



## Christ's Gift of Those Who Serve

God is a loving God who blesses His children richly with heavenly gifts (cf: [Luke 11:13](#)). This doesn't necessarily translate to material blessings, as we've seen previously, but God's gifts are meant to build us up spiritually and draw us into a deeper relationship with Himself.

The gifts God gave us are many, including grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love. All unearned, unmerited, and undeserved. As Paul wrote in [Romans 5:8](#), ***"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*** Yet there are even more gifts he has bestowed on His beloved: others who serve Him and His Church.

***But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."***

***And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. [Eph 4:7-8, 11-13](#)***

For clearer context of the above passage, I did not quote [verses 9 and 10](#) which are parenthesized in the English text. This helps us visualize how Paul is emphasizing *specific* gifts that Christ gave to the Church when he arose from the grave and ascended to heaven. Mainly, the chosen apostles and prophets of the early church era, and evangelists, pastors, and teachers of the church age in which we now live. And what gifts these are! The apostles like Paul, Peter, and John, gave us the written gospels and foundational New Testament letters to help us understand the critical tenants of the Christian faith. As Paul said in [Eph 2:20](#), our faith was ***"built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone."*** As I've commented before, we gentiles can thank apostle Paul for his part in bringing the gospel to us even today.

With the closing of the canon of Scripture, the need for the exclusive, Christ-appointed position of apostleship to bring new, previously unknown teaching, instruction, and prophecy directly from God's mouth to His people has concluded. According to [John 14:26](#) and [Revelation 22:19](#), God has revealed all we need to thrive in the faith through His written word and the Holy Spirit. Yet, the gospel still must be proclaimed, and disciples must be raised up in biblical truth and love.



Today, the Lord has given us the wonderful gift of godly evangelists, pastors, and teachers **for the equipping of the saints for the work of service** and the **building up of the body of Christ**. A pastor's job is to help each of us grow in the **unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God**. The walk of faith is difficult and the path is narrow; correctly interpreting Scripture, and holding oneself accountable to abstain from sin and grow in faith, is not something we can do as an island nor without help.

You may have not thought of your pastor as a gift. But if he is indeed faithful to preaching the Word, instructing you in the ways of the Lord, holding you accountable to living rightly, uniting the Church in the faith, and helping you mature toward the fullness of Christ, he certainly is a gift from the Lord!

The work of a good pastor is often arduous and thankless, and requires stamina and dedication that few of us likely appreciate. It can also be a lonely role as many lean on him, but he may have few to lean on. In some places, being a pastor is a deadly job – he's the first target of severe persecution as a visible, public representative of the faith. Being a godly pastor is not for the faint of heart nor those weak in the Spirit of Christ.

Let's not forget to pray for our good pastors. Pray that God would keep them strong, dedicated, surrendered to His will, protected from evil, and act as a powerful voice for the gospel and truth. Tell your pastor that you appreciate his service, humility, and heart for God's Word and the Church. Support him with your love and resources. And remember that a good pastor, who has committed his life to ministering to Christ's flock, leading us in truth, sound doctrine, and unity in the faith, is yet another of the amazing gifts that our risen Messiah has given us.

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece