



What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?

Key Takeaways:

1. Jesus is a generous king. Like David distributing bread, meat, and raisin cake to every Israelite after the ark returned to Jerusalem, Jesus does not hoard his victory. He ascended in triumph and then gave gifts to his people. His power and his generosity go hand in hand.
2. Jesus gives people as gifts to the church. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are not given so that everyone else can sit and watch. They exist to equip every member of the church to do the work of ministry in their homes, workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods.
3. Maturity means speaking and living truth in love. We can fall into one of two errors: all truth with no love, or all love with no truth. Neither is maturity. Maturity is learning that love does not mean avoiding hard things and that truth does not mean being harsh.
4. Every part of the body matters. Growth toward maturity is not about one person doing everything. It is the whole body working together, every connection strengthening the whole, so the church builds itself up in love.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the most meaningful gift you have ever received, and what made it significant? What did it reveal about the person who gave it to you?
2. Ephesians 4:7-8 draws from Psalm 68, where a conquering king receives gifts from his people. Paul flips the image and says Jesus gave gifts to his people. What does that reversal tell you about the character of Jesus as king?
3. Describing the roles of evangelists and pastors and teachers using the images of a delivery room and a pediatrician's office, how does that picture help you understand the difference between those two roles? Where do you see yourself fitting in that picture right now?
4. Read Ephesians 4:12 together. The gifts Jesus gives are meant to equip the saints for the work of ministry, not to replace them in it. How does this challenge the way you typically think about the role of church leadership? How does it challenge the way you think about your own role?
5. The word "equip" in verse 12 carries the meaning of mending a torn fishing net or setting a broken bone. In what ways have you experienced the church functioning that way in your own life? In what ways do you feel like your nets still need mending?

6. Two ways Christians fail to reach maturity include all truth with no love and all love with no truth. Which error do you think you are more naturally prone to? What does that tendency cost you in your relationships?
7. Ephesians 4:16 describes the church as a body fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament. The sermon pointed out that ligaments are small, mostly unnoticed, and quietly doing their job. Who in your life or in this church functions like a ligament for you? Have you ever told them?
8. We confuse the distinction between a peacekeeper and a peacemaker. A peacekeeper manages tension to avoid discomfort. A peacemaker is willing to speak truth even when it is hard. Can you think of a situation in your own life where you have been a peacekeeper when you were called to be a peacemaker? What held you back?
9. Jesus gives good gifts so his people can become like him. In practical terms, what does becoming more like Jesus look like in your specific season of life right now?

Practical Applications:

1. Read Ephesians 3:14-21, which is Paul's prayer for the church at Ephesus. Pray it slowly, word by word, for yourself and for the people in your small group.
2. Identify one person in your life who is outside the family of God. Pray for them by name every day this week and look for one natural opportunity to be present with them.
3. Reflect honestly on whether you are consuming ministry or participating in it. What has Jesus given you, in terms of gifts, experiences, relationships, or resources, that you could be using to serve someone else in this church or community? If you are not currently serving somewhere, take one concrete step this week toward finding a place to contribute.
4. Take time during your meeting to name the "ligaments" in your group, the people who quietly hold things together. Speak those names out loud and express specific gratitude.
5. As a group, discuss what it would look like to move from being a group that talks about ministry to one that does ministry together. Consider adopting one shared act of service in the coming month.
6. Commit to practicing truth in love with one another this week. Is there a hard and true thing you have been avoiding saying to someone you love because it feels unkind? Is there a relationship where you have been harsh with truth and withheld love? What would it look like to bring those two things together? Agree as a group that you will not simply tell each other what feels comfortable, but that you will do so with genuine care and kindness.