

LESSON NINE

**KEEPING THE ONENESS OF THE SPIRIT
&
THE GIFTS PERFECTING THE SAINTS**

Scripture Reading:

Eph. 4:1 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called,

Eph. 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love,

Eph. 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

Eph. 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Eph. 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Eph. 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Eph. 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Eph. 4:8 Therefore the Scripture says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men."

Eph. 4:9 (Now this, "He ascended," what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?

Eph. 4:10 He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.)

Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Questions:

Section 1

1. What are the two sections of the book of Ephesians?
2. What is the difference between oneness and unity? How can we keep the oneness of the Spirit?
3. What kind of proper humanity should we have, and why is it important?

Section 2

1. How can we see the genuine oneness of the Triune God in the picture of the tabernacle?
2. What must we realize first in order to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace, and how can we maintain it experientially?

Section 3

1. What is the relationship between 'grace' and 'gift'?
2. What do the 'gifts' refer to in Eph. 4:8 and how can we see this according to the verses?
3. What is the reason and the result of Christ's giving of the gifts?

Section 4

1. What are the steps in which Christ collected the gifts and gave them to the Body?
2. How do we see that all the believers can be gifts to the Body?
3. What is the heresy of the clergy laity system?

[Section 1]

Ephesians 4:1 says, "I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called." This verse is somewhat a repetition of 3:1, which begins the apostle's exhortation in chapters four through six. This indicates that 3:2-21 is all parenthetical.

WALKING WORTHILY OF GOD'S CALLING

The book of Ephesians is divided into two main sections. The first, composed of chapters one through three, reveals the blessing and the position which the church has obtained in Christ in the heavenlies. Chapter three, in particular, reveals how the church comes into existence in a practical way through being constituted with the riches of the living Christ. The second section, comprising chapters four through six, charges us concerning the living and responsibility the church should have in the Spirit on the earth. The basic charge is that we should walk worthily of the calling, which is the totality of the blessings bestowed upon the church, as revealed in 1:3-14. In the church, under the Triune God's abundant blessing, the saints should walk worthily of the

Father's selection and predestination, the Son's redemption, and the Spirit's sealing and pledging.

In walking worthily of God's calling, the church must have a certain kind of life and also bear responsibility to the full extent. Hence, in chapters four through six we see, on the one hand, the living the church should have, and, on the other hand, the responsibility the church should bear.

In exhorting the saints to walk worthily of God's calling, Paul spoke from his status as a prisoner in the Lord. His status as an apostle of Christ through the will of God authorized him to reveal the things concerning the church, to speak concerning the mystery of Christ. However, his status as a prisoner in the Lord qualified him to exhort us to walk worthily of God's high calling. Paul's living was surely worthy of God's calling. Furthermore, he bore the responsibility required by this calling.

In 3:1 Paul speaks of himself as "the prisoner of Christ Jesus," but in 4:1 he says that he is "the prisoner in the Lord." To be a prisoner in the Lord is deeper than to be a prisoner of the Lord. As such a prisoner, Paul was a pattern for those who would walk worthily of God's calling.

KEEPING THE ONENESS OF THE SPIRIT

To walk worthily of God's calling, to have the proper Body life, we need firstly to care for the matter of oneness. We must keep the oneness of the Spirit. This is crucial and vital to the Body of Christ.

Oneness, strictly speaking, differs from unity. Unity is formed by many people uniting together, whereas oneness is the one entity of the Spirit within the believers making them all one...Our oneness is a Person, even the Lord Jesus Himself realized as the life-giving Spirit. Today the Lord is the life-giving Spirit within us, and this Spirit is our oneness. Therefore, our oneness is not an objective Person far away in the heavens; it is a subjective Person indwelling us as our life.

This oneness is similar to the electricity in many lights that makes them all one in the shining. Although there may be dozens of lights in a large room, they are one in the electricity that flows within them. In themselves, the lights are not one; neither are they united to form one entity. The unique electricity in the lights is their oneness. This electricity does not unite the lights; it is the oneness within them. In themselves, the lights are individual and separate, but in the electricity they

have oneness. It is the same in principle with the believers in Christ. The Spirit indwelling us is our oneness.

In 4:3 this oneness is called "the oneness of the Spirit." The oneness of the Spirit is actually the Spirit Himself. In the illustration of the electricity and the lights, the oneness of the electricity is the electricity itself. There is not another element, apart from the electricity, that is the oneness of the electricity. The oneness of the electricity is simply the electricity itself. In the same principle, the oneness of the Spirit is not something apart from the Spirit. On the contrary, it is the Spirit Himself. The oneness within us and among us is the very life-giving Spirit. Therefore, to keep the oneness is to keep the life-giving Spirit.

