

"GROWTH IN THE CHURCH BY THE CAPTIVE"

Eph. 4:7-10

Paul develops his subject of seven unities in the church. He now talks about the qualities of the members of Christ's church.

He is going to talk about their qualities, their function. How they can best use their talents and gifts in his service.

By laying down an essential truth - every gift a man has is the gift of the grace of Christ - giver of gifts.

V.F.
This passage Paul describes the ascension of our Lord -- His triumphal entry into glory -- leading captivity captive and bestowing gifts -- Heavenly gifts upon men.

V.F.
He ascended up far above all Heavens -- above the 1st Heaven where birds fly and clouds pass by; above the second Heaven - milky way - stars. And finally into the Heaven of Heavens where God has his throne and where the Lord is preparing the Holy City - the New Jerusalem.

Our Lord born of a virgin died for our sins according to the Scriptures. This was God's plan through out the ages that Christ should die for our sins. Without the blood there is no remission of sin.

The manger and the cross are too meaningful signs and seals of God's love.

He is the first fruits of those who shall be raised from the dead -- He is the morning star.

Paul writes that he ascended -- "leading captivity captive", and now "giving gifts to men". How beautiful!

Some day this same Lord shall return to earth.

Each event in the life of our Lord points to the next event and all to the completion of this age.

He that descended is the same one that ascended up above all Heaven.

A hush came over that little band of followers walking with their risen Lord up the slopes of (Mount of Olives.)

At the brow of the hill he stopped -- lifted up his hands in blessing upon them. A chariot of light engulfed Him as he was swept out of their sight.

They could not help it -- standing -- looking upward. They must not tarry too long.

Angel came in garments of light and turned the Disciples back to their work.

We ask, why this separation? Why leave us Lord? Stay with us.

Upper Room he said "It is expedient that I go away."

Note (some reasons) why our Lord ascended.

Ascended

I. TO HIS THRONE TO DIRECT THE ADVENT OF HIS KINGDOM

Not lost the battle.

He directs war against spiritual enemies. Directs our work.

Twinkling of an eye - He will return.

II. TO BECOME THE OBJECT ON HIGH OF OUR PRAYERS AND HOPES

Lift up our hearts and souls Heavenward - Godward.

Phil. 3:20 - Our conservation is in Heaven.

Col. 3:2 - Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Windows of our souls are ever opened Heavenward.

Our treasures are there - by and by our friends are there - our family over there.

Sad if we left in death and Christ remained here.

III. TO GIVE US FAITH - NOT SIGHT

If He were here on this earth we would try to get to the Master.

Faith - what we do not see - invisible.

2 Cor. 4:18.

The More material - a religion is the more unspiritual it is.

Short Story

We have no Priest for our eyes.

- Altar
- Gold and Silver
- Rites or Rituals

Texas oil man getting married
 Nervous. Told Preacher, fee to proportion to Bravity of
 Service - if use long service, not give one cent.
 Day - ranch home.
 Preacher to Man - "Take Her?"
 " " Woman - "Take Him?"
 Closed ceremony pronouncing TOOK!
 Ceremony 5 words -
 P.S. He got \$500.00 fee
 or to be bring \$100.00 a word.

Our Temple is the temple of God in Heaven.

With the Temple - sacrifices - feasts - prone to idolatry.

Baptism and Lord's Supper superstition added - Baptism is regeneration,
 Lord's Supper brings grace - No.

That is why the first little wooden building here was good as a cathedral
 from which to call on the Lord.

IV. TO SECURE OUR INHERITANCE

Here we are in a dark world with a body made of clay and dirt. How can I
 ever be assured that I will make it to Heaven?

He is there to keep our inheritance for us. Luke tells us about his days in
 the flesh on this earth. He began his work of redemption down here in the flesh
 and brings it to glorious conclusion in Glory, finally presents us faultless before
 the Throne of God. Heb. 7:25, John 10:28.

I may fall into the dust of the ground - what of my inheritance? The Lord died,

buried, raised.

We did not know what it is to die, be wrapped in a winding sheet and put in a sepulcher.

I Thess. 4:13-14 - Promise--fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

V. TO INTERCEDE FOR US

Understands - sympathizes.

What became of the body of our Lord? Did it dissolve back to dust. No, he ascended back into Heaven. I Tim. 3:16. Great is the mystery.

Paul met him on Damascus Road. "Who art Thou Lord?" Acts 9:5. In glory he is the same blessed Lord.

VI. TO GIVE GIFTS

One of Christ's ascension gifts was the Holy Spirit. There is no limit to his abounding presence.

Some have natural gifts as business - player - etc. But there are gifts of grace, different gifts, when we gather in the church, each brings his grace gift.

Plan and purpose for your life. Receive gifts he gives you and the church is blessed. The church needs all of you - eye cannot say to the foot - I do not need

you. How poor a beginning when I first began to preach at 18 years of age, I could only try but God gives the ability and message.

Ascension is not Christ deserted, but Christ is now filling the world.

He led captivity captive.

Psalm 68:18.

V 17 - "The chariots of God are 20,000 - even thousands of angels."

He took captivity those that tried to make him captive.

What tried to hold him captive?

Sin and the world.

Death and the grave - tried to hold and bind him. Grave could not keep.

Samson broke the chains and ropes.

Low in the grave he lay

Jesus my Saviour;

Waiting the coming day

Jesus my Lord.

Up from the grave he arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er his foes,
He arose a victor from the dark domain
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Satan tried to capture him - Christ ascended up on high. He led captivity captive.

V. 7 - Unto everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Alexander McClarren spoke of living near the New Forest. "I use to hear much about what they called "rolling fences".

A man received or took a little piece of the King's land on which he built a house and put a fence around it. Which could be slowly and silently pushed outward by slow degrees and enclosed, year by year, a wider area.

We Christians have our own little plot. We have as much as we desire. We have as much as we take, we have as much as we can use and can hold.

"Lord, I believe help Thou mine unbelief." A prayer for every soul.

P. P. Bliss - A young man when he wrote "Oh! How I love Jesus!"