

**THE SOVEREIGN GOD AND**  
**THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL:**  
**A STUDY OF EPHESIANS**

**(LESSON FIFTY-TWO)**

**“EVANGELISTS AND TEACHING-PASTORS”**

**EPHESIANS 4:7-16**

**(NEW ENGLISH TRANSLATION)**

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

*8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he captured captives; he gave gifts to men."*

*9 Now what is the meaning of "he ascended," except that he also descended to the lower regions, namely, the earth?*

*10 He, the very one who descended, is also the one who ascended above all the heavens, in order to fill all things.*

*11 And he himself gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,*

*12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ,*

*13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God — a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature.*

*14 So we are no longer to be children, tossed back and forth by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching by the trickery of people who craftily carry out their deceitful schemes.*

*15 But practicing the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ, who is the head.*

*16 From him the whole body grows, fitted and held together through every supporting ligament. As each one does its part, the body builds itself up in love.*

In **Ephesians** chapter 4 and verse 11, Paul identifies some of the spiritual gifts that he mentioned in verse 7. He writes, "*And he himself gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.*" Here, we have a list of the ministry gifts which the Lord Jesus Christ has given to His Body.

Paul writes, "*And he gave some.*" It was Jesus Christ Himself who gave these ministry gifts to His Church. There is an intensive pronoun in the Greek text. The phrase literally reads, "He Himself gave." Paul is saying that it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and no one else, who gave the gifts of **apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors** and **teachers** to His Church. The word "gave," is the translation of a Greek word which means, "to bestow, cause, command, grant or offer." This clearly indicates that these ministry gifts were given to the Church based on a decision of our Lord's will and not on the basis of merit.

It is significant that each of these designations is involved in some way with the proclamation of the Word of God. It is through these ministry gifts that the Word of God is revealed, declared and taught. This, of course, speaks to the critical importance of the Word of God in respect of the growth and development of the members of the Body of Christ. It is our conviction that no church can rise higher than the level of its pulpit ministry. The Word of God is the provision and protection of the local church, and no amount of singing, testifying and fellowship can substitute for it, nor can concerts, barbeques and suppers, or any other form of entertainment.

In our previous **Lesson**, we considered the first 2 ministry gifts of apostles and prophets. In this **Lesson**, we will consider the ministry gifts of evangelists and teaching-pastors.

The word “*evangelists*,” is a translation of the Greek word **euaggelistés: (yoo-ang-ghel-is-tace’)**, which means, “a bearer of good tidings, a bringer of good news.” In the New Testament, the word refers to someone with a vocational calling from God to announce the good news of the Gospel. While it is true that every believer is called to share the Gospel with the lost, the evangelist does so as a result of a God-given calling which includes the preaching of the full message of salvation, which of course is the biblical Gospel. All believers can and should be soul-winners, but not all believers can be evangelists. The Apostles and prophets laid the foundation of the Church, and the evangelists build on it by winning the lost to Christ, who is the foundation according to **1 Corinthians 3:11**.

Evangelists are persons who possess a special gift of communicating the Gospel in relevant terms to those who are not yet believers. Evangelists were, and still are, primarily responsible for the numerical growth of the Body of Christ. The New Testament evangelist knew the gospel story thoroughly and was capable of explaining it in a way that could be easily understood. They were traveling or itinerant missionaries preaching the gospel to the unconverted and calling them to repentance. It is important for us to understand that the purpose of evangelism is to carefully but simply help unbelievers to become aware of their sinfulness and of the fact that they are “*dead in trespasses and sins,*” and “*without Christ... aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*” When unbelievers have become aware of how desperately lost they are, the evangelist points them to Jesus Christ as their only Saviour and Lord. Any human manipulation in this process, no matter how well intentioned it may be, always becomes a barrier to genuine belief.

The burden of God-called evangelists is not simply to go about denouncing sin. Their burden is primarily to point the way out of sin. Their task is not to condemn sinners, but to tell them about the love, mercy and grace of God, which is greater than all their sins.

