

CHRIST'S GIFTS TO HIS CHURCH

(Ephesians 4:7-10)

Amy Carmichael, an Irish missionary to South India once said, “*Every Christian has a spiritual gift to use for the Lord. Therefore, each Christian should get to know what gifts they have and learn how to use them as they live the life of a disciple.*” If we truly desire and aim that our lives as believers of Christ would have a lasting impact and would count for eternity, we must be engaged in using and exercising our spiritual gifts to serve the church and the world for the glory of God. Ephesians 4:7-10 presents two encouraging motivations in employing our spiritual gifts.

1 God Himself has gifted us to fulfill our _____.

In Ephesians 4:7, Paul shifts his discussion from the theme of the unity of the church to the issue of the diversity within the church. This diversity is in relation to the spiritual gifts given as a grace to each believer. This grace is not the grace of salvation, but the grace of service (Eph. 3:8). Spiritual gifts are the God-given, Christ-endowed, and Spirit empowered abilities bestowed to every Christian for the purpose of equipping the church to carry out its ministry and mission until Jesus returns. The Triune God Himself gives every believer these unique gifts and distinct capacities in order to serve other Christians, to strengthen the faith of fellow believers and to help the church fulfill its mission in spreading the gospel of Christ to the lost world (Eph. 4:11; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-30; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). Every Christian, then, is valuable. There is no useless Christian in the body of Christ.

2. Jesus Himself has paid the _____ to bestow gifts to His church.

Every spiritual gift is a blood-bought gift from our crucified, risen, ascended and reigning Christ. In Ephesians 4:8-10, Paul borrows the imagery from Psalm 68:18 which depicts God as a conquering King who subdued all His enemies and who ascended on high in triumphant celebration. As our victorious King who triumphed on the Cross over sin, death and Satan himself, our Lord Jesus ascended back to heaven as the exalted and reigning King who defeated all His foes (Eph. 4:8, Col. 2:15). Paul also alludes to the incarnation and exaltation of Christ when he mentions Jesus' descent into the earth and His ascension into the heavens (Eph. 4:9-10). As our ascended and reigning Lord, Jesus gave gifts to His church. The first gift Jesus gave to His church was the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17). With the sending of the promised Holy Spirit in Acts 2 comes the bestowal of spiritual gifts to Christ's church. Every spiritual gift is a precious and costly gift from our Lord Jesus Himself. It cost our Lord His eternal glory and His own sin-bearing death on the Cross to bless us not only with eternal salvation but also with spiritual gifts that we might serve Him and His church.

The best expression of gratitude to the One who gave His all to secure our spiritual gifts is to use them for good of His church and the glory of His name. A helpful way in discovering and cultivating our spiritual gifts is by following these four fundamental principles: (a) Guidance through prayer and self-evaluation; (b) Involved in ministry opportunities; (c) Feedback through counsel and confirmation of fellow believers; (d) Trustworthiness in using one's spiritual gifts.
