

## A LIVING CHURCH FOR A DYING WORLD

### Week 20 Outline

#### UNDERSTANDING HEALTH BY CONNECTING GIFTING WITH GOD'S PURPOSE

Devotional Scriptures: EPH 4:7; 11-16

#### Study and Reflection:

I am happy and excited to get deeper into our study of the Church, given by God for a dying world, to be His Light in the earth and to bring Life and Wholeness. In the past couple of weeks we have given real time and attention to our identify,....Resident Aliens....A Colony from Heaven....In this world but not of this world. Beginning last week, began to look at the next critical step, our Function. As in any product, system, organism, or organization, function is determined by purpose.

As we delve into the mind of God regarding ours as the Body of Christ, it is important to carve out this particular passage of scripture that will serve as the background and foundation for our teachings and sharings, over the next few weeks. I challenge you to give focused time and attention to this passage. It is my hope that it will enlighten you, challenge you, inspire you to join in earnest as we accept the challenge of the Holy Spirit to become a Healthy Church and Healthy Disciples. This is why I am assigning this passage, along with any others that you may be led to read and study, each day of this week. We will pay particular attention to versus 12-16, which in the original writing of the Apostle Paul constitute one grand statement.

It is a statement of the purpose for which the Lord has gifted every member of the Body. READ Ephesians 4:12-14!! This is all one complete statement. Its purpose is to tell us why our Lord Jesus Christ has appointed in the Church various offices and also the persons to fill these offices. In fact, the list in verse 11, is not and was not intended to list every gift or calling in Christ's church. This list was given to open up to our understanding to the principles of how HIS church should function and reason for the gifts in the church. In fact, the general statement is in verse 7.....*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* The message to the church is that every genuine member in the church at his or her spiritual birth is given 'special ability!' Every member is given by Christ Divine Gifts, which are intended to function and benefit the entire Body. Verse 11, breaks out for us certain leadership or pastoral gifts, with specific authority and intent in order that all the gifts, given to each one, is discovered, identified, nurtured, and put in place so that the entire Body may prosper.

Now let us look at the main reasons we have been graced with these spiritual gifts. It is found primarily in verse 12:

*2 "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ!"*

Why did the Lord give at least one gift to every member? Why did the Lord select out particular ones with special leadership or pastoral gifts?

**IT IS IN ORDER TO ...PERFECT THE CHURCH....TO MAKE HER ENTIRE AND COMPLETE IN EVERY RESPECT!**

**3 DISTINCT UNDERSTANDING, THAT ALL CONNECT TOGETHER MAKING A HEALTHY CHURCH:**

1. THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS
2. THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY
3. THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY

That is what we are meant to be. That is what God intends for us to both become and do. That is the Divine Purpose and Goal. The Lord has placed in His Church Everything Necessary for Wholeness, Completeness, Health and Prosperity!! In summary, these have been given to BUILD UP THE BODY AS IT OPERATES IN HARMONIOUS FUNCTION!

**BASED ON THIS, CONTINUE WITH OUR DAILY DEVOTIONS, ACTION ITEMS, AND INCLUDING OTHERS THIS WEEK!**

## A LIVING CHURCH FOR A DYING WORLD

May 17<sup>th</sup> Devotional

### BECOMING A HEALTHY CHURCH THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS

#### Devotional Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:7; 11-16

#### Study and Reflection:

The first reason for the gifting should challenge, and make each of us who is called by the Name of Jesus, sit up and pay close attention. The gifts, special abilities of the Holy Spirit. Special leadership offices and given, so that those who have been born into the Kingdom can be ‘perfected.’”

It means that although you may be born again...you and I have a long way to go in order to become and do what we have been called and assigned to become and do! The word perfecting here can be summarized like this: Make them fit and in alignment to their called purpose. It means being fully born-again, something is lacking. It means something is deficient or missing. Something is ‘out of place.’ In fact, Paul uses a term to describe a bone that is present, but has become disjointed or not properly connected to fulfill its purpose. The Greek word is *katartismo*: complete; finishing; to prepare fully; to make them ready; To Prepare them for Service!

#### Action Items:

As you study the Word of God, and seek Him in prayer...don’t be afraid to do an honest introspection of your own status.

*Are you complete?*

*Are you fully prepared to do the work assigned to you?*

*Are you ready to work together with others?*

These are a few of the questions we must ask and answer if we are to be the healthy function church the Lord has called us to become.

#### Involving Others:

You know the drill. Now share what you have discovered with others. Confess where you see your shortcomings and allow them to respond. They will be willing to do the same with you. *This is how ‘iron sharpens iron.’* This exercise will prepare us for some future teachings where we identify and role play a deeper sense of ‘perfecting’ which has to do with maturity vs immaturity.

## A LIVING CHURCH FOR A DYING WORLD

May 18<sup>th</sup> Devotional

### BECOMING A HEALTHY CHURCH THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

#### Devotional Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:7; 11-16

#### Study and Reflection:

The second reason God has so richly gifted the church and individuals, is so that we will operate together, and connect with each other, to do the WORK OF THE MINISTRY. Let's face the facts. In too many ways the Church has adopted the view, based on how it has continued to operate, that the Ministry Work is for the pastor, the paid staff, and others who are motivated to be involved. **THIS IS COMPLETELY NON-BIBLICAL.**

The Work of the Ministry, or *Christian Service* is to be conducted by an entire Kingdom of Priests (1 Peter 2:9). One of the reasons we see so much discontent, so much 'burn-out,' so much discouragement in churches is *because the work is being done by so few*. Now we must be completely transparent. The reason for this has evolved and become embedded in the psyche of the church in general as this is what is supposed to be. IT IS NOT!

