

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for October 14, 2018

Gifts from Above
Ephesians 4:7-10

I. The provision of spiritual gifts (4:7)

7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

- Our unity is not based on uniformity
 - Our diversity in Christ can and will contribute to our unity in Christ
- “But grace”
 - Spiritual gifts are divine enablements
 - Term for grace is *charis* often meaning unmerited favor
 - “In this context, it is a particular enablement given to each believer to empower them for ministry.”¹
 - 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.”
- “Was given”
 - Spiritual gifts come from God, not us
 - 1 Corinthians 12:7 “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”
- “To each one of us”
 - Spiritual gifts are for every single believer
 - 1 Corinthians 12:11 “All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apports to each one individually as he wills.”
- “According to the measure of Christ's gift”
 - Spiritual gifts come in different shapes and sizes as Christ sovereignly sees fit for each of us
 - Literal word for measure is *metron*, which makes measure a good translation
 - 1 Peter 4:10 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace”
 - Romans 12:6 “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...”
- Spiritual gifts are empowered by God, given by God to every believer according to God's measure

¹ Harold W. Hoehner, Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 522.

II. The prediction of spiritual gifts (4:8)

8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

- Spiritual gifts are not only meant to contribute to our sanctification (Romans 12:3-8)
- Spiritual gifts are not only meant to help us appreciate one another (1 Corinthians 12)
- Spiritual gifts are meant to display the victory of Jesus Christ
- Paul proves this by referencing Psalm 68
 - Summary of the Psalm: God victoriously delivers and saves His people from their enemies
 - Exodus (Psalm 68:6)
 - Wilderness wanderings (Psalm 68:7-10)
 - Conquest and military victories (Psalm 68:11-14)
 - Transfer of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (Psalm 68:18, 24-27)
 - Specific quote: Psalm 68:18 "You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men..."
 - Specific difference: Ephesians 4:8 "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."
 - Reasons for the difference:
 - All that God had already given Israel in the past
 - Protected orphans and widows (68:5)
 - Led out prisoners referring to the Exodus (68:6)
 - Provided rain (68:9)
 - Provided for the needy (68:10)
 - Accomplished the victory while women divided spoil and men lied down among the sheep folds (68:11-13)
 - All that God had given Israel in the time of David
 - Gave His presence in the sanctuary at Jerusalem (68:16-18, 24-27)
 - Delivered David and Israel from their enemies (68:19-23)
 - All that God would continue to give to His people
 - Power and protection in the future (68:28-30)
 - Voice, power and majesty (68:33-34)
 - Psalm 68:35 "Awesome is God from his sanctuary; the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!"
 - While God did receive gifts from men at various times in this psalm, the clear focus is on God who gives salvation and deliverance as well as power, and strength to His people

- Paul is not changing or misquoting a verse; instead, Paul is accurately summarizing the point of Psalm 68
- In referencing Psalm 68, Paul makes the point that the God who saves and delivers His people from their enemies is also the God who gives “power and strength to his people” (Psalm 68:35)
- What does this have to do with Ephesians 4 and spiritual gifts?
- Paul has spent 3 chapters in Ephesians detailing how God has saved and delivered us from the bondage of sin by the work of Christ
- Now, in Ephesians 4, Paul is exhorting us to live lives that reflect such a glorious salvation and deliverance (“walk worthy”)
- To be more specific, in Ephesians 4:8, Paul is saying that our spiritual gifts exist to point to the God who has already delivered us and saved us in Jesus Christ
- Our spiritual gifts are wonderful because they have been given to us by God
- However, our spiritual gifts are wonderful and essential because they declare the good news that we have been given salvation in the victory of Jesus Christ
 - David rejoiced in God’s conquering of Israel’s enemies in the Old Testament
 - We in the church rejoice in Jesus’ conquering of the enemies of Satan, sin, and death
- Our spiritual gifts have been given to us by Christ to show that He has defeated the enemies of Satan, sin, and death
- Thus, Paul’s discussion about spiritual gifts has everything to do with God receiving more glory in our demonstrations of the gifts that He gave to us in the church

III. The power behind spiritual gifts (4:9-10)

9 (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

- How did Christ earn this authority?
- On what grounds is Christ able to give spiritual gifts to the church?
- Because He conquered!
- Paul acknowledges Christ’s incarnation, service and death upon the cross in verse 9
 - Not just that Jesus went to earth and felt what it was like to be human
 - Not just that Jesus lived a life without sin
 - But, Jesus went to battle and defeated the ultimate foes at the cross
 - Satan, sin and death
 - Colossians 2:14b-15 “This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

