

DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH, PT. 2; EPH. 4:11 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

AS NOTED LAST TIME, ~ PAUL'S DISCUSSION OF ~ AND EMPHASIS ON ~ OUR UNITY in Eph. 4:4-6 ~ ¶¶

▶▶led him into a discussion of the diversity of spiritual gifting within the body of Christ in verses 7-16.

▶▶God has built diversity into the church by variously gifting all of its people to serve in different capacities, ~ ¶¶

▷▷in order to promote its growth and maturity ~ and to preserve and protect its unity.

▶▶Last time we examined [verses 7-10](#), ~ in which Paul mainly talked about spiritual gifting in general.

THIS A.M., ~ WE WILL BEGIN LOOKING AT EPH. 4:11-16, ~ IN WHICH PAUL NARROWS his topic of spiritual gifting down to talk about some specific gifts.

▶▶In [verse 11](#), ~ he lists five specific leadership gifts, ~ or more specifically, ~ five groups of spiritually gifted leaders.

▷▷And because it's important to get a good understanding of these gifts, ~ today we will concentrate solely on this verse.

↪↪And the majority of that will be on the gift of prophecy.

NOW LET'S EXAMINE VERSE 11.

"AND HE HIMSELF GAVE SOME AS APOSTLES, ~ PAUL SAYS IN VERSE 11a." **LEB**

▶▶The word "[apostle](#)" can simply mean "messenger" and is so used occasionally in the NT.

▷▷But the word more often has a technical meaning, ~ denoting those men chosen specially by Jesus to be His authoritative representatives.

↪↪And this is how Paul is most likely using the word here.

→→Simply put, ~ the apostles were special messengers personally chosen and sent by Jesus bearing His authority ~ and writing and speaking His message. **¶¶ 1/9**

▶▶ In 2 Cor. 5:20, ~ Paul refers to himself and the other apostles as "ambassadors."

▷▷ He says, ~ "Therefore, ~ we are ambassadors for Christ, ~ God making his appeal through us. ~ We implore you on behalf of Christ, ~ be reconciled to God.

▷▷ Ambassadors represent their nation ~ Paul and the other apostles represented the Kingdom of Heaven, ~ our homeland.

▶▶ No apostles today. ~ After John died, ~ there were no more men specially chosen by Jesus to be His authoritative representatives.

▷▷ However, ~ although there are no apostles today, ~ every one of Christ's disciples is sent by the Lord to represent Him before the people with whom we come in contact.

▷▷ My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ none of us can be apostles ~ And none of us has apostolic authority.

↪↪ But all of us are called to represent our homeland, ~ the kingdom of heaven. ~ And in this sense, ~ all believers are "ambassadors for Christ."

▷▷ Same message of reconciliation as the apostles.

↪↪ And i.e., ~ "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, ~ and that he was buried, ~ and that he was raised up on the third day according to the scriptures."

▷▷ Same mission as the apostles. ~ And i.e., ~ to implore people to be reconciled to God, ~ to "make disciples of all nations."

IN VERSE 11b, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT JESUS GAVE TO THE CHURCH "SOME AS PROPHETS," ~ or, ~ tpid, ~ Jesus gave the gift of prophecy to some. **LEB**

▶▶ Now, ~ we see from the book of Acts ~ that it is possible for those in the church who have the gift of prophecy to predict events beforehand, ~ i.e., ~ **fore**-tell.

▷▷ In Acts 11:27-28a, ~ Luke writes, ~ NIV ~ "During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ~ ~ ↓↓

↪↪ One of them, ~ named Agabus, ~ stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world."

▷▷ And it's important to mention here ~ that God has given us two tests by which to evaluate whether what they're predicting is from the Lord. ↓↓ 2/9

↳↳1st, ~ Deut. 13:1-3a. ~ "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ~ and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, ~ and if he says, ~ 'Let us go after other gods,' ~ which you have not known, ~ 'and let us serve them,' ~ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams."

→→Context ~ Suffice

↳↳2nd, ~ Deut. 18:21-22a, ~ "And if you say in your heart, ~ 'How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?' — when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, ~ if the word does not come to pass or come true, ~ ¶¶

→→that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; ~ the prophet has spoken it presumptuously ~ [i.e., ~ without God's authority]."

