

Series: Ephesians
Title: Christ Gave Preachers For
Text: Ephesians 4: 11-12
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Ephesians 4: 8: Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men....11: And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Christ Jesus has a body. God the Father gave Christ a people before the foundation of the world in whom he would be glorified. This was "the joy that was set before Him, for which He endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). Christ body is the people he purchased with his own blood--"the purchased possession" (Eph. 1:14). Each member is the "the travail of His soul" (Isa. 53:11); each one is the reward of his humiliation and sufferings (Phil. 2:9, 10); each member makes up the fullness of Christ's body. One of the most comforting words in all of scripture is that Christ's body is the fullness of Christ—Ephesians 1: 22: [God the Father] "gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." That means that Christ shall not lose one member—not one child of God. God the Father gave them to him to be glorified in their salvation. He shall! Christ satisfied divine justice for them—so that they cannot be condemned to hell because justice will not allow it—they shall be saved! Christ has the power and shall see to it that each one is brought to faith and saved so that his body shall be complete.

Illustration: Each of us has members in our body. And each member helps somewhat to provide for the other members of our body. But is anyone here depending upon your little finger to save your body? Or if you can prevent it will you allow a member of your body to be cut off?

Well, Christ is our Head—his name is Jesus for he shall save his people from our sins. He has all power in heaven and in earth to see to it that each child he redeemed is called to life and faith in him, that each is grown by him, that each is kept by him, and that each is saved to final glory by him.

Proposition: Our text teaches us that Christ shall call and save his people through the means of gospel preaching, through gospel preachers that Christ himself provides. This is as much Christ's glory as was his work on the cross. He is the Head of the church, his body! He fills all in all!

I. FIRST, WE ARE TOLD THAT CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE ON WHO PROVIDES HIS MINISTERS—Ephesians 4: 11: And he gave...and he still does.

Christ Fulfills All Prophecy

All prophecy is written concerning Christ. Christ must fulfill all things that are written of him. So he must fulfill these scriptures. He said,

Jeremiah 3: 15:...I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Jeremiah 23:4: And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them:

Concerning this gospel age in which we live, he promises his people.

Isaiah 30:20: And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: 21: And thine ears

shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

A key word in these prophecies is that Christ will give pastors which shall feed his people with the truth. There is no food for God's people in a lie. The truth of Christ our Surety who fully accomplished the redemption of every elect child given him by the Father is the gospel by which Christ makes his people obedient to the faith. In order to believe the truth we must hear the truth.

Romans 10: 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14: How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15: And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

So our text says, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;" (Eph 3: 11)

Ministers Given by Christ

Apostles were the first and chief office in the church. They were called by Christ, had their doctrine directly from him, had power to work miracles to confirm their doctrine (Heb. 2:3, 4). This office is ceased. There are no apostles in our day. No one has power to work the miracles that they had.

Prophets had a particular gift to interpret scripture (especially the prophecies of the Old Testament) and of foretelling things to come. Agabus was a prophet. (Acts 11:27-30). This office no longer exists in the church. There are no prophets today.

Evangelists are traveling missionaries such as Timothy and Titus. Christ still gives evangelists in our day.

Pastors and teachers are still given by Christ. Every pastor is a teacher of the scriptures. But there are teachers in the church who are not pastors. Pastors are the shepherds of the flock. Teachers are brethren gifted to teach the word and assist the pastors.

II. SECONDLY, WE ARE TOLD CHRIST GAVE HIS MINISTERS FOR—Ephesians 4: 12: for the perfecting of the saints.

This does not mean that believers will grow to be perfect. Paul had been in the faith a long time when he said, "I am the chief of sinners." It means "perfect in Christ."

Colossians 1: 28: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Colossians 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

The word "perfecting" signifies "restoring" or "setting of dislocated joints" like a surgeon sets a dislocated shoulder. Each member of Christ's body became dislocated when we sinned in Adam. All God's elect, all Christ' redeemed, in our lost and dead condition, is the valley of dry bones. The Lord uses this to illustrate what he does through the preaching of the gospel.

Ezekiel 37: 1: The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which *was* full of bones, 2: And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and, lo, *they were* very dry. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. 4: Again he said

unto me, Prophecy [preach] upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5: Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. [that's our gospel] 7: So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8: And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but *there was* no breath in them. 9: Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, [pray for God to bless the word—Peter said we will give ourselves to the word and to prayer.] prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. 11: Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. 12: Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and [I will] cause you to come up out of your graves, and [I will] bring you into the land of Israel. [his heavenly Jerusalem, his church] 13: And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and [when I have] brought you up out of your graves, 14: And [when I] shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed *it*, saith the LORD.

The preacher has no power to effect this. Christ sets the members in his body through the word he speaks effectually in the heart, through the Holy Spirit, through his preacher preaching “thus saith the LORD.”

1 Corinthians 12:18: But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Illustration: If we would repair our bodily health then we must wait on the doctor and follow the doctor's orders. We keep going again and again to the doctor's appointment until we are well.

The preaching of the gospel is the means the Great Physician has chosen to use. The Balm of Gilead will be given through the preaching of the gospel. We must come again and again and again. “As many as ordained to eternal life” shall believe. (Acts 13: 48)

III. THIRDLY HE TELL US CHRIST GIVES HIS MINISTERS FOR—Ephesians 4: 12: the work of the ministry.

First, the work of the ministry is to preach the gospel to the lost.

2 Timothy 2:10: Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Secondly, the work of the ministry is to oversee the church.

1 Peter 5: 1: The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3: Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4: And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Thirdly, the work of the ministry is teach all things Christ has commanded:

Matthew 28: 19: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Christ's preachers do not have any private doctrine. Christ commands us to teach that sin is a heart matter—the very nature is corrupt. Men were teaching sinners to clean up the outside, live moral, and so on. It was what they left out that offended Christ.

Matthew 15: 8: This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9: But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 10: And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: 11: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. 12: Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? 13: But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. 14: Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. 15: Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. 16: And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? 17: Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? 18: But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19: For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20: These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Christ commands we preach that a man has to be given a new heart by God—man cannot do it, only God.

John 3: 6: That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7: Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Christ commands we preach that Christ alone came to fulfill the law because we must have Christ for our Righteousness.

Matthew 5: 17: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18: For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19: Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: [I can jump over a barn] but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [that is Christ] 20: For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

He goes on to say “do you not hear the law. If you as much as look upon a woman you have committed adultery.” The preacher does the law and teaches sinners to do the law, the one way sinners can do and teach the law, by believing on Christ and by teaching others to believe on Christ. In Christ the believer has established the whole law of God perfectly the same as Abraham did 430 years before the law of Mt. Sinai was given. (Rom 3: 31; 4: 1-8; Gal 3: 15-18)

Christ commands his preacher to declare that Christ came to do this work for his sheep.

John 10: 15: As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16: And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.... 23: And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 24: Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. 25: Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26: But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28: And I give unto

them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. 29: My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

IV. LASTLY, HE SAYS HE GIVES HIS MINISTERS—Ephesians 4: 12: for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Christ's preachers, preach the word of God, not to divide or scatter the sheep, but to strengthen, build up and give comfort and assurance to the people of God.

Isaiah 40: 1: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

Illustration: The rain comes down from heaven, flows into river, waters the earth, returns up from whence it came.

In order, to edify Christ's body we must preach the word Christ gives—Christ and him crucified—the word returns to him by edifying his body, his people. So Christ must be the subject of all our preaching.

Colossians 1: 18: And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. 19: For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell;...23:...whereof I Paul am made a minister; 24: Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:...27: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily....2: 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Amen!