

Spiritual Gifts Activation Seminar

Lesson Nine: Introduction to the Ascension Gifts

Text: Ephesians 4:7-14

However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

Ascension Gifts

- After His death and resurrection Jesus ascended into heaven and assumes a position of invincible authority on earth and in heaven
- At the very time He assumed this position in heaven He gave these five ministry gifts to appointed men and women on earth.
- A common characteristic of these gifts are that they have the potential to bring a bit of heaven to earth. Heaven's grace and authority are manifested on earth through those exercising these gifts.

The Believer's Position in Heaven

- "God...has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ" (Eph.1:3)
- "For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus" (v.6)
- Because we are with Jesus in heaven while we walk this earth we can operate in these spiritual gifts

Various Levels of Function and Spheres of Influence.

- I believe all Christians have some level or potential of the five-fold ministry inside them.
- On a scale of 1 to 10:
 - 1. You bless some Christian friends and/or family with your [pastoral] gift.
 - 5. You have the reputation in your church of encouraging and nurturing young believers.
 - 10. You are a nationally known pastor and have written well-known books that have built up believers.

Equipping Gifts: A unique and very important characteristic about the ascension gifts is that they are given to the body of Christ to equip all members to minister.

- For example, if you have the gift of evangelism you have the responsibility to equip other believers to evangelize like you do.
- A local church is not mature unless all believers are equipped and functioning in their gifts, and all five ascension gifts are manifesting.

The Five Fingers of God

- The thumb (Apostle) can touch (operate in), all five.
- The pointer (Prophet) points to what God is saying
- The middle (Evangelist) is the longest. He reaches the lost.
- The ring finger (Pastor) is “married” to the church
- The pinky (Teacher) is the only one who can get into your ear.



Comparing Contemporary Christian Leadership with New Testament Leadership

- The term most often used for Christian leadership today is pastor.
- In the New Testament it was apostle. Pastor was least often used.
- Today’s most essential qualification in most churches is educational degrees. In the New Testament it was character and ministry fruitfulness.

Apostle

An apostle is commissioned by God with authority from heaven to plant new churches and to establish the government of the kingdom of God within an assigned sphere of ministry. They also typically provide helpful leadership over a number of churches in spiritual matters which is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those churches."

Prophet

A prophet is commissioned by God to speak an immediate message from God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance. His/her ministry primarily brings edification, exhortation and comfort to God’s people. But prophets are also known for their prophetic intercession. They predict future events and make known to God’s people their callings and destiny.

Evangelist

The gift of evangelist is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to share the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus’ disciples and responsible members of the body of Christ.

Pastor

The gift of pastor is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.

Teacher

The gift of teaching is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the body and its members in such a way that others will learn.

Characteristics of Budding Five-fold Gifts

- Apostle – Visionary, faith, starting a ministry, prayer group, etc.
- Prophet – Loves spending much time in prayer, intimacy. Hearing, seeing revelation.
- Evangelist – Leading others to Christ is the center of their ministry.
- Pastor – They get their fulfillment out of nurturing believers and helping them grow.
- Teacher – Can’t get enough of the Bible. Loves sharing revelations from the Bible with anyone who will listen.