

Theme: Christ has given leaders to equip believers to use the gifts given to them by God so that the church may become healthy as each believer participates in ministry.

I. Intro - Always Reforming

- A. Went to a conference with big focus on the Reformation
- B. It recovered many big truths - justification; Scripture
- C. A big one - the priesthood of all believers
- D. But the church must always be reforming; we lose truths
- E. Today: building a healthy church by every member ministry as equipped by leaders

II. The Basis: Christ's Victorious Ascension

- A. The basis of all we have is Christ & his victory!
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.) Ephesians 4:8–10
 1. Paul is here speaking of the **ascension** of Christ
 2. It is pictured as a victory parade - **captives; gifts**
 3. Christ our King has conquered the enemy, made a public spectacle of him, and given lavish victory gifts to all of us!
- B. A healthy church is centered on Christ and the Gospel
 1. If it were not for Christ and His Gospel there would be no church

2. The church is not a social or even religious organization - it is the community of those in living union with the Risen, exalted Christ
3. Any church that loses its focus on Christ and the Gospel is a church that is sick and on its way to death!

III. The Path: A Gifted, Equipped Church

- A. Jesus gave gifts to every single believer
But to **each one** of us **grace** has been given as Christ apportioned it.⁸ **This is why it says:** "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and **gave gifts** to men." Ephesians 4:7–8
 1. Christ has given grace - gifts - to each of us
 2. Note how Paul links the unique grace with gifts (v8)
 3. This means that **every single believer** has been gifted by Christ - **each one**
 4. There is no such thing as an "ungifted" believer
 5. This is an important teaching in the NT
Each one should use whatever **gift** he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's **grace** in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10
 - a. Notice **each one** has received a gift - whatever gift
 - b. **Gift** - charisma - grace gift - related to the grace of God we are called to steward well
 - c. Same point as Ephesians 4:7

Now to **each one** the **manifestation of the Spirit** is given for the common good. 1 Corinthians 12:7
 - a. Each one - just as before - every single believer has been gifted by the ascended, exalted Christ

- b. Here gifts are called **the manifestation of the Spirit** - but it is the same idea
- c. To say I have nothing to give, I am just a spectator is to say that Christ is not the victorious, ascended Lord!

B. Jesus gave gifts to build up the church - make it healthy

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it... 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, 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 4:7, 11–13

1. Christ gave gifts so that the body might grow
2. A gifted body can become mature and fully grown
3. Also seen in other NT texts

Each one should use whatever gift he has received **to serve others**, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given **for the common good.** 1 Corinthians 12:7

 - a. We are given gifts **to serve others** - not ourselves
 - b. We are given gifts **for the common good**
 - c. Same thing as so that the body may be built up
4. A believer who is not actively serving others via their gifts is ultimately tearing the church down rather than building it up.
5. To not use our gifts to serve others is to rob the

church of Christ

C. Jesus gave leaders to equip and free everyone in the use of their gifts so that the body can be built up

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. Christ also gave leaders to the church as a gift
2. These leaders are given to equip others so they may do the work of service/ministry
 - a. The word for 'service' is diakonia - ministry/service
 - b. This includes all forms of ministry from apostolic work to waiting on tables in the NT
3. The primary task of leaders in the NT is not DOING all of the ministry but identifying and equipping others to do the ministry.
4. A church with leaders who are actively walking with Christ, modeling His character to others, and equipping believers to use their gifts to serve others will be a healthy, growing church!

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Am I using the gifts God has given me to build up the church?
1. Each one of us has been given gifts by Christ
 2. There is no such thing as an ungifted, unengaged believer
 3. Are I pressing in to Christ and BRCC?

4. Am I coming as a consumer & spectator - or as an active participant?
5. This is not a burden, but a blessing! It is the fruit of the Gospel at work in our lives!
6. We are all priests of the Most High God!
7. God wants to use each of us to minister to and encourage others throughout BRCC - and beyond!
8. Perhaps in conversation, having a Scripture to share, serving in children's ministry, greeting people at the door - God can work through us to touch others!
9. If you do not know what your gifts are or how to serve - talk with a leader and we will help you to be equipped and serve!

B. New members & ordination of Scott Rupprecht

1. Jeff Hook will welcome new members into BRCC
2. Ordination of Scott Rupprecht

A Healthy Church

Ephesians 4:7-16

April 24, 2016

Ordination - Scott Rupprecht

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Teaching keywords: Holy Spirit; false teaching and heresy

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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, 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.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 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. Ephesians 4:7-16

The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26