Many Christians talk about unity or oneness but neglect the Spirit. This indicates that they make oneness something separate from the Spirit. The more talk certain believers have had about unity, the more divided they have become. Some can even argue with one another in a fleshly way over the matter of unity. There is no need for us to talk so much about oneness. Oneness is like a dove. If we do not talk about it, the dove is present with us. But if we talk about it, it flies away. When we talk a great deal about oneness, we are in danger of losing it. We do not keep the oneness by talking about it; we keep it by staying in the life-giving Spirit. As long as we love the Lord and embrace Him, we keep the oneness; for, as we have strongly emphasized, oneness is the Person of Christ as the life-giving Spirit.

Keeping the oneness of the Spirit implies that we already have the Spirit. If we did not have Him, how could we keep Him? However, most Christians live apart from the Spirit most of the time. Any action taken apart from the life-giving Spirit is divisive. When we are one with the Spirit, living according to Him and doing all things in Him, we keep the oneness without making any conscious effort to do so. But whenever we act apart from the Spirit, we are divisive and lose the oneness. Therefore, instead of charging you to talk about oneness, I would encourage you to take care of the life-giving Spirit, who is the Lord Himself as life within you.

LOWLINESS, MEEKNESS, AND LONG-SUFFERING

Verse 2 says, "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love." To have lowliness is to remain in a low estate, and to have meekness is to not fight for ourselves. We should have these two virtues in dealing with

ourselves. Long-suffering is to endure mistreatment. We should have this virtue in dealing with others. By these virtues we bear one another; that is, we do not forsake the troublesome ones but bear them in love. This is the expression of life.

The word “all” governs both lowliness and meekness. It does not mean that there are many kinds of lowliness and meekness; it means that we should have lowliness and meekness in all things. Thus, we must keep the oneness of the Spirit with all lowliness and meekness.

The problem, however, is that in ourselves we cannot be either lowly or meek. If we are honest and sincere, we shall admit that we have no genuine lowliness or meekness. On the contrary, we tend to exalt ourselves and to fight in defense of ourselves. Just as we do not have lowliness or meekness, we are not long-suffering and we cannot bear others in love. Nevertheless, Paul charges us to have such a worthy walk.

If we would keep the oneness of the Spirit, we must have a proper humanity, a humanity with lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering and a humanity that bears others in love. If we do not have such a humanity as our “capital,” then we cannot operate the “business” of keeping the oneness of the Spirit. The fact that the virtues in verse 2 are mentioned before the oneness of the Spirit in verse 3 indicates that we must have these virtues in order to keep the oneness of the Spirit.

[Section 2]

A TRANSFORMED HUMANITY

In order to have the virtues spoken of in verse 2, we need a transformed humanity. In our natural humanity there is no lowliness, meekness, nor long-suffering. But these virtues are to be found in our transformed humanity, that is, in the humanity of Jesus. In Matthew 11:29 the Lord Jesus said that He was meek and lowly in heart. Meekness and lowliness are characteristics of the humanity of Jesus. Any meekness or lowliness that we may seem to have in ourselves is a pretense and cannot survive any real testing. Praise the Lord that the humanity of Jesus in His resurrection life can be ours today! The more we are transformed, the more of the humanity of Jesus we have. By having the humanity of the resurrected Christ, we spontaneously have the virtues required to keep the oneness of the Spirit.

A PICTURE OF GENUINE ONENESS

The genuine oneness in the Triune God is seen in the picture of the tabernacle with its forty-eight boards of acacia wood overlaid with gold. In themselves, the boards were separate from one another, but in the gold they were one. The bars that held the boards together were also made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. As we have pointed out elsewhere, the golden bars signify the uniting Spirit. The acacia wood signifies humanity, and the gold signifies the divine nature. In the uniting Spirit there is the element of humanity. This indicates that the uniting Spirit is not merely the Holy Spirit of God, but the Holy Spirit mingled with our spirit.

This mingled spirit is seen in Romans 8. Romans 8:4 says, “That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to spirit.” The spirit here is our human spirit mingled with God’s Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God.” This verse clearly points to the mingled spirit, that is, the Spirit with our spirit. In the mingled spirit which constitutes the uniting bars, there is the transformed humanity with the virtues of lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering.

For years I tried to be meek and lowly, but I failed time after time. Eventually I learned that the lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering in 4:2 are not to be found in our natural humanity, but are characteristics of the transformed humanity, the humanity of Jesus Christ. This transformed humanity with all its virtues is typified by the acacia wood within the uniting bars. This indicates that in the uniting Spirit there is the transformed humanity, our humanity transformed by the resurrection life of Christ.

