

As a **rule**.... there are few gifts that men enjoy more ....than **Power Tools**....

Something about their ability to help us conquer household problems in the drop of a hat.... enhances our self worth.... and sense of power or something..... **right?**

Most **Ladies**, ..... prefer (on the other hand)... gifts which convey **feeling**....rather than **function**.....

VIDEO

As the church, we are the Bride of Christ.....

And our **Spiritual Husband** is not **insensitive** like this guy.....

Christ has given us **BOTH** types of GIFTS....

First Gift.....

GOD has once and for all LAVISHLY displayed His **affection** for us in the **GIVING** of **His Son** as the **atoning sacrifice** for our sins.....so we could know... day by day... the depths of His Forgiving Love...

(in the same act)... God also has **CREDITED** us (as a free gift to all who believe) the **PERFECT righteousness** of Jesus' life....for our salvation..... so we could **FELLOWSHIP** with Him in the Holy Spirit..... enjoying His glory and goodness forever...

So we as His Bride can rehearse that reality.... and live in **the good** of that PRIMARY GIFT ....

The freedom and goodness of the gospel becomes the **loving context** out of which we live every aspect of our lives...

Knowing and believing that LOVE He has for us...

We are ready to receive and acknowledge ANOTHER type of Gift Christ has given to every member of His Body...

(that is our **subject** today).....

Christ has given to the church...

**Gifts that WORK**

Power gifts (if you will).....

Some get Spiritual Computers.....Some get vacuum cleaners....

some get spiritual **hearing aids** (discern and interpret)... some get power **washers**.... Some get construction tools..... Some get automatic weapons..... some get Microphones and Loudspeakers....

We **all** get... **Gifts that WORK**... (not **independently**)... but only in the CONTEXT of each and every other empowered gift.... given to the **other members** of the Body...

**PRAY**                    *-Father.... as your children... we WANT **all** your gifts.... We want most to be reminded of the Indescribable Gift of Jesus.....*

*We also want to learn to appreciate... and to appropriate the Gifts which you have imparted to us... in order that we might fulfill all the WORK you called us to do here as the Body of Christ....*

**Pan** out... give you the Broad Context from our study of Ephesians thus far:

First Three Chapters ..... were about....? **Our Calling** out of darkness into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son...

God told us (through Paul) **HOW** God brought us (thru **grace**) into the unsearchable RICHES of being children of God...

He told us how he has formed **ONE BODY** of People... (composed of Jew and Gentile – and every race of man).. under the headship of Jesus Christ....

**Chapter 4**....(so far)

Called to walk in this **Divine Unity** (*spread arms out around congregation*) which we have been brought into through **believing the gospel**.....

We have this unity because.....

We each confess.... that I am no longer **my own Captain**..... but **Jesus** is Lord...

We believe One Gospel.... so we have **one faith**...

We have been Immersed (placed into) the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.... and have obeyed His command to make that invisible reality... **visible** through **BAPTISM**...

All of us who have been immersed into Christ....(by this means) are part of **HIS Body**.... the Spiritual Organism of Jesus Christ here on earth... **the church**....

We are the flesh and bones (if you will) through which the Spirit of God continues to **apply** the redemptive work which Jesus accomplished...

We are now.....the Word **incarnate**.....

We are the Light of the World....

We have **One Head**..... and One God and Father....who is OVER all... and through all... and IN all...

4:1 Paul calls us to walk worthy of that calling.....in a manner that **MAINTAINS** (doesn't mess up) that **unity**.....

Within that **UNITY**..... however... God has designed **individuality**.....

The One People of God.....is made up of INDIVIDUALS.....

People...(each with different stories)..... each with different shapes.....levels of maturity....

And each with a **Specific area of Gifting**..... so that God has declared us to be **individually**..... MEMBERS of one another.

- So that no one person..... or **one type** of gifted people.... or even one family.... can fulfill **the purposes** of God by themselves.....

**We are all designed to FIT TOGETHER....to form a **DIVERSE** UNION... through the gracious **employment** of our gifts.**

(arms around the congregation) – so within this UNION of common spiritual experiences – One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism...one HOPE of our calling)....

God is empowering GIFTS to accomplish His work in and through us.....

**(pot of something on the stove that boils up until it overflows...)**

First 6 verses.... of Ch. 4... Paul has been talking about our Unity....

**Ephesians 4:7-10**

**"But ...grace was given to each one of us** according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he **gave gifts to men.**" (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also

descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might **fill all things.**)"

## Gifts that Work

### 1. Your Gift is Empowered by Grace

The blades on my mower have become very dull..... So I took this 15/16 Wrench .....powered by my own body...(push with legs, pull with arms..)

Called Dave Gay (runs a power equipment business)... he told me (in so many words) that I needed to find someone with some **actual muscle** to get it done!....

So I took it to my neighbor.... not b/c he is strong... but because he has a huge **air compressor** with an impact wrench....

*Describe Air Compressor..... without the compressed air... all the tools and attachments are **worthless**...*

Even with **all that** extra power.....my neighbor and I couldn't get it that nut off.....

