who are uniquely gifted and given to the church to be evangelists. And, you know, I was looking at MacArthur on this, and I think he pegged it, so I put, did I put his quote down?

I did. I'm sorry about that. Here's what he said. He said, every church should be led by a combination of evangelists and teaching shepherds.

[42 : 46] That is, men gifted to bring the lost in, and men gifted for feeding believers and leading them to the word to build them up. And so, according to MacArthur, and I think he's right, this gifted evangelist is still in effect today and very much needed in the church today.

In fact, it is one of those kinds of leaders that we lack a great deal of in the church today. All right, and then four and five, I'll put these together, pastors and teachers.

I put these together because grammatically, though it's not real apparent from the English translation, but grammatically in the Greek text, these are combined together under one particular office of leadership, pastors and teachers, pastor-teacher.

Now, it's talking about an office in the church. In fact, all of these are, in the technical sense, offices of leadership in the church. Apostle, prophet that has passed away, evangelist, pastor-teacher, pastor-teacher.

The pastor-teacher is, that's me. I've been given that duty, that place of leadership in his church.

[44 : 12] Now, I'm a gift to you. Aren't you glad? But all pastors are gifts to the church for a specific role.

And, all right, now, while there is a gift of teaching given to individuals, remember Paul is not focusing on all the gifts, the spiritual gifts that God gives to each member of the church.

The gift of teaching is one of those. But he's not referring today, he's referring to an office of teacher, pastor-teacher. But the gift of teaching is given to individuals in the church.

But my role is to shepherd the flock and to teach them the word of God. That's the role of the pastor-teacher.

The poimene, poimene is the Greek term. We have poimene and episkopos and presbyteros is the other word. Those are three terms that are used almost interchangeably to refer to the one office in the church, the office of pastor.

[45 : 20] And they kind of really kind of focus on various aspects of the duty of the pastor. All right, so these are the gifts that are given to the church. All right, so we're talking about the expression of unity, right?

The distribution of the gifts, the description of the gifts, and then finally, the design of the gifts. The design of the gifts.

Verses 12 through 16. Boy, I'm going to have to quit here, but I think I can get this last part out.

God's perfect design in giving his gifts to the church is threefold.

For ministerial, it's fourfold actually. I must have added one after I wrote that. So you can cross that out fourfold.

God's perfect design in giving his gifts to the church is fourfold. For ministerial activity. Ministerial activity.

[46 : 25] Activity of the ministry among the membership of the church. Verse 12. For the equipping of the saints. All right, so he gave the gift, pastor-teacher. For what? For the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry.

For edifying or building up of the body of Christ. Now, the King James, I think, is the only translation that does this, but they put a comma between saints and for.

So it reads, for the equipping of the saints, comma. For the work of the ministry, comma. For the edifying, building up of the body of Christ. And all you have to do is put a comma right there

between saints and for, and it makes a list of things that the pastor-teacher is supposed to do. The pastor-teacher is supposed to do these three things. Equip the saints, do the work of the ministry, and build up the body of Christ. But a comma doesn't belong there, grammatically speaking.

Christ has gifted his church with pastor-teachers pastor-teachers, whose primary duty is to train God's people to do the work of the ministry.

[47 : 40] As one pastor put it, your job, and don't throw anything at me, okay? Your job is the work of the ministry.

Do the work of the ministry. ministry. My job is to equip you for that work. Does that mean I don't have to do anything else? I mean, I don't have any responsibility to evangelize, I don't have any responsibility to, you know, wash dishes on men's night.

I haven't done that in a while, so you might be thinking some of you've been my thing. I'll write you down. Okay, write me down. I was going to do it this last one, Monday, but I'm sick, so I promise you.

No, we all have personal responsibility to be servants and to serve, but we're talking about the way the body of Christ, if it's unified, the way it is to function.

And the pastor teacher is to equip you, the saints, for the work of the ministry. For the edifying, the building up of the body of Christ.

[48 : 55] Number two, for spiritual maturity. All right, so number one, ministerial activity. Number two, spiritual maturity.

Verse 13, till, we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That's a mouthful.

Basically, Paul means, did I put this in there? He means pastors teach the people. This is how it works. This is kind of the flow of thought. Pastors, pastor teachers, they teach the people the whole counsel of God's word.

word. That's the faith. The faith. Even though, you know, it's difficult sometimes when we see the word faith and we make it apply to being faithful and having faith in Christ.

It's talking about the faith, which is the word of God. So, the pastor, my responsibility is to teach the faith.

[50 : 05] The whole counsel of God's word, which includes the knowledge of the Son of God. Then, the result of this teaching is unity.

See, you just kind of follow the phrases. It's unity. Unity of the faith. faith. Or a oneness in the knowledge and understanding of God's word.

That is, you know, what's my goal? It's not to throw out there some ideas about what this text might mean and here's four or five thoughts and you can pick one.

You just decide what you think that means. My job is to, after much prayer and leadership of the Holy Spirit and preparing and communicating is to say, this is what God has said.

This is His word. So, my goal is, as a pastor teacher, to bring us all into the same thinking and understanding of Scripture. I'm talking about the very core things.

[51 : 10] It doesn't mean that we won't differ on some peripheral things and say, well, you know, there are some things where there is some room for various opinions.

But when it comes to the body of doctrine, the faith, the goal is to bring unity in that. Unity of that faith.

I know we just kind of take the way it flows here and then the ultimate goal is spiritual maturity. To the perfect man. The gals are thinking, aren't any perfect men?

Certainly not the one who lives in my house. No, the mature man of God or woman of God.

This is generic. That's the ultimate goal. So, pastor, teaching the whole counsel of God's word, teaching what God said and what it means, what it should mean for us and how we apply it and all those things.

[52 : 12] The result being that we gradually come together in a unity of that faith. And oneness in the knowledge and understanding God's word with the ultimate goal being maturity.

Spiritual maturity. And what's the standard? The standard of maturity is Christ. That's the standard. The standard is not, you know, some ideal Christian you know about.

You know, or some pastor you had in years past. You know, if I could just reach, you know, that maturity. Our standard is Christ. So that means we never, never arrive, do we?

Not, not in this life. But the standard is the measure to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. All right, quickly. I'm sorry.

Number three, for doctrinal stability. So, for ministerial activity, this is God's design, spiritual maturity, and for doctrinal stability.

[53 : 17] Verses 14, 15, that we should no longer be children. Children in our faith. Tossed to and fro and carried with every wind of doctrine. You know, we just kind of, you know, whoever we listen to, we go that way and turn on the radio.

Well, that's a different way. And we just, we just kind of toss to and fro every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men and the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.

It's really descriptive, isn't it? But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ.

We're talking about a doctrinal stability. And then finally, for effectual unity. And this has been the goal all along.

In these verses, 1 through 16, unity. A very effectual unity. That's a unity that affects things, brings about things.

[54 : 24] Verse 16, from whom the whole body, that's us, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies.

What does that mean? Well, I kind of inserted that parenthetically. There's each individual member working in concert. You can just kind of see a body and its joints. You know, I've got my fingers and it's connected by a joint to my palm and that makes all that work right.

And then that joint to my forearm and elbow and shoulder and, you know, and all those joints put the whole body together. And so it works right.

It doesn't work like it used to, not with my body, but that's the idea. According to the effective working, effectual working, by which every part does it share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love, for the building up of itself.

So it all kind of works together. It's a unity that is effectual. It brings about things. And that is growth, growth of the body, the building up of the church in love.

[55 : 46] Thank you.