

Week 1 Sermon Outline

Gifts from the Ascended Christ

Ephesians 4:7-13

Intro:

- Recent studies show that between 75-150 churches close every week in the United States.¹
- Statistics regarding the state of pastorless churches in Missouri.
- Seminary enrollment in many places is dwindling.²
- Many local churches struggling to find the leaders they need.
- What are we to do; where are we to look?

Main Idea: The ascended Christ has given His Church the leaders she needs—but those leaders need to answer that call.

- I. **Every believer is gifted for Christian service (v7-10).**
- II. **Some believers are gifted for Christian leadership (v11-12)**
- III. **It takes all believers working together to reach maturity in Christ (v13)**

Conclusion: Do you believe that the ascended Christ has given His Church the leaders she needs? Only when every church begins to look for the Christ-given gifts within her fellowship will we discover how faithful Jesus has been in resourcing His people. Who might Jesus be calling to Christian leadership here today?

Closing Illustration: There is the story of a pastor who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation, "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets." It's the same with the leaders that churches need. The good news is that the ascended Christ has resourced His Church...the bad news is that far too many are ignoring that call.

¹ <https://religionnews.com/2021/05/26/study-more-churches-closing-than-opening/>

² <https://ministrywatch.com/enrollment-declines-and-shifts-continue-at-evangelical-seminaries/>

Prayer Prompts

1. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you to a particular sphere of Christian ministry in your church.
2. Pray for your church's current leaders.
3. Pray for the churches in your community, Missouri, and around the world—that they would discover the leaders they need.
4. Pray for current college and seminary graduates—that the Holy Spirit would guide them to places of service.

Reflection Questions

1. Are you convinced that Jesus has gifted His Church with the resources she needs to accomplish His purposes?
2. Why do most churches instinctually believe that the leaders she needs will come from outside of her membership instead of from within? How might my church begin to develop and equip her own members?
3. How do I presently use the gifts that Christ has given me?
4. Who can I ask to help me discern how I might be best gifted to serve my church?
5. How can my church better identify those Jesus is calling to Christian leadership?