

**Preaching Christ....  
...by the power of the Holy Spirit  
...and the authority of the Word of God**

**Date:** 14 August 2022  
**Services:** *Across the diocese*  
**Series:** Sharing Jesus for Life  
**Title:** LIFE  
**Passage:** Ephesians 4:7-16  
**Outline:**

1. The **gifts** of **God**
2. For the **people** of **God**
  - a. To **build** them **up**
  - b. ...to **unity**
  - c. ...and **maturity**

- This is the **third** and **final** of three sermons following the launch the diocesan strategic plan – one on **each word** of the **catch phrase** – **SHARING JESUS** and **LIFE**
- If **SHARING** focuses on our desire to share Jesus with others - the second word – **JESUS** – focusses on our desire that every believer, every church, every ministry is centred around **JESUS** - so that are we **captivated** by him... **enlivened** by him – **inspired** by him – and so can't **HELP** but share Jesus with others.
- So now to **LIFE**
- When we say that our aim is to **SHARE JESUS for LIFE...** there is a little **word play** going here...
- That is – we are sharing Jesus so that **others** may find **LIFE** through **knowing Jesus**
- BUT also - we are **SHARING JESUS** – for the **term of our nature** **LIFE...** that is – this is not a **temporary measure...** not a strategy we are embracing for a **season** with a **time limit** – we want **all** our people in **all** our churches to be about the work of **SHARING JESUS** – - **all our lives...**
- We are talking about a **lifetime** of **servicing Jesus...**
- A lifetime of taking Jesus **seriously**
- A lifetime of **building one** another up in our relationship with Jesus
- A lifetime of **servicing others**
- A lifetime of **ministry**
- A life time of longing for others to know our shepherd too//
- Here is how the plan reads at the top of this third column

A **DISCIPLING** church producing  
life-long disciples of Jesus who are  
trained and equipped for ministry.

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- I commented last week that there is no such thing in the Bible as two types of Christians – the ones who just **turn up** for church every now and again and the *really* keen ones who are involved in everything.
- This reflects **that // a discipling church** – helps all disciples of Jesus become **keener and clearer** in their **discipleship** – which simply means – **keener and clearer** in their **following** of **Jesus**.
- A disciple is a **follower** and **learner**... and the **Bible's heart** – **God's heart** - is for **all** Christians – to be **life-long learners** who are follow the **shepherd** with greater **focus**, more **determination**, deeper **obedience**, less **distraction**... **all the time!** //
- I hope you'll turn with me now to Ephesians 4:7-16 –...

And we discover...

1. The **gifts** of **God**
2. For the **people** of **God**
  - a. To **build** them **up**
  - b. ...to **unity**
  - c. ...and **maturity**

- Frist:

**1. THE GIFTS OF GOD**

- Have a look with me – <sup>7</sup> *But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.*
- It's so clear and so exciting that God has given **each** of us **gifts** to use in the service of others.
- The **grace apportioned** us – are **gifts** he has given
- Thankfully – we don't all have the **same** gifts – and there are various lists of gifts in the New Testament, none of which are exhaustive.
- Might be hospitality – gift – ministry
- Music
- Serving
- Hosting
- Leading
- Caring
- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Flower arranging
- Speaking about Jesus
- teaching the Bible
- Leading small groups
- RE in schools
- Doing craft in kids' ministry
- Praying
- Listening

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- Organising
- ...doesn't matter
- God has apportioned to **you** // certain gifts ///
- What's my gift?
- many books and courses have been constructed to help people work out what their spiritual gifts are...
- It's not that hard!
- Your gift = what you're **good** at and what you **love doing** ///
- Can you think what that is...? or a number of things? Get on and use those gifts in the service of God...
- There are however, five **specific gifts** mentioned here which God gave to the early church at this time – have a look with me – v11 *Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers*
- Why were **these** gifts given? /

## **2. FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

- Back to Ephesians 4... he gave these gifts - v12 *to equip his people for works of service,*
- Two were **foundational**... Ephesians 2:20 says that the church was built on the **foundation** of the **apostles** and **prophets**... they were **1<sup>st</sup> century** offices... not **repeated**... **sent** and **commissioned** by **Christ himself** as **the early church leaders to establish the church**...
- And then **evangelists** – who to **this day** proclaim the **good news** of Jesus...
- And **pastors** and **teachers** – like **ministers** and **others** who **teach** and **care** for God's **people**...
- And what's **their job**? //
- v12 – *to equip/prepare God's people for works of service*...
- **Fascinating** words used here... the word translated '**prepare**' means to **restore** to **original condition**... in **secular Greek** it was used of **setting broken bones** or **mending fishing nets**.
- **Here** - It means that **pastors** get **alongside** people – people from all sorts of **backgrounds** – and in a whole range of **conditions**... and through a range of methods, help **mend them**... **restore** them... **equip** them... so they are ready to **serve**...
- And that brings us to the **other** fascinating word here – the word used for **works of SERVICE**... - the word originally meant '**waiter**' – one who **served** on **tables**... but comes to be used of **any sort of service**.
- And that is the role of **all God's people** – **ALL saints** – **serve!** –
- we put **ourselves** at the **service** of others... we **wait** on **others**...we do **good** to **all** – as their **servants**... using our **gifts** – //
- and pastors and teachers // help **us** get **ready to serve**.
- And what is the **point** of all this?
- Where is all this heading?