↳↳So, ~ 100% accuracy and does it lead you away from or to the Lord

▶▶But primarily, ~ **emphasis** on primarily, ~ a true prophet in the church, ~ true of OT prophets as well, ~ **is someone who proclaims the truth with God's authority, ~ (i.e., ~ forth-tell, ~ as we also see in the book of Acts.**

▷▷In Acts 15:32, ~ Luke tells us, ~ "And Judas and Silas, ~ who were themselves prophets, ~ encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words."

↳↳Those in the church with the gift of prophecy proclaim messages that exhort, ~ encourage, ~ and edify disciples.

▷▷And I strongly believe that forth-telling, ~ i.e., ~ exhorting, ~ encouraging, ~ and edifying disciples, ~ **I strongly believe that forth-telling, ~ and not fore-telling, ~ is the primary focus of the gift of prophecy.**

↳↳In fact, ~ as we'll see in a couple minutes, ~ both Peter and John speak of false prophets, ~ not in the context of fore-telling, ~ but in the context of false teaching.

→→I find that extremely significant. ~ And I also find that it sets definite parameters on what the NT gift of prophecy actually entails.

NOW THERE IS ALWAYS A DANGER OF FALSE PROPHETS AND FALSE TEACHERS sneaking into the church.

▶▶In 2 Pet. 2:1a, ~ Peter warns us, ~ "But false prophets also arose among the people, ~ just as there will be false teachers among you, ~ who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, ~ even denying the Master who bought them." ¶¶ 3/9

▶▶ And look at Paul's warning in 2 Cor. 11:13-15a.

▷▷ "For such men are false apostles, ~ deceitful workmen, ~ disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ~ And no wonder, ~ for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ~ So it is no surprise if his servants, ~ also, ~ disguise themselves as servants of righteousness."

▶▶ But in spite of this danger, ~ Paul tells us not to set aside or reject the gift of prophecy. ~ But he also tells us to test what is said.

▷▷ In 1 Thess. 5:20-22, ~ he writes, ~ "Do not despise prophecies, ~ but test everything; ~ hold fast what is good. ~ Abstain from ~ [i.e., ~ stay away from ~ or reject] ~ every form of evil.

▶▶ And in 1 Jn. 4:1, ~ John also calls upon us to test what is said as well, ~ "Beloved, ~ do not believe every spirit, ~ but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, ~ for many false prophets have gone out into the world."

▷▷ With the word "spirits" John does not have in mind a supernatural spirit.

▷▷ It should be looked at as referring to false prophets, ~ since the emphasis of the passage as John develops it ~ is on testing teachers and what they're teaching.

▶▶ Basically, ~ both John and Paul are saying, ~ "Don't outright reject prophecies, ~ but don't believe everything you hear either. ~ 77

▷▷ Carefully weigh and examine what people tell you. ~ Not everyone who talks about God or the things of God comes from God."

▶▶ We need to understand, ~ just because a person says "thus says the Lord," ~ does not mean they are actually speaking for the Lord. ~ This is brought out clearly in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

↳↳ Jer. 14:14, ~ "And the LORD said to me: ~ 'The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. ~ I did not send them, ~ nor did I command them or speak to them. ~ They are prophesying to you a lying vision, ~ worthless divination, ~ and the deceit of their own minds.'"

↳↳ Jer. 29:8-9, ~ "For thus says the LORD of hosts, ~ the God of Israel: ~ Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, ~ and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, ~ for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; ~ I did not send them, ~ declares the LORD." ↴ 4/9

↳↳ And Ezek. 13:6-7 says, ~ "They ~ [i.e., ~ the false prophets] ~ have seen false visions and lying divinations. ~ They say, ~ 'Declares the Lord,' ~ when the Lord has not sent them, ~ and yet they expect him to fulfill their word. ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Have you not seen a false vision and uttered a lying divination, ~ whenever you have said, ~ 'Declares the Lord,' ~ although I have not spoken?"

▶▶ Now, ~ when John says "do not believe every spirit, ~ but test the spirits," in 1 Jn. 4:1, ~ the forms of the verbs for "do not believe" and "test" ~ indicate that this is not something that can be done once and for all.

▷▷ So this testing of the spirits must become a habit.

↳↳ Satan is constantly attempting through his servants to mislead believers.

→→ What Peter tells us in 1 Pet. 5:8 applies here.

↳↳ "Be sober-minded ~ [i.e., ~ clear-headed]; ~ be watchful. ~ Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, ~ seeking someone to devour."

