

EPHESIANS
EQUIPPING & EDIFYING

Tuesday, September 22
Reading: Ephesians 4:11-16

Ephesians 4:16 *From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

Paul lists four gifts that relate to the leadership of the church. Apostles and prophets were crucial for the founding of the church (see Ephesians 2:20). In these years while the church was being organized and the New Testament was being written, these men were specially gifted to lead and establish the church. Today, we are going to focus on the gifts of evangelist and pastor-teacher.

Evangelists and Pastor-Teachers are gifted to spread the gospel, preach God's Word, and care for God's flock. These gifts are most important for the church today. Their goal is to EQUIP and EDIFY (build up) the body of Christ. It is their task to prepare God's people for the work God has called them to do.

Paul lists four results of God's people having godly leaders who equip them for service:

- (1) Believers have a **STRONG RELATIONSHIP** with God and each other as they grow in unity and in the image of Christ (4:13).
- (2) Believers have a **SECURE FOOTING** in God's Word that allows them to see false teaching and not be sweep away by clever deceptions (4:14).
- (3) Believers become **SOUND IN SPEECH** as words, thoughts, and actions are grounded in God's truth (4:15).
- (4) Believers have a **SHARED GROWTH** as each member uses the gifts God has given them and work together in love (4:16).

LESSON ONE: "To Equip His People for Works of Service." Many times, we hear church members say, "Isn't ministry the pastor's job?" Paul refutes that attitude in these verses. The job of the pastor and church leaders is to equip God's people to minister. The ministry of the church is to be done by the people of the church. This does not mean the pastor is not involved in this work, but it does mean that not everything is on his shoulders. If he is teaching God's Word and equipping the congregation correctly, then **THEY** will do a majority of the ministry. Are you sitting back and expecting the pastor and leaders of your church to do everything? How are you involved in the ministry of your church? What more could you do to serve God?

LESSON TWO: "Speaking the Truth in Love." In Greek, this is literally 'truthing in love.' Believers' lives are to be measured by truth **AND** love. You cannot have one without the other. Pastor John Stott put it this way: "Truth becomes hard if it is not softened by love; love becomes soft if it is not strengthened by truth."¹ Love does not mean ignoring when someone is wandering from the truth. Nor does speaking to truth mean that we ram these faults down their throat. Love and truth must be tied together. Which do you have more difficulty showing: truth or love? What does it take to speak a hard truth to someone in a loving way?

¹ John Stott, The Message of Ephesians, p. 172