

God's Second Gift to the Church: Leaders

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[0 : 00] So we talked about these last week. We talked about spiritual gifts. And they are indeed that. They are gifts dispensed by God. We didn't pay for them.

We didn't even ask for them. But at that moment of salvation, God supersedes in us. And the Holy Spirit gives us a spiritual gift in which we are to serve one another in the church.

This Holy Spirit, these gifts help both unite us and mature us. And the reality is it doesn't stop there. And sometimes we need to think about this. It's not like Jesus Christ came on this earth. He lived his 30 days, or his 30 years, sorry. Died on the cross and said, all right, guys, I've saved you. Satan has no longer dominion. Dominion, out of here. I'm now going to leave with the angels. They're going to take me back up to my rightful place in heaven. And you guys are going to be able to figure it all out from here, right?

[1 : 01] You know, you can almost see him like getting on a helicopter or these angels taken away. He goes, oh, yeah, Jews and Gentiles are saved too. Don't worry, you'll figure it out. He doesn't do that, right?

Just think if he did that, the type of chaos that would happen if he said, hey, figure it out for yourself what you're supposed to do. I think we know tragedy after tragedy of man trying to figure these things out without God's wisdom.

So what did God do? God gave the church leaders. God gave the church leaders. When I ask you the question, what is a Christian minister supposed to do?

What is your impression of a pastor? It's kind of interesting. I've actually been having a lot of fun when people meet me here in Squamish. As you know, Squamish is a highly unchurched area, right?

I get asked, hey, man, what do you do the rest of the week when you're not working on Sunday? And that is a genuine, honest question. My doctor, just what do you do?

[2 : 12] What do you even do on a Sunday? He grew up kind of a Catholic background. So, you know, do you still get together and ring the bell? Or like, do you guys pull a bell?

What do you do? You know, just completely oblivious to any type of work of ministry. But what's interesting is sometimes within the church, not everybody has a proper view of what Christian ministry is.

Now, your answer will depend on certain things. It'll depend on your personal background. It'll depend on your personal experiences, whether they are good or bad.

Your personal thoughts, whether your thoughts are informed or not. But for some, a pastor or a leader can be seen as an administrator. Some of you might see me as a president or the CEO of Squamish Baptist Church.

And all you guys are my underlings and do what I want, right? You guys don't even buy into that one, okay? You might see me as the chief evangelist.

[3 : 21] And my role is to evangelize. My chief job is to serve you. Our chief job is to bring comfort to those in need.

And some view the minister as I'm actually the employee of you. You guys have got together. You've hired me. And now I work for you. Those are some of the views that people have of what a pastor or a minister should be.

Now, let me ask you another question. What is supposed to be your role in Christian ministry?

I'm sure you've got a lot of ideas of what my role in Christian ministry is. But have you thought much about what your role in Christian ministry is? Perhaps you think it's, I'm a financial supporter.

I give so that the church can go. For some of you, well, we're a moral supporter. We're rah, rah, rah. Let's go. Let's go. For others, you are the church advertiser.

[4 : 28] You're the person, whoever you meet, you're inviting as many people to come to the church. And you want to invite people to hear the gospel. Perhaps some of you are in the prayer warrior mode.

I pray, I pray, I pray. Now, what's interesting is God didn't leave us to come together to vote and figure it out.

God's actually laid out some very specific instructions that answer those questions for us. And that's what I want to look at today. So please turn with me to Ephesians chapter 4.

Ephesians chapter 4. It's a small passage that we're going to look at. We're going to be beginning in verse 11. Verse 11 of Ephesians chapter 4.

Paul is writing this church. And he says, Like when we birth a baby, we do not leave that baby alone to nourish itself and to find its way in the world.

[6 : 11] Nor does God, when someone is new to his kingdom, when he creates this new church, leave the church to find its own nourishment and sustenance.

From the beginning of God's people throughout history, God has provided gifted men and women to provide leadership for his people.

Sometimes it worked well. Sometimes it didn't work very well. But in this New Testament, as he's created this church, he's got a really good system going on here.

One, it begins with these people called the apostles. The apostles. And we're going to learn more about them. But I was just going through church history today.

