

## **Ephesians 4: 7-16 – For the body part 1 (Why)**

### **Show Video Clip – Body of Christ**

Last week we started in on the second half of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. We looked at the first 6 verses of chapter 4 and saw how Paul was urging us to walk the walk and not just talk the talk. Today we continue on with a more detailed look at how the church – the Body of Christ – is to go about doing just that. God never asks us to do anything He will not equip us to do – God will never expect anything from His Body without first ensuring His Body is able to do what is asked of it.

Let's see what I am talking about – open your Bibles if you would and please follow along with me as I read aloud our study verses for today: Ephesians Chapter 4 verses 7-16:

### **Ephesians 4:7-16 (New International Version)**

**7**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." **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, **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.

The New Living Translation puts the last half of these verses like this:

### **Ephesians 4:12-16 (New Living Translation)**

**12** Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. **13** This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. **14** Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. **15** Instead, we will speak the truth

in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. **16** He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

There is so much contained in these verses – so much that is directed to and specifically for the Body – for us as those who call Christ Lord and Savior, that we are going to spend two weeks on discovering the meaning behind the words.

Today we will look at these verses in the context of asking the question **Why?**

Why did God give us this specific outline for the church – why are the saints called to minister to the body as these verses dictate (remember, the saints are you and I individually – the saints are all those who have come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ - The body is the all saints collectively), and our study verses today are detailing a specific plan for the saints to minister to the body as a whole – today I want to explore the why and next week I want to explore the how.

Another way to say it would be: today we are going to explore the goal intended in these verses and next week we are going to look at the means of accomplishing that goal.

**So I ask you this - is every Saint called to be a Minister – a Minister to Christ's body and a Minister to those who have yet to receive Christ?**

The answer is found in verse 7 and verses 11–12. In verse 7 Paul talks about how each individual Christian is gifted by Christ with various measures of grace; and in verses 11–12 he talks about how the church is gifted by Christ with certain ministering people who equip the saints to minister to the body.

### **Ephesians 4:7 (New International Version)**

**7**But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Christ gave to each – just think about that for a minute - - each one of us has been uniquely graced with Christ's gift. --- This means that you are not an accident in the body of Christ. Christ has a specific purpose for you in His Body and He has uniquely gifted you by His Grace for that purpose.

Romans 12:6 says almost the same thing:

### **Romans 12:6 (New Living Translation)**

**6** In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.

Our different giftedness is owing to the sovereign grace of Christ --- according to His will and He is the Head of His Body and as the Head knows what is best for the body.

This then lays the foundation for what comes later in verses 11–12.

**Ephesians 4:11-12 (New International Version)**

**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

This is different from verse 7. - There the point was that every believer is gifted by Christ. Here the point is that the church is gifted by Christ with people in varied and specific functions:

*"Some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers."*

These gifts to the church—these people—are charged with **preparing** the saints.

The New American Standard translates it like this

**Ephesians 4:12 (New American Standard Bible)**

**12**for the **equipping** of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Webster Defines Equipping like this:

- a. To supply with necessities such as tools or provisions.
- b. To furnish with the qualities necessary for performance:

The Online Word Net Dictionary defines Equipping like this:

The act of equipping with weapons in preparation for war

I think both sets of definitions are very apropos if you will. Christ is supplying His body with the tools needed to impact a hurting world, giving us the qualities needed to be Christ on Earth, while at the same time preparing us for battle – not only the battle yet to come, but for the battle we are already in:

**Ephesians 6:12 (New Living Translation)**

**12** For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

**The Messages puts it this way:**

## **Ephesians 6:12 (The Message)**

12 This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels.

*Amen to that!*

**This is for keeps – this is not some game we are in – this is for all the marbles and God has chosen us to be His foot soldiers and Christ is preparing us, equipping us, for Battle.**

And verses 11–12 are telling us just who's job it is to do that – just who Christ has gifted for that specific task. But please don't miss a key point here – no-one is fully gifted, fully equipped, fully prepared in of him or herself.

*"Some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers."*

Think how significant this is for the nature of the church. Each of us is personally gifted by Christ with varied grace, and yet not so perfectly that we are not in need. None of us has a corner on God's Grace – none of us can say: "I have no need of apostolic authority, or prophetic encouragement, or evangelistic training, or pastoral nurture, or teachers to help me apply the Bible to my life." These verses make it quite clear that all of us are gifted with a measure of grace, and all of us are in some measure lacking and in need of ministering from those who along with us makeup Christ's body.

*In one hand these verses confirm that each and every one of us are vitally needed by the church, and on the other hand, it confirms that the church is vitally needed by each and every one of us. We cannot, function, we cannot survive apart from one-another. Just as a body cannot function completely with missing arms and legs and fingers and toes and so on and just like a body cannot survive without a heart or a brain or lungs; The Body of Christ, likewise, cannot function completely with missing parts and will not survive if we take the heart out of Her or separate Her from Her Head – Jesus Christ.*

But that's not all – verse 12 goes on to say that the body is equipped for works of service.

The preparing and supplying of the saints is not an end in itself. We don't stop there and say, "O good, now we are all prepared and supplied ---- The work is done." Not in the least,--- all that work is done for a reason ----- to make the saints into servants – Christ's Ministers to a hurting world.

## **2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (New International Version)**

**17**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! **18**All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

The New Living Translations puts it this way:

**2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (New Living Translation)**

**17** This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! **18** And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. **And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.**

So this then answers the question I started off today's study with:

**Is every Saint called to be a Minister – a Minister to Christ's body and a Minister to those who have yet to receive Christ?**

This is the why of today's message – Why did Christ provide a means for “the body” – “**His Body**” to be equipped – so that we could be His body to those in need – so we could be His arms reaching out to embrace those in need of a hug; so we could be his legs walking alongside those in need of a friend – so we could be His voice speaking for those who have no voice – so we could demonstrate the Love of Christ to those who feel unlovable – to those who have never known what Love is.

Why do the saints need to be equipped, because the task we have been called to, the Ministry which has been given us, is not one we can do in our own strength, it is not one we can do alone – it is a super human endeavor that needs super human strength and that only happens when we are mature in Christ.

**Philippians 4:13 (New Living Translation)**

**13** For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

The key word is mature – that is why this is a never ending process. I have often said, the salvation of a soul is a matter of a moment, but the maturation of a saint is the process of a lifetime – the process which we detailed today – because that is the end goal.

**Ephesians 4:13-16 (New Living Translation)**

**13** This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. **14** Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. **15** Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. **16** He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

As I ask the Praise and Worship team to come up and end us in Song and Prayer, I want to remind you that that is the goal – that we all come into the fullness of Christ – but that cannot, will not happen if we all aren't doing our parts. I can't do it alone, Mark can't do it alone, none of us can do it alone, because none of us has all the pieces – we each only have our small part and just like building a puzzle, if someone doesn't bring his or her piece to the table, the puzzle never gets finished, it will remain full of wholes an incomplete work -- a house that will come crashing down.

***Do Jenga Demonstration***