

I. Review

- A. There are five primary ministry giftings that Jesus has given to individuals in the church that build the church up in love for Jesus and for one another. These gifts are the essential and God ordained vehicle through which the church is built up or grows up in love and maturity. If these gifts are not given by Jesus, encouraged in the church, and received by the church, we cannot walk out the greatest theme and commandment: to love God and others to it's God-intended fullness. (Rom. 12:1-13; 1 Cor. 12:7, 22, 25-31, 14:1; Eph. 4:16; 1 Pet. 4:7-11)

- B. Critical Understandings - There are a few absolutely critical truths concerning the five-fold ministry gifts we must understand in order to move forward rightly as we seek to see them more established and experienced in our midst. (Rom. 12:1-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31; Eph. 4:7-11; 1 Tim. 3:1-13)
 - 1. Jesus is All
 - 2. We have access to all the gifts by the same Spirit
 - 3. These gifts equip the whole church for ministry
 - 4. These gifts are given by grace alone, not spiritual merit
 - 5. Leadership is granted based upon spiritual merit alone, not upon gifting
 - 6. Only function rightly in relational unity and trust
 - 7. Diverse yet equal

II. Five-Fold Builders

- A. The five-fold ministry gifts and other gifts of the Spirit are given in a sequential order in two instances in scripture. This sequence is not to be taken as an order of importance, or authority structure as it often is. Rather, the sequence is a framework of how the gifts complement and build upon one another. The scriptures present this idea as a building being built, or a healthy physical body. (1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:19-22, 4:13-16; Heb. 3:3-4; Rev. 21:2, 14)
 - 1. The Foundation - There are three instances in which apostles and prophets are recognized as the ones who's gifts establish the foundation on which the church is established. Some believe that the laying of the foundation was a once-for-all reality and so those gifts no longer are needed. However, as we looked at last week, there is nothing in the bible that supports the idea of those gifts ceasing. So we should conclude, then, the foundation is constantly shored up and established within the church

primarily through the gifts of the apostle and prophet. (Eph. 2:19-22, 3:1-7; Rev. 18:20)

2. Building on the Foundation, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers - As apostles and prophets are keeping the foundation of the church true and sound, evangelists, pastors, and teachers build the walls and bulwarks of the church.

III. Titles and Spheres

- A. It is very clear each of the five-fold gifts vary in influence and power among the individuals who carry the gifts. For example, local influence versus national influence or a constant greatly impactful ministry versus a seasonal small impact ministry. When these variances become clear, the question of recognition through titles or levels of power comes into the conversation. A common example of this would be the language of an individual having the office of, gift of, ministry of, or manifestation of a certain gift.
- B. Although we do see these types of titles and distinctions in the scriptures, it remains very challenging as to how and when they were assigned, as well as if there were varying degrees of delegated authority that came with them.
 1. In my opinion, the focus upon granting or honoring of titles within the modern charismatic church has mostly been unhelpful and even negative in its fruit, and I currently wonder if we simply lack maturity and understanding to grant titles within the current cultural expression.
 2. In light of these things, our current focus as an elder team here at Restoration will be primarily recognizing, encouraging, and granting platforms for the exercising and growth of the gifts. We believe that titles and spheres will manifest and be recognized organically within and by the body. (Acts 13:1; Gal. 2:7-9)

IV. Five-Fold Practical Breakdown

- A. Apostles - Of all the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the gift of apostleship is by far the most unfamiliar and unclear to the church. Simply put, the gift of apostle is the gift to establish both spiritual and organizational foundations in individuals and corporate church families. Apostles are uniquely gifted to see the weaknesses and strengths of the overall spiritual and organizational health of the church in both

individuals and corporate families. They often identify where and how individuals' callings and giftings best fit within the body. Their primary heart and message is establishing the major truths or concepts which best facilitate the fullness of life and love in and with Jesus and one another. They generally have a small number of major or essential themes that they preach as a lifestyle. (1 Cor. 3:6-11; Rom. 15:20; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:14)

1. Different from the Twelve – The scripture distinguishes the twelve apostles of Jesus from the multitude of individuals gifted as apostles after His ascension. (Mat. 19:28; Lk 22:30; Acts 1:21-24; 1 Cor. 15:4-8; 1 Jn. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:16-18; Rev. 21:14).
 2. There are at least nine other apostles mentioned in scripture but never in the same category as the original twelve when it comes to unique authority in the church. The gift is similar but they carried a unique one-time authority and leadership through which God birthed the Ekklesia. (Acts. 14:14; Rom. 1:1, 16:7; Gal. 1:19; Phil. 2:25; 1 Tim. 5:22)
 3. The five-fold gifts are often misunderstood as a hierarchy or organizational chart of authority. Apostles, who are listed first, are often thought of as the highest authority, telling individuals with “lesser” gifts what to do with absolute, unquestionable power. If this were true we would see the apostles take a much different tone in their epistles as they spoke into various situations. They speak as co-laborers and equal brothers rather than authoritarian dictators. (Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 4:16; 2 Cor. 5:20, 6:1, 10:1; Gal. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:11; 2 Jn. 1:5)
 4. Common Misunderstandings – Apostles do not have to plant churches although they commonly do. They do not have to be on oversight teams although they commonly are. Apostles do not have ultimate authority; elders do. The list of gifts speaks of the pattern of building foundations rather than governmental authority structure. Apostles are to be submitted to the elders of the church.
- B. Prophets - The gift of prophecy is the unique ability to hear and articulate the testimony of the heart or will of Jesus to His people in a current context. The focus of prophecy is not the person or situation but instead how God feels about them or what He is doing in the person or situation. The gift of prophecy is designed to edify, exhort, and bring comfort to the body. Biblically, edify means

to build up in holiness, exhort means to confirm, and comfort speaks of persuasion. (1 Cor. 14:3, 24-25, 31; Rev. 19:10)

1. Characteristics of this Gift – Receiving and articulating the Rhema Word of God. Commonly receiving revelation from Jesus concerning people or situations through dreams, open visions, mental pictures, impressions, imputed emotions, inner voice, audible voice, and physical manifestations.
2. Common Misunderstandings – The revelation that prophets receive is never to be viewed on the same level of authority and inspiration as scripture. On the contrary, it is judged according to scripture and is to line up with and support it. New covenant prophets are not to be held to the same accuracy standards as prophets in the old covenant (Word for word dictation, with the death penalty if there was a failure of total accuracy). In fact, we are to expect only partial understanding and all prophetic utterances are to be examined. Almost all prophetic words require a response of prayer, intercession, and sometimes action in order to bear the fullness of intention. Rarely do they manifest in a vacuum. The prophetic gift biblically is rarely predicting future events and when future events are predicted it is attached to a ministry direction concerning that event. The prophetic gift is not a validation of the individual in nearness to the Lord, in relational love, or holiness.