And I was just, since the time of Christ, and I was actually noting important events. And in part of my studies, I'm going through church history and biblical interpretation.

[7 : 12] And you learn who were the heroes of the faith. And there's always like these times in history where it comes together. So even in the new church, when the apostles went out, did you guys know that James, the brother of John, became kind of like the head of the church of Jerusalem?

So James, who was Jesus' half-brother, he was not an apostle, but he oversaw the growing of the church. God put in him this gift.

About 300 years after the time of Christ, a lot of heresy broke out. God raised gifted men to come together to declare what was kind of truth. They canonized scripture.

And they were able to define what the Trinity was. And the reason they defined these certain things was that untruths would not come into the church.

Early church fathers would have been Augustine and Aquinas, who were defining God's truth. We later meet this man, Martin Luther, who forms the Protestant church.

[8 : 16] And God uses John Calvin to forward biblical teaching. Then we later meet a man named William Tyndale and John Knox in England, who are fighting for us to have a Bible.

Just think. That's only like 500, 600 years ago, they were fighting for their lives that we could have a Bible in our own language. And even recently in this century, there's men called B.B. Warfield and John Masha Gresham, who fought the fact that this Bible is indeed the word of God.

What's interesting is each of these men were captivated by God's word. They worked to protect it, to preach it, and to make sure that we received it as God intended.

Did you guys know that the foremost biblical linguists, the best commentaries, the best biblical translators, both in the Greek and the Hebrew, and the greatest scholars in these fields are all evangelicals?

They're all... And it's not like we're the only ones that study the Bible. There's a lot of different people. But the greatest linguists and textual understanding of this word are men and women that God has given to the church because they have this great love for his word.

[9 : 45] Christian scholars, Christian men, Christian women have been the forefront in the defense of this Bible. Today we're going to look at why. So let's take a look at verse 11. It reads, God gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

And I wanted us to take a look at each individual gift God has given to the church in this process.

So the first one is apostle. Most of us think, when we think apostle, we're thinking of the 12 apostles who walked with Jesus Christ.

And you would be correct. The literal understanding of apostle is the word sent one or an ambassador, someone who has a message.

And you'll actually find other people called apostles in scripture because they had a message, but they were not recognized as one of the 12 apostles or the apostles that God had anointed. Now we all know God started off with 12 and Judas betrayed them, took off. They're down to 11. And it's noted in Acts chapter 1 at the very end, it says the apostles knew those opposed to the 12, so they threw lots of some of the men were there and they named Matthias as one of the apostles. [11:02] I don't believe that was condoned by God. That was just a guy's trying to solve a problem. The Bible just tells us of the story. But we later learn that God calls this guy Paul to become an apostle.

And the church has generally regarded apostles to have been personally appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ himself to be that apostle.

All right? So he's going to be Jesus Christ official sent one. It has to come to him. The apostle was never given the authority to send out another apostle.

You with me on this one? This is important to understand. For you who've been here the last couple of weeks will know when we talked about spiritual gifts and people believe that there's apostles today, this is the reason why I believe they are incorrect.

Okay? There's no lineage of apostles that you can follow back down throughout history. It was those 12 and those 12 only. But notice at the beginning, if you flashback, I'll just read the verse, but in Ephesians, actually that's going to be under prophets.

[12:18] But all of these apostles saw Jesus in his resurrected glory. We all know that Paul did not walk with Jesus, but what's interesting is that some theologians will argue that when Paul went into the wilderness, Jesus actually appeared to him and taught him for those three years.

I thought that was quite an interesting, I've just heard that lately. Totally makes sense to me.

Because Paul, as we know, has a lot of knowledge and he has a lot of great experience, but he doesn't write specifically about, but he alludes to.

But these were the characteristics of apostles. They went out and they taught people what Jesus had taught them.

They had a relationship with Jesus, they had his teachings, and they were his official representatives. And they kept apostling till people killed them.

Just think of what the world was like, the darkness before Christ came. I was just thinking about that. You know, why did these men all have to die?

[13:31] You really just have this small country Israel in the middle of it all where God has been working through centuries. Everywhere else is complete and utter darkness.

