

The Fullness of Christ: Studies in Ephesians (8-4-19)

BECOMING AN EPHESIANS 4 COMMUNITY - PART 5 (A PROPHETIC CHURCH)

Ephesians 4:8-13

⁸ Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." ⁹ (Now this, "He ascended" -- what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) ¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

JESUS IS BUILDING AN EPHESIANS 4 COMMUNITY

- Jesus dies, rises again and He is now building His church (Matt. 16:18).
Eph. 3:10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,
- What will it look like? It'll be an Ephesians 4 community. Unto that end, Jesus releases 5 aspects of His ministry as grace to us so that the church will be built up in quality and quantity. The church is being built up. We have many spots and blemishes right now, but Holy Spirit is preparing us. His goal is vs. 13: *the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*
- **Apostolic**
 - The apostolic is about the heart-beat, the mission of God: Mission, movement, mobilization, and multiplication.
 - There are 25+ apostles named in the New Testament including the Twelve.
 - Q: Where has God sent you (where do you live)? Have you received the Great Commission (to go and make disciples) as a personal mandate from heaven to you?
- **Prophetic**
 - The prophetic is about communicating the heart and mind of God.
 - It calls people back to the covenants of God.
 - OT Prophets called people back to the covenant God made with Moses.
 - NT Prophets call people back to the covenant God made through Jesus (Acts 3:22-23).
 - The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The 5-fold reveals Jesus.
 - Jesus, as The Prophet (Luke 24:19; Heb. 1:1-2), does mighty works and declares the Word of God.
Rev. 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
 - It brings a sense of the presence of God.
 - It calls us to social justice

PROPHETS & PROPHECY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- Agabus (Acts 11:27-30; 21:8-14). Predicted a famine in Judea and Paul's arrest in Jerusalem.
- Judas and Silas. The Apostles and elders in Jerusalem send Judas and Silas with their letter back with Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch. (Acts 15:32)
- Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus (Acts 13:6)
- The gift of prophecy:
 - **1 Cor. 14:1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.**
 - **1 Cor. 14:3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.**
- The book of Revelation is a prophecy about the beauty of Jesus' leadership in the End Times.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS TO AVOID

Pitfalls:

- Weak focus on the testimony of Jesus.
 - An overemphasis on personal prophecy. Not leading people to the cross and resurrection, to Jesus.
 - Receiving identity from giving or receiving prophecy is harmful. Identity is from being rooted in Christ.
 - Sometimes people look for their identity and their sense of worth from the prophetic. It's not the role of the prophetic to bring identity to people. That sense of identity and worth comes from the cross.
 - False prophecy in the OT is usually false words of prosperity and blessing. False prophecy prevents people from truly turning to God. It artificially inflated people so that they will eventually crash. False prophecy hinders people so that they did not seek true repentance that leads to life.
 - True prophecy in NT points to Jesus and His ways of maturing and blessing people. It's the testimony or witness of Jesus. Jesus' death burial resurrection and calls people to respond to the Gospel from the God who is alive and speaking now.
- Over-emphasis on the spontaneous.
 - The prophetic brings a sense of the "Now!" when there is a spirit of prophecy. But it needs to be focused on the sense of the witness of Jesus now.
 - Holy Spirit takes of the things that belong to Jesus and make them known to us. The glory of the Holy Spirit is not particularly in the spontaneous, but in the pointing to Jesus.
John 16:14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.
 - Spontaneity and sensitivity need to be balanced with strategy, planning, and discipline, otherwise, there can be little progress even after years of giving and receiving prophesying.
 - We must contend for a mature expression of the prophetic aspect of Jesus' ministry. We want to have true prophetic ministry that points to Jesus, that bears witness to Him, that testifies of Jesus.
1 Thes. 5:20-21 Do not despise prophecies. ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good.
- Some people think they have to be spontaneous to be prophetic. They think they are not being prophetic because they planned and strategized it ahead of time. We need "Strategic Prophetic Planning."

- Confusing the Diagnosis with the Answer/Cure
 - If someone discerns something, they might try to use more discernment to fix it.
 - **The answer is applying the Gospel, not more prophetic.** The main role of the prophetic church is to call people to respond to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Repentance. Faith. The finished work of Jesus. ***Hebrews 1:1-2 ¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.***

BECOMING A PROPHETIC CHURCH

- The heartbeat of the prophetic church is to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. The prophetic church is awakened to its role in intercession and unceasing prayer. The prophetic church infuses the Body of Christ with the sense of the urgency of the times in which we live.
- The prophetic release of Jesus' grace to the church is needed so that that the Body of Christ will mature and grow. ***Eph. 4:16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.***
- God is preparing and pruning His church in preparation for Jesus' return. The purpose is to focus on the main and core thing so that there will be true fruitfulness - so that each part will function properly. When each part functions properly, the body will build itself up in love. ***John 15:2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.***
 - The Ephesians 4 community does not come about by the world's ways.
 - We need to acknowledge our unity in the Spirit.
 - We need to appreciate the uniqueness of Christ through each person and not expect everyone to be the same as us.
 - We need to learn to submit one-to-another in the fear of God so that our weaknesses will be covered and our strengths multiplied. So that we can function properly.

Eph. 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Ephesians 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism;⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.