

Theme: In the New Covenant, God calls all Christians to be actively participating in works of ministry, serving others in the church and the world.

I. Intro - Our Spectator World

- A. We are a nation of spectators
- B. We used to gather around the piano and sing together or go caroling - now we pay to watch others sing or play something in iTunes
- C. We used to play sports together - we mainly pay to watch others play
- D. We then approach God and the church the same way - as spectators rather than participants
- E. Can a spectator really glorify God and enjoy Him?
- F. Does God really expect us to be involved in His mission in the world?

II. The Basis: The New Covenant

- A. Paul is speaking of Christ's work in His ascension
This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." ⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, Ephesians 4:8-11
 - 1. Paul quotes an OT text on the ascension of Christ
 - 2. A picture of a victorious King with captives & gifts
 - 3. He first descended - the Incarnation to initiate NC
 - 4. He then ascended and gave New Covenant gifts

B. The New Covenant - Spirit, gifts, ministry

No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy." Acts 2:16-18

- 1. The New Covenant gives Spirit to ALL believers
- 2. The Spirit gives gifts to us - prophesy, dreams
- 3. Like prophets in OT - God now ministers through us
- 4. A common theme in NT
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:16-17
 - a. All are called to speak God's Word to one another
 - b. We are all to actively participate in worship
 - c. We also minister outside of church - whatever we do
 - d. Leads into discussion of family, work - all we do

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10-11

- a. Every one of us has gifts - **Each one/anyone**
- b. All different gifts/areas - Whatever, speaks, serves
- c. Result - **God receives glory** - last week's teaching!

C. Contrasting Old and New Covenants

Old Covenant	New Covenant
Spirit rests on select few	Spirit fully poured out on and dwells in all believers
Prophets, priests, kings minister	All God's people minister
People received ministry	People receive ministry and then actively minister to others

- 1. To only passively receive ministry is to deny the New Covenant gift of the Spirit, for He was given so that all of us might be used by God to serve & minister.
- 2. This was what OT saints longed for!
But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!"
Numbers 11:29
- 3. Do not give up your new covenant inheritance!
- 4. Don't make Moses angry! He longed for this!

III. The Method: Equipped To Minister

A. Jesus has given leaders - to equip

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up Ephesians 4:11-12

- 1. Jesus gave leaders - including pastor-teachers
- 2. Their job is not to do all of the ministry, while everyone else watches
- 3. Their job is to equip everyone to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, Ephesians 4:12 ESV
 - a. This is a better translation
 - b. **κατάρτισμόν** - to restore, educate, fully train
A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is **fully trained** will be like his teacher. Luke 6:40
 - c. Equipped to do real ministry (diakonia)

B. Leaders are given to equip everyone to do real ministry

- 1. Does not mean there are no leaders, or that everyone is an authorized leader of the church, replace elders & deacons, etc.
- 2. It means they are equipped/trained so they can actually minister to one another and their neighbors
- 3. This includes ministry in the church & to the world

C. The church does not exist to entertain us but to train us

1. We do not gather so that we (or our children) can be entertained
2. We gather so that we can be disciplined - fed, strengthened and trained so that we walk with God and serve others.
3. A spectator/consumer vs. a participant/disciple

Spectator/consumer	Participant/disciple
What did I get of this?	How did God work in me to glorify Him and serve others?
Here am I - serve and entertain me!	Here am I - God use me to serve you and others!
I am here until something better comes along	I am here for the long haul - good times and bad
Was I satisfied with this product?	Was God satisfied with my participation in glorifying and enjoying Him?

4. Christ does not call us to be spectators watching others walk with God and minister, but rather that we actively walk with God and minister to others.

IV. The Result: A Mature Church Glorifying God

A. Church matures as everyone is equipped & participates
 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

1. As leaders equip, each individual matures & grows
2. As each of us mature, the church matures
3. When we follow the biblical pattern and leaders equip all believers to do ministry the church matures and flourishes.

B. A mature church brings glory and praise to God
 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, **so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever.** Amen. 1 Peter 4:11

1. As all believers serve God in all of life, it brings praise and glory to God
2. God is most glorified in a church when everyone is actively participating, growing in their faith, and ministering to others in and out of the church.

VI. All In To Apply the Word

A. Am I a participant or spectator in walking with God?

1. Do I have an active walk with God?
 - a. We have the privilege of walking with God - in Word, prayer, worship!
 - b. This is not about legalism - it is like relating to my spouse, child, or friend
 - c. Don't be like OT Israelites - "Moses you go to the mountain for us!"
 - d. Don't be a spectator to others walking with God
2. Am I a participant or spectator in God's work in the world?
 - a. God is on mission!
 - b. Do we come ready to participate - sing, pray, serve, fellowship, minister to others?
 - c. Do we see that God is at work in family, neighborhood, friends, co-workers - and wants to work through each of us?
 - d. Don't be a spectator to God's work - join in!

B. Do I see true joy comes from participation?

1. Remember - we were created to glorify & enjoy God
2. Deep lasting joy comes as we walk with God, and as He works through us

C. Prayer - for us to be passionate participators

Participants Not Spectators

Ephesians 4:8-12
September 20, 2015
Prayer

Hebrews 13:20-21

Teaching keywords: calling and work; good works; leadership; new covenant; service; spiritual gifts; Christian life

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen. Hebrews 13:20–21

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Ephesians 4:8–12