In **Acts 21:8-9**, there is a reference to “*Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven.*” This Phillip was one of the seven men who were selected and appointed to serve in the Jerusalem church, ministering to the needs of the poor widows (**Acts 6:1-7**). When the “*great persecution,*” described in **Acts 8:1-3** arose, Philip left Jerusalem and went to Samaria. The Holy Spirit used him mightily to evangelize the city, as recorded in **Acts 8:5-12**. After the church in Samaria was started, Philip was again used by the Holy Spirit to bring the gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch, a member of the court of Candace, the Ethiopian queen. Philip found the eunuch sitting in his chariot, reading **Isaiah 53** and trying to make sense of the prophet’s words. Philip offered to explain the text to him, and the eunuch invited him to come up and sit with him. Phillip preached Jesus Christ to the eunuch and he was converted and baptized (**Acts 8:26-39**). Immediately following the baptism, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away to Azotus, where he continued his work of evangelism in the towns from there to Caesarea (**Acts 8:40**).

The fact that in **Acts 21**, Luke identifies Phillip as “the evangelist” and not as “the deacon,” suggests that his principal calling was that of an evangelist. Phillip’s evangelistic experiences clearly indicate that the gift of an evangelist can be exercised to a whole city as well as to single individual. They also indicate the itinerant nature of the evangelist’s ministry. The gift of an evangelist can be exercised anywhere and to anyone.

Brothers and sisters, the fact that a believer may not possess this gift does not excuse him or her from being burdened for lost souls or from witnessing to them and sharing his or her faith with them. **1 Peter 3:15** indicates that every child of God has a responsibility to do so. The Apostle Peter wrote *“But set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts **and always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess**”* (New English Translation).

Now we come to pastors and teachers. In **Ephesians 4:11**, Paul writes, *“And he himself gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as **pastors and teachers.**”* The fact that the word “some” is not inserted between the words, “pastors” and “teachers,” indicates that we may be dealing with here is one office with two ministries. **Kenneth Wuest**, the Greek New Testament scholar of the mid-twentieth century, made the following comments concerning this matter: “The words ‘pastors’ and ‘teachers’ are in a construction called Granville Sharp’s rule which indicates that they refer to one individual. The one who shepherds God’s flock is also a teacher of the Word, having both the gifts of shepherding and teaching the flock. God’s ideal pastor is one who engages in a didactic ministry, feeding the saints on expository preaching, giving them the rich food of the Word.” Perhaps we should regard “pastors” as a subset of “teachers.” In other words, all pastors are teachers, but not all teachers are pastors.

The word “*pastors*” is a translation of the Greek word **poimén: (poy-mane’)**, which literally refers to one who herds sheep and tends flocks as a shepherd. Figuratively, the word **poimén** refers to someone whom the Lord has raised up to care for the total well-being of His flock, that is, His people. Such a person loves the Lord’s people and cares for the weak, the sick, and those who are going or have gone astray.

The Greek word translated “*teachers*” is **didaskalos: (did-as’-kal-os)**, which means “teacher.” It refers to an instructor who is acknowledged for his or her mastery in their field of learning. The word, as it is used here, refers, to a Bible teacher who is competent in theology. Teachers are divinely empowered to explain what the Bible says, interpret what it means, and apply it to the hearts and consciences of believers. They expound the great truths and the sublime doctrines of the Bible, explaining its underlying principles and the broad scope of its history, theology, purpose and impact. The teacher develops consistent hermeneutics and understands the principles that unite the entire revelation of God. Teachers do not simply impart information or open up new ways of thought. They also urge their hearers to live by what they teach.

Our Lord’s final command to His disciples, was a command to teach. In **Matthew 28:19-20**, He said to them, *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching them** to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”* (New English Translation).

So vital is the ministry of teaching in the making of disciples, that in **2 Timothy 2:2**, Paul gave the following charge to Timothy, his son in the gospel: *“And what you heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be competent to teach others as well”* (New English Translation).

The word **didaskalos** has to do with the primary function of pastors which is to feed the flock of God. They feed the flock of God by teaching them the Word of God. Consider the words of our Lord to the one whom He entrusted with “*the keys of the kingdom,*” recorded in **John 21:15-17**:

**15** So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my lambs.**

**16** He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**

**17** He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**

It is important to note that the verb “feed” is in the present imperative tense in the Greek, in all 3 instances. Jesus is giving a charge to Peter to **continually** feed His lambs and His sheep!

In **Acts 20:28** the Apostle Paul gave the following charge to the elders of the Ephesian church: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, **to feed the church of God**, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

Mark’s use of the word **poimén** is instructive. In **Mark 6:34**, he writes, “And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep **not having a shepherd**: and he began to teach them many things.” It is very interesting to observe how Jesus responded to the distressed, downcast flock. Mark says that “He began **to teach them many things.**” What does this verse imply concerning the greatest need of the flock? The greatest need of this flock was for teaching! They needed a **didaskalos**. They needed a Bible teacher who was competent in theology.