TRANSFORMATION AND ONENESS

Keeping the oneness of the Spirit requires transformation. For this reason, we should not expect a new believer to be able to keep the oneness of the Spirit. It is useless to charge the new ones to keep the oneness, because keeping the oneness of the Spirit requires transformation. If you have not been transformed, you will not have the lowliness nor the meekness necessary to keep the oneness. The more we have been transformed, the more we spontaneously inherit lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering. All these virtues are our heritage by transformation.

The oneness of the Spirit cannot be kept by babyish or childish Christians. It can be kept only by the transformed ones. Those who are natural

and fleshly cannot be meek, lowly, or long-suffering. They cannot keep the oneness, because nothing in their natural being can ever enable them to keep it. Therefore, I wish to emphasize the fact once again that 4:2 implies the need of transformation. We have problems with oneness because we are so natural, so fleshly, and so much in ourselves. But if we have been transformed, we keep the oneness spontaneously because in our transformed humanity we have lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering.

THE UNITING BOND OF PEACE

Verse 3 speaks of keeping the oneness of the Spirit “in the uniting bond of peace.” Christ has abolished on the cross all the differences due to ordinances. In so doing, He has made peace for His Body. This peace should bind all believers together and thus become the uniting bond.

Before Christ was crucified on the cross, there was no peace between the Jews and the Gentiles. According to 2:15, by Christ’s abolishing in His flesh the separating ordinances and creating the Jewish and Gentile believers into one new man, peace was made between all believers. Furthermore, on the cross, Christ dealt with all the negative things between us and God. This means that He also made peace between man and God. Now there is no longer a separation between the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers nor between us and God. However, at the time Ephesians was written, some of the Jewish believers still held the concept that they should be separate from the Gentile believers. For this reason, Paul said that the middle wall of partition has been broken down and that the Jewish and Gentile believers must be one. Otherwise, there can be no oneness. And without the oneness there cannot be the one Body. Therefore, in 4:3 Paul says strongly that we must keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. If we would do this, we must realize that the differences between us have been abolished on the cross.

The uniting bond of peace is actually the working of the cross. By our experience we know that whenever we go to the cross, there are no differences between us and others. However, as soon as we come down from the cross, differences appear. This is true not only in the church life but also in our family life. Often the love between a husband and wife is buried beneath the differences that emerge when they come down from the cross. The only way to get rid of the differences is to go to the cross. When

we go to the cross and remain there, the differences disappear, and we have peace. As we remain on the cross, this peace becomes the uniting bond in which we keep the oneness of the Spirit. Therefore, in order to keep the oneness of the Spirit we need both transformation and the cross.

Ephesians 4:2 indicates the need of transformation, and 4:3 indicates the need of the cross. We need to be transformed in order to have lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering; and we need to be crossed out in order to have the uniting bond of peace. Then we shall keep the oneness of the Spirit.

[Section 3]

Ephesians 4:7 says, “But to each one of us was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Concerning the Body, all the basic elements are one. This is covered in verses 4 through 6, where we have one Body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father. Although the basic elements of the Body are one, the gifts, or the functions, are many and varied. The word “but” at the beginning of verse 7 brings out this contrast between the oneness of the Body and the variety of the gifts or functions.

GRACE ACCORDING TO THE GIFT

Verse 7 says that each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Here grace is given according to the gift, but in Romans 12:6 gifts differ according to grace. Grace actually is the divine life that both produces and supplies the gifts. In Romans 12 it is the grace that produces the gift. Thus, the gift is according to grace. In Ephesians 4 it is grace that supplies the gift. Hence, here the grace is according to the gift, according to the measure of the gift. Grace according to the measure of the gift can be compared to our blood, which supplies the members of our body according to their size. The measure of the gift of Christ is the size of a member of His Body.

CHRIST GIVING GIFTS TO MEN

Verse 8 continues, “Wherefore He says, Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men.” “Height” in the quotation of Psalm 68:18 refers to Mount Zion (Psa. 68:15-16), symbolizing the third heaven where God dwells (1 Kings 8:30). Psalm 68 implies that it was in the ark that God ascended to Mount Zion after the ark had led the way to victory.

Verse 1 of Psalm 68 is a quotation of Numbers 10:35. This indicates that the background of Psalm 68 is God’s move in the tabernacle with the ark as its center. The ark was a clear type of Christ. Wherever the ark went, the victory was won. Eventually this ark ascended triumphantly to the top of Mount Zion. This portrays how Christ has won the victory and ascended triumphantly to the heavens.