Took it Dave... b/c not only do they do this everyday..... but they have a **COMMERCIAL GRADE** impact wrench... with enough air power to build a battleship....

Sadly, even their best tool couldn't get it done.... had to grind the flange off the nut...

**Point** – with a JOB as impossible as building the CHURCH of the LJC ... we need nothing short of Power Tools....

So God has given **EACH** of us Abilities / Talents... designed to run on the **power** of His GRACE.

**Ephesians 4:7**

**"But grace** was given to **each one of us** according to the measure of Christ's **gift**.

Just like an **Impact Wrench** RUNS on the power of the compressed air running through it.....

God has formed spiritual TOOLS... **abilities**... talents.... within each of you...for the building of His church.

Grudem – A **spiritual gift** is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used the **any** ministry of the church. (**broad**)...

Scripture teaches us **here**... Christ has measured out grace (**faith**) according to how big your gift is.....

According to how He intends for it to be used in the context of His church...in a precise way...

**Whenever** we talk about Spiritual gifts within the church... it is tempting for some of you to fall pray to the lie.... that we have **two classes** of Christians ...

Like in school..... you have the “**normal kids**” and then you have the GIFTED and TALENTED.....

The lie.....that some of you buy into..... Is that I am not really **capable**....

Better let the others serve..... I'll stay on the fringes.....

Bible knows NOTHING of that mentality....for people in the church....

God says here (v. 4) .... **EACH** of His children... are GIFTED.... (**no** exceptions)

One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism... One God and Father OVER ALL... and **through ALL**..... an **IN ALL**....

YOU have a **gift!** (if you are a Christian)...You have a God given **CAPACITY** to serve in and through the church.....

The POWER (that your gift runs on) is **God's grace**...

Some of you might be saying.....

- Okay... I understand compressed air..... but **how do I get power from grace?**

Most simply.... your “air hose” is **FAITH** in what He says.... about Himself and about YOU who are in Him.....

You BELIEVE God is **IN you**.... WORKING....to **fill your GIFTING with Himself**....

Just like the compressed air fills up an impact wrench....

But I want to make sure you understand this theologically.... so lets consult Master Theologian Louis Berkhoff – (he says)

(on slide)

**Grace** (in the NT) is the **unmerited operation of God** in the heart of man, effected through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Can't SEPARATE the Grace of God and the Person of the **Holy Spirit**.... (used **synonymously** in Scripture.....

The **HS** takes from the STORE of God's grace in Jesus.... and conveys it to YOU.....

Word (**charis**) used MAINLY in two ways in the NT...

First is to refer to....what we might call.... (the **FREE gift of**)

1) **Redemptive Grace**....

- the **forgiveness** of sin / deliverance from its penalty
- in the reception of the **MERIT** which Christ earned (for us) in His life and death.

It is out of this definition whereby (we learned in Eph. 2) you are **saved by grace**... (and that not of yourselves... it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.)

Some of you here..... need to RECEIVE **that** free gift from God.....

It is the GIFT of the person of Jesus Christ.....

**John 1:12**

"But to all who did receive him, who **believed** in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,"

Apart from JESUS.... no matter how talented you make think you are..... you have no **ACTUAL life** or power in you whatsoever.....

All is vain and empty (without meaning) apart from JESUS.

But for those who (by faith) are **CONNECTED to JESUS**.....*He gives ....(what our text in Eph. 4 is talking about.....*

- 2) **Empowering Grace** – the **active force** that labors and operates through Spiritual Gifts.. for the accomplishment of God's purposes in the world.

These are two different uses of the same word.... because in its essence GRACE is simply the **Holy Spirit** applying the powerful **working of God** into and through our redeemed lives.....

So Paul can say this.....

### 1 Corinthians 15:10

"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, **I worked harder than any of them**, though it was not I, but the **grace** of God that is with me."

In another place.... He says.... do not receive the grace of God **in vain**.....

Instead **WORK together** with and under the power of God's grace.... which flows into you as you **TRUST** Him.

But we have a **perpetual PROBLEM**.....in our Gifts being empowered by Grace...

B/C .... For some of you..... there's a **KINK** in your air hose.....

You actually **PREFER** to trust in yourself..... so you get the **CREDIT**.....

rather than (in weakness) **HUMBLING** yourself before the **LORD** and admitting that you are **NOTHING** without His Power.

You **RELY on** .....(**mostly**) yourself.....

God is calling you this morning to **REPENT** of that self-sufficient **PRIDE**.....

Because it is robbing the **REST of the church** of the **GRACE** of God!

- Ever think of it that way?

If you are walking in pride.... depending on yourself..... you are not only missing out on God's grace for your life..... you are cutting off **supply** intended to flow **THROUGH** you to the church!

Here's some **good news!** God's grace is so powerful.... He will even give you grace to **REPENT** of that sin!

### James 4:5-6

"Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns **jealously** over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?"

*He wants you to be FULL of and empowered by His Spirit...when you are full of YOURSELF or the WORLD..... He gets jealous...*

But **he gives more grace**. Therefore it says, “**God opposes the proud, but gives grace** to the humble.”

Each of you have been a GIFT that is designed to be empowered by GRACE..... so it can work.....