It's evil. There is no God being a part of it. So as these apostles head out, like, just think of all the demonic activity that happened when Jesus Christ was there.

It would have been Satan combining the full forces of evil against Jesus. You know that's what was happening there, right? Every evil thing brought down on Israel at that time to try to stop Jesus.

It didn't work, praise God, right? So now, these men head out with this message. And they're preaching it. And they're tortured.

They're beaten. And they eventually all die except for John. That's what happens when light goes into darkness sometimes.

[14:48] The darkness wants to continue existing. So as they went, they'd create these pockets of people, kind of build them up, and then would keep going.

So that's the first foundation of the church is these men, these apostles. The next one Paul brings up is prophets here.

Now, note the order. It says apostles and then prophets. Some of you guys might think, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, BK. There was prophets in the Old Testament.

So maybe you got your order mixed up. But we're not talking about Old Testament prophets here.

We're actually talking about New Testament prophets. Now, there's not a lot of ink that is given over to them.

We read about them. And we don't know all their names. But these were men that functioned in the church. And women. We learned about Agabus. And he had four daughters that were actually prophetesses.

[15:48] And they had the ability to give God's word. Why is this important? Because they don't have this yet. There's no Bible before them.

So as the apostles taught their teachings and traditions and then moved on, sometimes situations would arise in the church.

Hey, what do we do about this? And God would raise this person who could speak God's word into that situation. So this is all the foundation of the church that's getting built upon.

So these churches were established because they didn't have a Bible. It's not like Paul said, all right, I'm done. Here's my ESV Bible for you guys. You know, a couple hundred churches later.

Hey, I ran out of ESV. You're using King James. Sorry, guys. You're gonna have to learn Elizabethian English. But you'll be okay. You know, he didn't do that, right? So he anointed these people.

[16:50] And these people came out as prophets. They knew. They understood. They knew. They knew. And the right word wasn't what they weren't like predicting the future as we think prophets should be.

What it means is they knew they had God. They knew God's mind on certain things. So they were able to preach what God's mind was.

And this teaching would be keeping in line with that of the apostles. And as I brought up a couple of weeks ago, I believe the apostles and then these prophets are just a temporary office for the church.

When they were done and this Bible came out, the letters of Paul and the gospels of John, and all these books started to go around the letters, we didn't need prophets anymore because we knew what God's mind was because it was found in his word.

So I know some of you might come from backgrounds that says, hey, there are prophets today. There's prophets that show up.

[17:58] I actually have a friend that I got to know. Their whole family was saved through a work of a prophet. But it was kind of the odd kind of work. They used to come to a church where a well-known prophet in the neighborhood would come and he would show up at their church service and tell them, you know, God's got a blessing.

There's someone in here that's going to, you know, it was those kind of prophets that really, you didn't know what the real truth is. Biblical prophets speak real truth. In fact, you know what the judgment was against a prophet who said a wrong prophecy?

It was death. Old Testament, if you had a prophet that prophesied falsely, you'd kill him because he wasn't from God or what he was saying wasn't from God.

So we have this idea today that sometimes prophets can exist. Well, it's interesting at my friend's church, the pastor's preaching, prophet gets up, comes over and says, hey, listen, I got a prophecy. I want to prophesy on this prophet, on this preacher. And he says all these really great and wonderful things to this man. It says he's going to have a worldwide ministry. It's going to go far and wide.

[19:07] The fruit of this, we will know for eternity. Within 45 minutes, that pastor ended up having an aneurysm and died right there while preaching. So my friend said to me, do you not think that was a spiritual check for us?

Like he had said all these things and he'd go about talking about all these truths. And here was significant evidence in front of us that what he said was a lie.

So we had these apostles and prophets that were meant to stabilize the church. They had three responsibilities. One, lay the foundation of the church.

The second responsibility was to receive and declare the revelation of God's word. They were to do the teaching. This was the first teaching in the new church age.

And the third thing that they did to confirm the word of God, they did it through signs and wonders and miracles. We read this in 2 Corinthians 12, 12.

[20:15] Paul writes, So the evidence of what you know I'm saying is true and right is I can do these miracles.

Acts 8, 6, 7 says, And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. Notice it's not like the miracles were bringing people to faith, but it was authenticating them as true speakers of God.

