

Pastor Lenard Tavernelli—United with Christ--Ephesians 4:7-12 - Church Is a Team Sport

Main Idea: Serve to build up the church because Jesus has gifted each of you and given church leaders to equip

Sermon Summary: Church is a team sport. All Christians are called to serve—this is God’s will. That is why the Spirit has given every Christian a spiritual gift—which they are to use to serve others in the body of Christ. God did not intend for Christians to mature alone—He gave the church. The leaders’ main role is to equip the congregation to serve. God’s purpose is to unite all things in Christ.

1. By His grace, Jesus Christ has gifted each one of us (4:7-10)

- It is God who gives us life and every single talent, skill, treasure you have (Deut. 8:18)
- When we become Christians, the Spirit gives each of us spiritual gifts. So boasting is totally excluded.
- You may not have chosen the spiritual gift you were given. But you have it—and you should use it.
- All Christians have the Holy Spirit in measure. In the pattern of Psalm 68 (God delivering Israel, plundering the Egyptians and establishing a meeting place), Jesus descended to us to save us plundering us from captivity to the world and Satan. He is making us into a new temple for God to dwell among us.
- We are not to look at others envying their spiritual gifts but rather be thankful for our gift(s). And do not “hoard” your gift using it only for yourself. God gave you the gift to use for the benefit of others. If you don’t, it’s like the hand saying to the rest of the body: “Count me out, I’m not helping.”
- If you are unsure of your spiritual gift(s), Pastor Lenard suggested speaking with him.
 - 1 Cor 12:7-11; To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.
 - Rom. 12:6-8; Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

2) For his purpose, Jesus Christ has given church leaders (11-12)

- Leaders are gifts to the church lest there be no oversight resulting in chaos and no organization. (The Trellis and the Vine book and example Pastor Lenard noted).
- 1 Peter 5:1-3; I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.
- The purpose of leaders is to equip the saints for ministry. How? Thru prayer, teaching, counsel, setting an example.

- Jesus told Peter: feed My sheep. Feeding thru Scripture understanding—and motivating to serve.
- 2 Tim 3:16-17; All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

3) Specific to Bethel

- Our Mission: Proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ and grow mature disciples for the glory of God
- Our four C's (Measures): Bible Content; Godly Character; Loving Competence; Compelling Community
- Our discipleship pathway or roadmap:
 - Gather (as on Sunday morning); Grow (eg: Bethel kids, Equip, Community Groups); Practice (serving as Christ gifts us); Go (to reach our neighborhood and the world for Christ).

Questions (select some to discuss):

- Do you believe the Spirit has given every Christian—including you—a spiritual gift? Were you excluded?
- Do you have a pretty good idea of your spiritual gift? What makes you think that? What is that gift(s)?
- Would you say you are using your spiritual gift(s) for the benefit of others at Bethel? If not, why?
- Is it surprising to you a church leader's primary task is to equip the saints to do ministry—and not to do it all themselves?
- When Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave spiritual gifts to us (4:8). He also ascended so He might fill all things (4:10). What do you think that means?
- The three items specific to Bethel (Mission, Four C's, Discipleship Pathway)—are any (or all) confusing to you? Are they helpful to think about ministry—or not so much?
- Do you see yourself growing in the 4 Cs (Measures)? In what ways do you see yourself growing? Or stagnant?