We must *relook* at ministry. We must look at how and who we select to be in leadership. Leaders in the Body of Church should be those called, identified, trained and committed to, not simply do the work, but to teach and train others by 'precept and example!'"

Note how this was communicated by the Apostle Paul to his 'son' in the gospel, Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2).

#### Action Items:

If you are a member of the Body of Christ, in some real, tangible, practical way...**you are called to the Work of the Ministry.** This work of course has many forms. Some are levels of ministry that begin our walk with Christ. We all should be trained in prayer. We all can be used to encourage. We all can serve in supportive ministries, ensuring the work is shared and God is glorified.

Where do you stand in this? Are you really and decisively available? Do you come with an open heart, a humble and teachable spirit? Are you willing to change your schedule to become a working part of the ministry?

#### Involving Others:

This section is clearly intended to be a group discussion and interaction. In your small group share and listen to each one. See where you have been successful and perhaps where you have fallen short. Conclude together how each of you are going to move forward in making sure you are identified, trained, and put in proper place to do the *Work of the Ministry*.

## A LIVING CHURCH FOR A DYING WORLD

May 19<sup>th</sup> Devotional

### BECOMING A HEALTHY CHURCH THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

#### Devotional Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:7; 11-16

#### Study and Reflection:

The third reason or purpose for God gifting the church is an overall reason and objective that encompasses all the others. The reason and purpose that we are so richly gifted and talented, and endowed with such excellent grace and ability *is to ensure the Health, Wholeness, and Growth of the local and global Church of Jesus Christ!*

Jesus assured us that this will be the outcome when He stated: **“Upon this Rock I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH!”** Look at the wonder of this ongoing miracle. God builds His Church by gifting weak, flawed, failure-prone human beings to get the job done. He allows us such blessed opportunity to in some small but significant way.... Build His Church. Of course this demands that we humble ourselves and open our hearts so that we can do this work

#### **TOGETHER.**

We learn from the evidence of Scripture and the examples of so many before us that we will succeed only as we submit ourselves to listening to and being led by those properly ordained by God to help mold and shape our lives.

#### Action Items:

The purpose of each one in the Body is to promote spiritual growth and development. This requires each and every one of us to listen to those ordained to lead us and to support with great enthusiasm, ministries and endeavors that may not coincide with our own ideas. We must be like our Lord, having a Servant’s Spirit. Examine your own self. *Where do you stand in doing everything you can, not to promote you or your own ideas, but to promote the Growth and Development of the Body to which you are a part?*

#### Involving Others:

Short but honest group sharing here is critical, followed by prayer that touches each person in your group. This must include *commitment* of the group to be accountable to one another to enable and empower all of you to please the Lord as we work together in His Body.

## A LIVING CHURCH FOR A DYING WORLD

May 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Devotional

### BECOMING A HEALTHY CHURCH GENUINE SPIRITUAL GIFTEDNESS PRODUCES: UNITY, FAITH, KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST, AND CHRISTIAN MATURITY

#### Devotional Scriptures:

Focus on Ephesians 4:13-16; 1 Corinthians 13:11

#### Study and Reflection:

The past three days of our study were filled with critical understandings and principles that are dangerous to the enemy's kingdom. We should not think that they will be understood and implemented easily or without 'push back,' even from within.

For these two days I want you to see key elements that we must embrace, if we are going to effectively implement the desires of God for the church to be:

1. **Perfect** (equipped and empowered)
2. **Productive** throughout its membership in genuine Christian Service
3. Seeing and enjoying genuine **Growth** and **Development**

In the verses assigned, we must come to a corporate understanding and implementation of those habits and characteristics that produce Unity, Faith, Knowledge of Christ, and genuine Maturity.

We must with openness and without fear embrace the context of Paul's caution in these verses. There must have been present in the church at Ephesus, important disagreement and division regarding the tenets of their shared Faith. That is why he challenged them about Unity. There must have been some lack or negligence regarding the knowledge of the Person and Character of Jesus for him to point out that the gifts were intended to heal their divisions and cause them to embrace a shared understanding of these vital subjects. Lastly, we must admit to what he addressed in the church at Ephesus.... our immaturity as if we are newborns in the faith.

#### Action Items:

See where you stand personally in these critical areas:

- Are you an asset to the church because you are resolved to listening with an ear to agree?
- Are you allowing the teaching and presentations to increase your knowledge of Jesus?
- Are you striving to hear without being offended, identify areas of possible immaturity on your part with a willingness to improve?

We all are in the same boat to various degrees. Let's not allow this to continue.

#### Involving Others:

Look forward to being *positive* in your group in a way to draw others into the discussion. Become an enabler to pull others closer to you and the group so that they will grow and prosper in the discussions. Be committed to developing and fostering in your group an atmosphere of constant learning, loving, and enjoying this journey in the church TOGETHER!

## A LIVING CHURCH FOR A DYING WORLD

May 22<sup>nd</sup> Devotional

### BECOMING A HEALTHY CHURCH

### UNDERSTANDING HEALTH BY CONNECTING GIFTING WITH GOD'S PURPOSE

#### **Devotional Scriptures:**

Ephesians 4:7; 11-16; 1 Corinthians 13:11

#### **Study and Reflection:**

If you have journeyed with us this week, I refuse to assign anything for you to do.

What has the Holy Spirit brought to you in a decisive manner this week?

It may be things you need to focus on personally or it may involve others. In either or both ways, *give these things your focused attention.*

Perhaps you are to connect or re connect with someone that you have not spoken to for a while or feel led to invite back into fellowship?

Whatever, it is, let the Lord have His way.

***Experience something new and nurturing in your walk with Christ!***