And he, the writer of Hebrews 2, 3, 4 says, It was declared at first by the Lord and was attested to us by those who heard. While God also bore witness, God does this, he bears witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Hey, I'm going to prove myself. So this is the work that happened within that first 60 to 70 years of the church. And then I believe it changes.

Now let's go to the third word. We have the third person, third office, is the evangelist. We still have those today. These are people who are charged with expanding the kingdom.

[21 : 39] Today we use the word missionary or church planter. These are people who are specially gifted to be able to go into another area, set it up, get gospel, get organized, get the people into a really functioning church.

And what they usually do is they go and leave. I've got a friend like that. I don't know how many churches he's planted, but he likes to go into poor, impoverished areas in America. And he just works really hard right now.

He's in a really tough town in Central California. But he gets in there and he builds these people together, training them, brings up some men that can continue the leading.

Then he hands it over to them. And then he goes on to where God's calling him next. And it's a really great story that he does. And he's had some success and some areas have been tougher than others.

But these are people with a special calling. We see that today. Why? Because the gospel isn't over the whole world yet, is it? We're still charged. And these are some of the things we even think about when we send out missionaries.

[22 : 49] When we're given our money, are the missionaries actually working to see God's word going beyond our culture? So the last one that we see is the shepherd's teachers.

Some people put this as one word. Some people include it as two. I'm going to put it as one right now. But we read that the word shepherd means one who cares for the flock.

This word can be interchanged with pastor or elder. Here in our Baptist community, we call Dave and I pastors because you guys support us financially in that process.

And then we have lay elders. Okay? Those are people that their primary purpose is their financial, they're earning finances outside of the church, but they still have the same call as, say, Dave and I do, but we're all gifted differently.

So it is one who provides spiritual guidance. And what's interesting when he uses the word shepherd, teacher, is shepherds are to teach, but some teachers weren't shepherds.

[24 : 05] And what I mean by that is some people are gifted at teaching and some people aren't gifted at shepherding. But as elders, all elders are to teach.

So there is a desire and a knowledge to teach God's word. So in this foundation of the church, as prophets in the New Testament gave revelation, teachers and shepherds would expound this revelation.

And as soon as they had a Bible, they would study this Bible and they would expound it like we do today. Our role is to teach God's revealed word. And we believe, just as it says here, until we all reach full maturity, and full maturity only comes at the coming of Christ, it is a permanent office of the church.

So we got those areas down. We got apostles, prophets. What's the next one? Evangelists, right? Teachers and shepherds. So what's the, so why does God give all these gifts to the church?

Let's take a look at verse 12. It says to equip the saints for the works of the ministry, for building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith.

[25 : 35] It's actually interesting that in earlier translations, they used to interpret this, that the pastor is to perfect you, the saints. The pastor is to equip you, the saints.

And it is the pastor who does all the work of the ministry. And it's the pastor should be responsible for the edifying for the church.

But what the passage actually says that these apostles, these prophets, these evangelists, these shepherds and teachers are to equip you to do the ministry.

Their purpose has never been the ones to do the work of the ministry. But our role is to equip, train, and teach you to do the work of the ministry.

Why? So the church can be built up with all your gifts. Amen? That's the whole reason we exist as pastors and elders.

[26 : 35] It's just to equip you, to train you, to help strengthen your gifts, to build up this body. That is what you were charged for. That is what a functioning body looks like.

The reality is a church can have a fantastic teacher. It can be an amazing teacher. But if the body itself doesn't use its gifts, it is dysfunctional.

I've been a part of churches. I know churches through my friends where some of them, some churches treat the pastor as the employee. He just does the Sunday morning thing.

And then that's it. Then they do the rest. They don't depend on him for anything else. And those churches are largely dysfunctional. Then you get the other side of the spectrum where the pastor kind of takes control of everything and doesn't let anybody else do or exercise any gifts because you're not good enough.

So then you also have a very dysfunctional church. Now I want you to pay special attention here.

[27 : 45] Notice it says, the apostles brought God's instructions. The prophets gave God's revelation. The evangelists proclaim God's truth.

And the shepherd teacher trains people in God's truth. The central part to every aspect of these offices is the word of God.