▶▶ "do not believe every spirit, ~ but test the spirits," ~ John says in 1 Jn. 4:1.

▷▷ "test" means to make a critical examination of something; ~ to determine genuineness, ~ put to the test, ~ examine.

▷▷ We are to constantly examine to see if the source of a message, ~ a teaching, ~ or a prophecy is God the Holy Spirit.

↳↳ John is calling us to be Bereans, ~ who, ~ as Acts 17:11 says, ~ "received the word with all eagerness, ~ examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."

▷▷ In John's day, ~ coins were constantly weighed and tested for genuineness and proper weight before they were accepted.

↳↳ This is what we are to do.

→→ We are to constantly and carefully weigh and test what is being preached or taught or prophesied for genuineness and proper weight ~ before we accept what is being said.

↳↳ And if we find that a sermon or a teaching or a prophecy is not genuine or of proper weight, ~ we are to reject it. ¶¶ 5/9

▶▶Note well, ~ John is telling all believers to test the spirits. ~~ The responsibility for testing the spirits rests not merely on pastors or other church leaders ~ **but on every believer.**

▷▷Believers can and will, ~ of course, ~ help each other in testing for genuineness and proper weight. ~~ Some are more capable and have more experience than others.

▷▷Yet in the last analysis, ~ every believer is personally responsible for weighing and testing for the genuineness and proper weight of preaching, ~ **teaching, ~ or prophesying before accepting it.**

↪↪And of course, ~ in this weighing and testing, ~ we must apply the tests from Deut.

IN VS. 11c, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT JESUS GAVE TO THE CHURCH "SOME AS evangelists." LEB

▶▶The word for "**evangelist**" refers to one who brings good news.

▷▷And of course, ~ the good news in the context refers to the gospel of peace with God through Christ's crucifixion.

▷▷Evangelists travel from place to place proclaiming the good news of peace with God through Christ.

▷▷And the gift of evangelism is the gift of special empowerment whereby God blesses the evangelist's work with the fruit of conversions.

▶▶E.g., ~ Philip, ~ who, ~ according to **Acts 6**, ~ was originally chosen in the early church to minister to widows, ~ eventually became an evangelist.

▷▷In **Acts 21:8**, ~ Luke writes that he, ~ Paul, ~ and the rest of their group, ~ on their way to Jerusalem, ~ "**entered the house of Philip the evangelist.**"

▷▷In **Acts 8:4-25**, ~ we read that he evangelized Samaria, ~ and in **8:26-40**, ~ that he led the Ethiopian eunuch to salvation in Christ and baptized him, ~ **and subsequently preached the gospel from Azotus to Caesarea.**

NOW, ~ NOT ALL DISCIPLES OF JESUS HAVE THE GIFT OF EVANGELISM.

▶▶However, ~ and this is extremely important, ~ this fact does not excuse believers who do not have the gift from sharing the gospel with the lost.

▶▶E.g., ~ It does not seem that Timothy was an evangelist. ~~ And yet, ~ Paul exhorted him to evangelize. **⇓⇓ 6/9**

▷▷ In 2 Tim. 4:5, ~ Paul told him, ~ "As for you, ~ always be sober-minded ~ [i.e., ~ keep your head in all situations], ~ endure suffering, ~ do the work of an evangelist, ~ fulfill your ministry."

▶▶ And of course, ~ doing the work of an evangelist is implied in the great commission.

▷▷ In Matt. 28:18-20, ~ Matthew writes, ~ "And Jesus came and said to them, ~ 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, ~ baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ~ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. ~ ~ And behold, ~ I am with you always, ~ to the end of the age."

→→ The work of evangelism is the first step in making disciples.

▶▶ So, ~ even though there are believers especially gifted in evangelism, ~ it is incumbent upon all those who claim Jesus as Savior and Lord to share the gospel with the lost.

IN VERSE 11d, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT JESUS GAVE TO THE CHURCH "some as pastors and teachers." LEB

▶▶ If we look carefully, ~ we'll notice that Paul words these two differently. ~ ~ He does not say "some as pastors and some as teachers."

▷▷ . . . Overlap. ~ ~ According to Paul's qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy and Titus, ~ ~ which also apply to pastors, ~ pastors are to be able to teach.

↳↳ So here, ~ I would suggest, ~ is the overlap Paul is indicating here.

