

Series: Living Life as the New People of God
—A Study in Ephesians

God's Gift to the New People of God

Ephesians 4:7-16 (NIV)

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says:

*"When he ascended on high,
he led captives in his train
and gave gifts to men."*

⁹*(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

¹⁴*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

1. GOD HAS GIVEN GRACE TO EACH ONE OF US.

v. 7 "But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it."

- Paul moves from what God has for all of us (unity) to what He has for each of us (diversity.)
- God has lavished His grace upon us.

2. CHRIST REIGNS VICTORIOUSLY OVER SIN AND DEATH TO SECURE OUR POSITION.

v. 8-10 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." ⁹(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

- Jesus' post-resurrection ascension to heaven pronounced His victory over Satan, sin, death and the grave.
- What does "descended to the lower, earthly regions" mean?

3. GOD GIVES LEADERS TO THE CHURCH FOR A REASON.

v. 11-12 "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

- God gives spiritual gifts to individual members of the body, but He gives the gift of leaders to the whole body.
- Two things must happen for explosive growth to occur:

The leaders must let go of the ministry, and
The ministers must let go of the leadership.

4. MATURITY IS THE GOAL.

v. 13-16

We are to move toward maturity in order to:

- Obtain unity
- Gain knowledge
- Understand the fullness of Christ
- Become grounded
- Grow up

Jesus came to this earth on a mission. He conquered sin and death so that He might present to His bride gifts of leaders to build up the body of Christ.