You know that? Everything is built around God's word. And it's not that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherd, teacher are the source of the building up of God's word.

It is the word of God which is the source of building up the church. Note Paul is not calling for the educators, the organizers, the administrators within you, the counselors, the psychologists, the fundraisers to equip the church.

He's calling for those people of the body of Christ to use their gifts to build up the church by the word of God.

[28 : 58] somehow there's this view that is developed within evangelicalism that since the preacher or the pastor is the leader that he is the one who's responsible for the success or failure of the congregation.

Sometimes that's true but that is not how God sees it. Pastors are judged if there's progress or no progress.

People believe in the pyramid system. He sits at the top, we're at the bottom or they have a view as the pastor is the bus driver, we're just on the back of the bus and wherever the bus goes it's all on him.

And sadly, I've seen churches who've released really good God-fearing, gifted men because they wanted to get bigger or they wanted to change some philosophy around. To this day, I've never seen that to be a good decision.

But what's interesting is that throughout all of the pages of Scripture, God does not call out unhealthy churches because of their pastors.

[30 : 09] You know that? When you go in Revelation and you look at those messages that they have, it is the people that God is calling an account to.

the whole book of Galatians is actually written to a church of why did you put up with so much garbage that was being taught in your church?

In fact, there was this one great commenter, he had this question, he says, if you sit down and listen to trash, you will be held accountable. He's telling it bluntly, right?

But what God is doing through this, when we look at church discipline in Matthew 18, it's not for the pastor to do, but it's actually an action for the congregation to do.

Acts 6, the church was discriminating against Gentile widows. Basically, they took a fund, they were giving out the money to the widows, and they found out the Jewish widows were getting more money than the Gentile widows.

[31 : 17] It was actually the people of the church were supposed to fix that. Name good godly men within you to take care of that function. Why?

Because I'm going to hold you guys responsible for that. 1 Corinthians 5, there was a wickedness of sin that was going on in the church. Paul did not call out the pastors and elders, he called out the church.

Why are you allowing this man to be in this church when you know he's in an immoral sexual relationship with his stepmother? It's a gross sin, but the reality is if you guys as a church accept that, it's you who I'm holding accountable.

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 4, 3, for the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but have itching ears that will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.

So what are our takeaways from this type of teaching? we are all equally responsible for the health of this church.

[32 : 43] It doesn't rest on my shoulders or Dave's shoulders or Chris's shoulders or Steve's shoulders. It's all of your shoulders as we come together to worship God.

We need to be together in our desire to see God glorified. Amen? We are all responsible for our collective witness.

Is Jesus Christ truly being represented in our lives in elsewhere? The reality is God knows us and that's a good thing.

He knows our needs. That's why he's given us spiritual gifts to use those gifts. here in this church right here right now.

The other aspect is have you guys ever thought of leadership as a gift to the church? church. I'll be honest with you.

[33 : 49] You guys are a pretty great church. You guys are an honoring church. I've been here for just over a year. You're a loving church. You display honor towards Dave and myself and the elders and those are really good things.

And there's a thankfulness for us and I praise God for that. I've been in situations where people wanted to dictate like where I could even take my holidays.

Like they looked on me as an employee. I got out fast. That is a very unhealthy environment that you want to get into.

But the question I have for you is what about your gifts? Are you developing a deeper love of God for God by using your church and this body to glorify him and worship him?

Next week I'm going to open up a little bit about 1 Timothy and what it says about leaders and the expectation that you are to have for your leaders. I believe we need to know and understand what biblical leadership looks like in the church from a character point of view.

[35 : 09] But today as we come to this table, we use this table as a time of obeying God to be thankful what he's done for us on the cross.

But I also want us to be thankful for the leadership that God has given, not just in our church, church, but hey, you guys, dads, you're leaders in your home.

That is a spiritual act. For some of you women who might not have husbands to fulfill that role, God has given you that role.

And that is a heavy burden I know for some of you. But God does provide through this church people to care for you, love you, and come into your life to help go through those turns and curves and hills and valleys of life.

We're to be thankful for God's provision and all these things. So before I come to the table, let me just close off with a prayer. prayer. So you