

God is Our Uniqueness

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INTRODUCTION:

Understanding Our Text

Our text is found in **Ephesians 4:11-16** this morning. It is important that we understand it clearly before we proceed with our sermon topic. You see it is in clearly understanding what the Word of God is saying to us, that we become healthy in our relationship with God. When we are healthy in our relationship with God, we grow and the church grows. This text reveals to us three important essentials for the Body of Christ.

I. The Structure of the Church:

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NASB CWS-NT dgb)

[11] And He **gave** (Spoken of God or of Christ as the author or source of what one has or receives; to give, grant, bestow, impart **Mt 6:11**, "give us this day our daily bread"; **Mt 9:8**, "God who gave power unto men".) **some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,**

In **Ep 4:11**, Paul lists the five kinds of ministers which have been given by Christ to His Church...: **apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers**. The first three of these were itinerant (*traveling, roving, wondering*) ministers, apostles, prophets and evangelists, who were preaching wherever they found an opportunity, while pastors and teachers were attached to some congregation or location. Philip was a traveling missionary *and the only one given the title of evangelist in the New Testament*.

- **Apostle** in the Greek means messenger or ambassador
- **Prophet** in the Greek means to tell beforehand, a foretelling of future events, or an interpreter. This included the foretelling future events or the exhorting, reproving, and threatening of individuals or nations as the ambassador of God and the interpreter of His will to men.
- **Evangelist** in the Greek means a preacher of the gospel. He was often not located in any particular place but traveled as a missionary to preach the gospel and establish churches.
- **Pastor** in the Greek means shepherd, one who generally cares for flocks.
- **Teacher** in the Greek means instructor, master, teacher.

[11] And He **gave** some as **apostles**, and some as **prophets**, and some as **evangelists**, and some as **pastors and teachers**,

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

Saint in the Greek means holy, set apart, sanctified, consecrated, saint. Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God's purity and abstaining from earth's defilement. (Saints is a reference to the church in general while the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher were the secondary leaders of the church under the head of the Church, Christ.)

Verse 12 gives us the purpose or job description of the leadership of the church. Under the leadership of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, these leaders were to equip the saints. Not to be vague Paul gets very specific and he lists two items here.

- Equip them for works of service in the Kingdom of God.
- To build up the body of Christ.

II. Second Essential - The Purpose of the Church:

To what end? In other words, when the saints are equipped for service and faithfully carry out that service, it accomplishes God's purpose for His Church.

[13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to **the fullness of Christ**.

So what is accomplished?

- Unity of the faith
- Knowledge of the Son of God
- Maturity measured by the stature of the fullness of Christ

This is the goal, this is what a healthy body looks like and a healthy body grows. The adding of souls (numbers) to the Kingdom of God is between God and the choices made by the individuals He invites into the Kingdom. That is not the church growth we are to concern ourselves with. The growth we are to concern ourselves with is the ongoing process of attaining the fullness of Christ in our personal lives. As we work at attaining the fullness of Christ in our personal lives the church grows in numbers by virtue of the manner in which God has set for His church to be healthy and grow. So how do we do that?

[14] As a result, we are no longer to be children, **tossed** here and there by **waves** and carried about by every wind of **doctrine**, by the **trickery** of men, by **craftiness** in deceitful **scheming**,

Let's look at this verse a little closer.

[14] As a result, we are no longer to be children, **tossed** (Tossed in the Greek is a surge of the sea, to fluctuate – to shift back and forth unnecessarily, it is the same Greek word which is translated as wave below. We must get our feet down on solid

ground which is the knowledge of the Son of God. This is the job of the leadership of the church, to make sure the church has the knowledge of God which coming from the Word is sure and true.) tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine (the thing taught, *subject matter*), by the trickery (fraud) of men, by craftiness (Shrewdness, cunning, craftiness, unscrupulousness; the word signified the employment of any or all means necessary to realize an end) in deceitful scheming (To work by method. Method, the following or pursuing of an orderly and technical procedure in the handling of a subject. In the NT, connected with evil doing, a device, artifice, art, artificial method, craft);

III. Third Essential - The Nature of the Church:

[15] but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, being fitted (to join together, to frame together, it comes from the word joint) and held together by what every joint (A joint by which other members of the body are connected together) supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

This is the theology of the uniqueness of each of God's children.

Look at the words Paul is using in this last verse:

- Fitted and held together like the joints of the body
- These different parts that are fitted together supply necessary parts of the whole
- There is a proper working for each individual part
- This causes the growth and building up of the body

Fitted and held together speaks of unity which we will go into more detail next week. It is necessary, however, to see that the individual parts are different, unique, and they each supply something that the other parts of the body don't supply.

We are unique. Different parts with different functions. Gallup is a research organization that has studied human potential for the past 30 years. They have interviewed more than 2 million people and have discovered some important facts. "You will be most successful in whatever you do by building your life around your greatest natural abilities rather than your weaknesses. *Your talents should be your primary focus!* God has given you a unique combination of talents. God also places within you a calling – a calling to serve others and advance the cause of Christ and the Church, a calling to ministry. Your calling is what God wants you to do with your life; your talents and strengths determine how you will get it done." **LYS** When we discover, develop (strengthen), and deploy the natural talents God has given us in our personal lives and in our calling in the Body of Christ we find the right fit for our life. This is the proper working that Paul speaks of in our text today.

Gallup's research has revealed 34 individual talents that God has created in mankind. Here are some important lessons they have learned in their research.

- “One theme or talent is not more valuable than another.” Like the different parts of the body, all are necessary for the health and growth of the total body.
- 1 in 33 million people share the same top 5 themes in the same order, there are 9 others in the U.S. just like you. 1 in 477 trillion share the same top 10 themes that you have. God created you unique. God brought together the people He wanted at Mt. View.
(Look at Mt. View Talents Chart)
- Talents are distributed evenly in all other countries and across gender barriers. God is not prejudice toward one group over another in any way.

There is a proper working in each individual part of the Body of Christ as we discover, develop, and deploy the natural talents God has given each of us.

- Accept your talent and you accept yourself the way God created you. **Ps 139:14a** I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
- Discover, develop (strengthen), and deploy your God given talents and you fulfill your calling in life.
- Live your talents and you discover the right fit for your personal life and in the Kingdom of God.

There is a natural, God planned, result – Health and Growth.

Will you join us to discover your God given talents and begin to strengthen them for use in the Kingdom of God here at Mt. View where He has place you? Take a blue card. Put your name on it and the words, “I want to discover my talents”.

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CWS-NT - Complete Word Study of the New Testament.

CWS-OT - Complete Word Study of the Old Testament.

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(**dgb** – Personal comments)