### **A. TO BUILD THEM UP**

- back to v12 – he gave pastors and teachers to *equip his people for works of service so that the body of*

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***Christ may be built up...***

- What a beautiful **picture**
- Pastors and teachers get the people of God **ready** to serve each **other**...
- And as we **serve** each other, the **body** of **Christ** – the **family** of God is **built up**
- We grow **strong, clear, focused, passionate, immovable**... we stay **focused** on **Jesus** – we're not easily **swayed** or **distracted**...
- And where is **this** heading?

**B. TO UNITY**

- Because – v13 - *until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God*
- So we all end up on the **same page**
- **Unified** in the **faith** – that is – in **doctrine** – in what we **believe** –
- And **unified** – in the **knowledge** of the **Son of God**
- Unified in **knowing Jesus!**
- Again – what a **great picture**...
- Not heading off in **different directions**
- No one promoting **one idea** or one **ministry** over **another**...
- To **UNITY** -

**C. AND MATURITY**

- – v13 again - *until 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.*
- mature...
- **Grown up**
- That maturity which Paul describes as attaining to the whole **measure** of the **fullness** of **Christ**...
- **Maturity** – which is God's people – being **full** of **Christ**...
- ...being **all** God **desires** for us.... /////
- Let me ask you – if you are a part of one of our churches – what is the **best** thing about your **church**? /
- I was part of many presentation boards in another diocese... and when we had a conversation with a prospective minister for a parish, the bishop would often ask the parish nominators – what do you love about your parish – what keeps you coming back?
- And more often than not, the answer was something like – well – the morning tea is great – and we are very close....
- What I longed to hear was – well – we are using our **gifts** to **serve** one another... and as a result – we are being **built up** – so that we are **united** in the **faith** and in our **knowledge** of Jesus Christ – and are becoming **mature!**... or **SOMETHING** like **that!**!
- **This** is the church as God **intended it to be**...!
- So – how do we get there...??

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- I want to finish then... by taking you through that **right hand** column of our **strategic plan** – it would be good if you had a copy **handy**...

A **DISCIPLING** church producing life-long disciples of Jesus who are trained and equipped for ministry.

....Such an exciting prospect

**How does it happen?**

This is what the plan says...

- Church services that involve and develop the gift ministry of believers – people using their gifts
- Preaching which transforms and equips believers for life-long discipleship – preaching by which people are mended – restored – so that they can serve...
- **Then with regard to Bible study groups:**
- All church members encouraged to join a Bible study group – that is going help people in their life-long discipleship!! (Example – people who joined who had never been in one before...)
- Structure and content of Bible study groups facilitate personal growth in all aspects of discipleship – these are not academic exercises... but where the word of God – touches our very hearts and lives.

**MORE GENERALLY: (have a look at the list if you have it there)**

- Develop and promote resources to facilitate personal daily Bible reading and prayer – what a great difference that makes in the life of every believer!
- Encourage and facilitate personal prayer partners, for the purposes of mutual encouragement, accountability and support in walking with Jesus – I used to meet with two other guys every week – to share and pray... so good!s
- Train and equip Bible study leaders – so that those with the gifts, have the skills
- Train and equip pastoral carers
- Train and equip lay service leaders
- Train and equip Bible readers and prayers for church services
- Train and equip a welcoming team for services and events
- Train and equip people to disciple others
- Train, equip and develop a growing team of preachers and teachers
- Develop and resource age-appropriate ministries (such as children, youth, young adults, retirees, young mothers, etc)
- Encourage and facilitate participation in conferences, seminars and online courses for people wanting to go deeper in their faith

**And what difference would all this make?**

- ↑ trained leaders for ministries

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- ↑ people in Bible study groups
- ↑ number of ministries
- ↑ people involved in ministries
- ↑ number of people across all ages and backgrounds within the church

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Again - I trust you may continue to look prayerfully and carefully over the strategic plan – and see what are the **3-4 ideas** which you can **immediately implement** which will make a difference in the **life** and **ministry** of your **church**...

...in THIS instance – from this **right-hand** column – so that **our churches are full of people committed to life-long discipleship**

**People who use**

**The gifts of God**

For the

**People of God**

**So that God's people are built up**

**To unity**

**And maturity**

... for when that happens,

...we will be **people, churches,** and a **whole diocese**

...**immersed** in – and **ready** and **equipped** for - the **work** of – the great **privilege** of

**SHARING JESUS FOR LIFE**

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