So you can **WALK in** the good works.... which God prepared beforehand for you to **ACCOMPLISH** during your time on earth...

## 2. Your Gift has been **Custom Allotted** to you for Service **in the Church**.

Think about the parable of the talents..... where the Master invested varying amounts in His servants... and gave them instructions....to USE them until He returned....

Some of you have **BIG prominent gifts**.... on the one hand... .BLESS God for that.... on the other hand **FEAR**.... for to whom much has been given MUCH will be required....

Teachers (in particular) you will face much stricter JUDGEMENT for what you have said than all the rest....

Others of you have less prominent gifts.... (serving / administration / **MERCIFUL caring**...goes on behind the scenes....)

Others of you might be gifted in **DISCERNING** God’s will in certain situations.... or in speaking a timely WORD to build up another believer.....

Regardless of the SIZE of your gift..... God is calling you to BELIEVE this morning that HE has **sovereignly MEASURED it out**.... precisely to accomplish His purposes for the good of the WHOLE.

Where we get off base....is (this is very **subtle**)... we start thinking our gifts are all about us.... our fulfillment....

No, CHRIST has measured them out in such a way..... that the church NEEDS all of them..... so we can be **mutually INTERDEPENDENT** on God flowing through and working through the WHOLE Body.....

(repeat above)

So that we can be a WORKING DISPLAY of individual DIVERSITY making up ONE UNION under the banner of Jesus Christ.

In regard to those of you who are already members..... I am really preaching to the choir here.... for ..... **93%** of you are serving the Lord is some ongoing capacity.....

I commend you!.....and exhort you to make sure you KEEP trusting in the LORD moment by moment to empower your gift with His grace.....

Others of you here (7%) or you are not yet a member.....

God has gifted you.....(not in just some general way)..... but in a Sovereignly **SPECIFIC** way to help **build up** His work here in this place where (at least for now) He has placed you.....

God has blessed our congregation with a VARIETY of people who LOVE the Lord and want to serve Him....

But (**hear this!**) we are MISSING some **critical Body Parts**.....

We are PRAYING..... Could be.... God is calling you.... to lay yourself on the altar and say God.... **use my gift** in your Church.... for your glory ... in this place.

#### **1 Peter 4:10-11**

"As each has received a gift, use it to **serve one another**, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

Lastly.... Paul wants us to be MOTIVATED by the fact that....

### 3. Our Gifts are the Manifestation of Christ's **RULE** from heaven.

When Satan and his fellow angels (who wanted glory for themselves) **fell** from heaven.... they became God's **ENEMIES**.....

They were created by God to have Spiritual Power to be exercised in serving His purposes... but they **REBELLED**...and were cast out of heaven....

Then.... Satan **lured Eve** onto His team.... and the whole human race.... joined forces against God.... We became His enemies.....

The whole **world** of humanity.... learned to form cities and nations who intentionally banned together against God....

But ...God **so loved the world** (even in its fallen rebellious state) that He sent His SON.... to redeem all who would believe .....

And on the CROSS... GOD defeated His enemies..... by nailing the punishment for **our CRIMES** upon His own Son.....

**Colossians 2:15**

"He **disarmed** the rulers and authorities and **put them to open shame**, by triumphing over them in him."

That **DECISIVE blow** was dealt ....on the cross.....

To PROVE it was SUCCESSFUL **in liberating** ALL of God's children.....

Who were **POW's** in Satan's camp.....(We were held CAPTIVE by the devil to do His will.....)and under God's wrath.....

God **RAISED Jesus** from the Dead!

But (here in Eph. 4:8) Scripture tells us..... something **even better**.....

There was also a **VICTORY** parade after that **TRIUMPH!**

When Christ **ASCENDED** to the right hand of God the Father..... and God put all things under the FEET of His Risen Son.....

He TOOK (all His people ... from every age)....with Him.... in a procession of Captives He had set free!

And He has given **us GIFTS** ... impartations of Grace Empowered Abilities.....

**So that** (through our exercising those gifts in the context of the church...)

His **FAME**... and **His resurrection glory** can BE SEEN and EXPERINCED all across the globe....

Until He returns..... through the CHURCH.

Here is how Paul says that:

**Ephesians 4:8-10**

"**Therefore** it says, "When he **ascended** on high he led a host of captives, and he **gave gifts to men.**" (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended **far above all the heavens**, that he might **fill all things**.)"

When you TRUST in the LORD... (to fill you with His grace)... and to empower you to faithfully use whatever GIFT you have....

no matter how minimal it might seem to you.....

As we all EMPLOY them TOGETHER to build up the church and bring lost sheep into the fold....

WE together... are manifesting to the spiritual realm.... that Christ is INDEED **ruling**... and reigning ... and that SOON He is coming back to consummate His VICTORY.

We are manifesting a **FORETASTE**... of the age to come..... where we won't need GIFTS anymore.... we won't need faith.....(they will have passed away)

For the GLORY of the LORD will indeed cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.....

Until THEN..... the FULLNESS of Christ... is seen as we exercise the MEASURE of faith He has given us.... to serve each other....and the lost... with our GIFT.

Does your Gift..... Work?