“Those” in verse 8 refers to the redeemed saints who had been taken captive by Satan before they were saved by Christ’s death and resurrection. In His ascension Christ led them captive; that is, He rescued them from Satan’s captivity and took them to Himself. This indicates that He has conquered and overcome Satan, who had captured them by sin and death.

The Amplified New Testament renders “He led a train of vanquished foes” for “He led captive those taken captive.” “Vanquished foes” may refer to Satan, to his angels, and to us the sinners, also indicating Christ’s victory over Satan, sin, and death. In His ascension there was a procession of these vanquished foes as captives from a war for a celebration of Christ’s victory.

“Gifts” here does not refer to the abilities or enablements for varied services, but to the various gifted persons in verse 11—apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. After conquering and rescuing them from Satan and death through His own death and resurrection, Christ in His ascension made the rescued sinners themselves such gifts with His resurrection life and gave them to His Body for its building up.

Verses 9 and 10 are a parenthesis. This means that verse 11 is the continuation of verse 8. Verse 8 says that Christ gave gifts to men, and verse 11 says that He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers. “Each one” in verse 7 refers to every member of the Body of Christ, each of whom has received a general gift, whereas the four kinds of gifted persons mentioned in verse 11 are those who have been endued with a special gift. As we shall see, these are the leading apostles, prophets,

evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. As followers, we all can be such gifts to the Body.

Verses 9 and 10 explain how Christ gave the gifts to the Body: “Now this, He ascended, what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He Who descended is the same Who also ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.” The “lower parts of the earth” refers to Hades, underneath the earth, where Christ went after His death (Acts 2:27). Christ firstly descended from heaven to earth in His incarnation. Then after He died on the cross, in His death He descended further, from earth to Hades. Eventually, in His resurrection He ascended from Hades to earth, and from earth to heaven in His ascension. By His descending in death and ascending in resurrection, He gave gifts to men.

CHRIST FILLING ALL THINGS

By descending and ascending, Christ also cut the way that He might fill all things. The thought here is profound. Firstly, Christ was in the heavens. In His incarnation He came down to earth as a man and lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years. Then He died on the cross and descended into Hades, ascended in resurrection from Hades to earth, and then ascended to the third heaven. By means of such a traffic of descending and ascending, He fills all things. Now Christ is everywhere, on the earth as well as in the heavens.

FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS

In verse 12 we see the reason for Christ’s giving of the gifts: “For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ.” The Greek word rendered “for” in this verse is weighty and significant. It indicates that Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers for the purpose of perfecting the saints. The saints are perfected “unto the work of ministry.” The Greek word translated “unto” means “resulting in.” Therefore, the perfecting of the saints results in the work of ministry. The many gifted persons in verse 11 have only one ministry, that of ministering Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ, the church. This is the unique ministry in the New Testament economy (2 Cor. 4:1; 1 Tim. 1:12). According to the grammatical construction, “the building up of the Body of Christ” is “the work of ministry.” Whatever the gifted persons in verse 11 do as the work of

ministry must be for the building up of the Body of Christ.

ARRIVING AT THREE THINGS

Verse 13 continues, “Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” According to this verse, the perfected saints will arrive at three things: at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, and at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Christ has a fullness, the fullness has a stature, and the stature has a measure. We must arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

[Section 4]

CHRIST’S UNIVERSAL TRAFFIC

Let us now consider in more detail how the gifts are given by Christ to the Body. We have seen that, concerning the Body, all the basic elements are one. However, the gifts and the functions are different. Christ has traveled from the heavens to the earth, from the earth to Hades, from Hades back to earth, and from the earth to the third heaven. It is by this universal traffic that the gifts have been given by Christ to the Body.

Consider the Apostle Paul as an example. How could a sinful, devilish persecutor of the church such as Saul of Tarsus become a gift to the Body of Christ? Only by the traveling of Christ throughout the universe. Christ traveled from the heavens to the earth. He was born in a manger in Bethlehem, and He lived for about thirty years in the little town of Nazareth. After He was crucified on the cross, He went down into Hades and took a tour of that region for three days. Then He came out of Hades on the day of His resurrection. Between His resurrection and ascension, He appeared to His disciples over a period of forty days. At the end of those forty days, He ascended into the heavens.

If we had Ephesians 4 without Psalm 68, we probably would not realize that when Christ ascended to the heavens He led a train of captives. He entered into the heavens as a conqueror with a train of captives. He presented these captives to His Father, who in turn gave them back to Him as gifts. Then Christ gave all these captives as gifts

to men. One of these gifts was Saul of Tarsus. This is the way Christ gave gifts to men.