In **1 Peter 5:1-4**, the Apostle Peter writes,

**1** So as your fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings and as one who shares in the glory that will be revealed, I urge the elders among you:

**2** Give a shepherd’s care to God’s flock among you, exercising oversight not merely as a duty but willingly under God’s direction, not for shameful profit but eagerly.

**3** And do not lord it over those entrusted to you, but be examples to the flock.

**4** Then when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that never fades away. **(New English Translation)**

The flock of God needs God’s Word if it is to be nourished and strengthened. Unfortunately, many of us pastors fail to nourish and strengthen the flock because we are either incompetent, lazy, or both. **(God help the sheep!)** Teaching the Word demands diligent preparation, and that is hard work. It takes time to pray and study. It takes discernment, sensitivity, insight and skill to rightly divide the Word of God. **(God help the shepherds!)** The English theologian, **John Stott**, has written that “Nothing is more necessary for the building up of God’s church in every age than an ample supply of God-gifted teachers. It is teaching which builds up the church. It is teachers who are needed most.”

In **2 Corinthians 2:14-16**, Paul wrote the following:

**14** *But thank God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume.*

**15** *Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those who are being saved and by those who are perishing.*

**16** *To those who are perishing, we are a dreadful smell of death and doom. But to those who are being saved, we are a life-giving perfume. And who is adequate for such a task as this? (New English Translation)*

**The Passion Translation** renders verse **16** of the passage as follows: *"The unbelievers smell a deadly stench that leads to death, but believers smell the life-giving aroma that leads to abundant life. **And who of us can rise to this challenge?**"*

When Paul thought about the greatness of God's plan, he wondered if anyone is sufficient to play a role in it. He raises the question, *"who is adequate for such a task as this?"* *"Who is equal to such a task?"* *"who can rise to this challenge"* of being a minister of the gospel? The truth is that no human being is sufficient, in and of themselves. Paul was very aware that his competency as a gospel preacher did not reside in himself, but in God. In **2 Corinthians 3:5-6**, he writes, *"Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as if it were coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who made us adequate to be servants of a new covenant not based on the letter but on the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life"* (**New English Translation**).

It is God who commissions His servants; it is God who empowers them; it is God who triumphs over their weaknesses; it is God who upholds them; and it is to God that they are accountable. The American theologian **Howard Hendricks**, said, "If you can't stand the smell of sheep, you shouldn't be a shepherd." **Dr. David Martyn Lloyd-Jones** said, "A man should only enter the Christian ministry if he cannot stay out of it."

In **Hebrews 13:20-21**, the author writes, *"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."* The Lord Jesus is the Great Shepherd who vigilantly watches over, not only His sheep but also His under-shepherds!

Sheep need to graze continually in the pasture of the Word, the pure, unadulterated Word of God. Anything else, no matter how persuasive; no matter how enthralling; no matter how eloquent; no matter how exciting; no matter how loud; no matter how "anointed," is *"chaff which the wind driveth away."* I believe that God is saying to those of us who are pastors "Feed my lambs! Feed my Sheep! Feed My sheep!" One day we will have to give an account to Him!

We may say that the evangelist is concerned with the beginning of the Christian life, while the teaching-pastor is concerned with the growth and development of that life. Someone has said that evangelists are basically obstetricians, while teaching-pastors are pediatricians. The evangelist is the quarryman who digs the rock out, cuts it loose from its basic structure, and separates the rock into smaller pieces.

The teaching-pastor is the stone mason, the one who shapes the rock, puts it in proper form and fits it into the building in its proper place, according to the great blueprint of the Architect. This is the work of these two gifts together in the body of Christ. Sometimes the pastor has to “*do the work of an evangelist*” (**2 Timothy 4:5**), but this is not his principal calling.

We will conclude this **Lesson** with a final word. It is important for us to distinguish between divine gifts and natural talents. No unsaved person, no matter how talented he or she may be, can be an evangelist, pastor, or teacher in the New Testament sense. In fact, neither can any believer, unless he or she has received that particular gift and calling from God. The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural. They enable a person to do what would be humanly impossible for him or her.