→→ All pastors are teachers ~ but not all teachers are pastors. ~ ~ The overlap, ~ I would say, ~ is only on one side.

↪↪ And with that in mind, ~ we'll look at "pastors" and "teachers" separately.

PAUL SAYS THAT JESUS GAVE PASTORS TO THE CHURCH.

▶▶ "pastor" means "shepherd." ~ ~ And it is used metaphorically of the men who are responsible for the leadership, ~ protection, ~ guidance, ~ care, ~ and oversight of a local church.

▶▶ Paul used the imagery of shepherding in his farewell address to the elders of the church at Ephesus. ¶¶ 7/9

▷▷ In Acts 20:28-31a, ~ he said, ~ "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, ~ in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, ~ to care for the church of God, ~ which he obtained with his own blood. ~ I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, ~ not sparing the flock; ~ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, ~ to draw away the disciples after them. ~ Therefore be alert."

▶▶ Peter used it as well in his exhortation to elders on how to lead the church.

▷▷ In 1 Pet. 5:1-3, ~ he writes, ~ "So I exhort the elders among you, ~ as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, ~ as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ~ shepherd the flock of God that is among you, ~ exercising oversight, ~ not under compulsion, ~ but willingly, ~ as God would have you; ~ not for shameful gain, ~ but eagerly; ~ not domineering over those in your charge, ~ but being examples to the flock."

▶▶ Both apostles point to a close connection between pastoring and the office of elder, ~ to which I alluded earlier, ~ since both exhorted the elders with the task of pastoring.

▶▶ The pastoral role involves a great deal of care, ~ concern, ~ and godly leadership.

▶▶ Teaching sound doctrine, ~ of course, ~ is an essential part of this ministry, ~ so that the flock can discern and avoid the dangerous teaching that comes by way of the wolves.

▶▶ The model for pastors, ~ of course, ~ is Jesus, ~ as spelled out by Him in His Good Shepherd Discourse recorded in Jn. 10:1-18. ~ Read for context. ~ Highlights.

▷▷ From what Jesus says there, ~ we know that pastoring includes knowing people intimately.

↪↪ In verse 3b, ~ Jesus said, ~ "The sheep hear his voice, ~ and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."

▷▷ Pastoring also involves leading the sheep. ~ In verse 4a, ~ Jesus said, ~ "When he has brought out all his own, ~ he goes before them, ~ and the sheep follow him."

▷▷ Pastoring encompasses protecting his sheep from "wolves." ~ In vs. 12, ~ Jesus said, ~ "He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, ~ who does not own the sheep, ~ sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, ~ and the wolf snatches them and scatters them."

▷▷ And it includes loving the sheep enough to sacrifice one's life for them. ~ Verse 11, ~ "I am the good shepherd. ~ The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." ↴↴ 8/9

AND FINALLY, ~ AND BRIEFLY, ~ IN VERSE 11, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT JESUS GAVE teachers to the church.

▶▶Now, ~ Paul is not talking about teaching math, ~ or science, ~ or anything like that. ~~ He is speaking strictly of teaching within the context of the church and teaching the Bible.

▷▷Basically, ~ the teacher is the one who provides instruction in Bible content and doctrine to believers.

↪↪But teaching also includes exhorting the hearers to live in conformity with the Bible truth they are learning. ~~ Paul in Ephesians is an example of this

▶▶So important is this ministry in the church that provision is made for its continuity for succeeding generations.

▷▷Paul urges Timothy to not only pursue a teaching ministry himself ~ but also to entrust what he has learned to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

↪↪In 1 Tim. 4:13, ~ Paul told him, ~ "Until I come, ~ devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, ~ to exhortation, ~ to teaching.

↪↪Then in 2 Tim. 2:2, ~ "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

▶▶Ezra provides the biblical model for teachers. ~~ Ezra 7:10. ~~ NASB ~ "For Ezra had set his heart ~ [i.e., ~ he devoted himself] ~ to study the law of the Lord ~ and to practice it, ~ and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel."

CONCLUSION.

JESUS "GAVE TO THE CHURCH SOME AS APOSTLES ~ AND SOME AS PROPHETS ~ AND some as evangelists ~ and some as pastors and teachers." LEB

▶▶Let us continuously thank our awesome Savior for these five groups of spiritually gifted leaders that He has graciously given us.

LET'S PRAY 9/9