By His universal traveling Christ not only gathered up many sinners, but He also defeated Satan, the one who had captured them. At one time, we all were captives, those who had been captured by Satan, sin, and death. By traveling from heaven to earth, from earth to Hades, from Hades back to earth, and from earth back to heaven, on the one hand, Christ gained all of us and, on the other hand, He conquered Satan, who had usurped us and held us under his power of death. Having been released from Satan, sin, and death, we are now Christ’s captives. All the angels know that when Christ ascended to the third heaven, He was leading a train of captives and that these captives were presented to the Father. What a victorious celebration this procession must have been! Although this glorious event was hidden from the eyes of men, it was seen by angels. They knew that an event of tremendous significance was taking place in the history of the universe. This is not a product of our imagination; it is a marvelous fact.

CAPTURED BY CHRIST

More than nineteen centuries ago we were captured by Christ and put into His train of captives. As those who have been captured by Him, we have no way to escape. Although we have never seen the Lord Jesus, we have no choice but to believe in Him because we have been captured by Him. Now that we are in His train, we cannot get away from Him. Not only have we been captured by Christ, but He has also presented us to the Father. After beholding us with great appreciation, the Father returned us to the Son as gifts. In this way we all were made gifts to the Body through Christ’s universal traveling.

In His travels Christ died for our sins and accomplished all things for the fulfillment of God’s purpose. He defeated Satan, and He released us from the enemy’s usurping hand. Once we were Satan’s captives, but now we are Christ’s captives, those who have been led in His train to the height of the universe, presented to the Father, and given back to the Son as gifts to men.

According to the New Testament, we were saved before we were born. When people ask me when I was saved, I sometimes tell them that I was saved more than nineteen hundred years ago, at the time of Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. We were redeemed in Christ’s crucifixion, and we were regenerated in His

resurrection. Even before Christ put us in His train of captives, we were already saved. By the time He presented us to the Father, we had already been saved and regenerated.

GIFTS TO THE BODY AND TO MEN

Now we can see the steps by which sinners have become gifts to the Body of Christ. These steps include Christ's incarnation, His human living, His death on the cross, His burial in the tomb, His descent into Hades, His resurrection from among the dead, and His ascension to the heavens to return to the Father. By means of these steps we, the sinners, have become apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. Now we are gifts to men. Wherever the Lord may send us in the days ahead, we shall be sent as gifts to the people there.

Not only the leading apostles and prophets are gifts, but every member of the Body is a gift. For example, my little finger is a gift to my body. It can do something for my body that no other member can do. None of us should regard ourselves as too small to be a gift. Sometimes it is the smallest members who are the most useful and who render the greatest comfort to the Body. Therefore, we all are gifts given by Christ to His Body. Because of Christ's universal traveling, we are no longer sinners, but sons of God, trophies to the Father, and gifts to the Body.

In Ephesians 4 we see the giving of the gifts, whereas in Psalm 68 we have the receiving of the gifts. According to Psalm 68, the Son received trophies from the Father as gifts. Then in Ephesians 4 the Son gave them all as gifts to the church. We, the saved ones, have been given not only to the church, but even to the whole world. Thus, wherever we may go, we shall be a great blessing to others.

In some of the foregoing messages I have pointed out that all the saints can be today's apostles and prophets. In this message I would like to point out that we also can be evangelists, those who preach the good news, those who proclaim the glad tidings. As we contact people in our daily living, we need to tell them the good news. If we are faithful to do this, we are evangelists. We are also shepherds and teachers, those who take care of others and instruct them in the way of the Lord and in the things concerning God's economy.

NO CLERGY OR LAITY

Ephesians 4:11 does speak of some apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers.

Perhaps you are wondering how I can say that all the saints can be such gifts to the Body. The gifts in 4:11 are the leading apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. We, of course, cannot be these leading ones; however, as their followers, we can be the same kind of persons. I certainly do not consider myself an apostle like Paul, who was a leading one. But as a follower of Paul, I do regard myself as one of today's apostles, today's sent ones. We all should have such a concept concerning ourselves. We all should be followers of the leading apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. If we are not such followers, we shall fall into a great heresy—the heresy of a clergy-laity system. We shall make the leading ones the clergy, and the followers will become the laymen. But in the church, the Body of Christ, there is no such thing as either clergy or laity. As gifts to the Body, we all are apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. As gifts given by Christ to the Body and to all mankind, we can be a great blessing to the whole world.

Ephesians 4 tells us that grace is given according to the measure, the size, of the gift. The grace produces the gifted persons and then supplies them according to the measure of the gift. All the gifted persons are for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ, until we all arrive at the three items mentioned in verse 13.

References:

Life-Study of Ephesians msg. 36 & 38