Jesus Christ gave gifted leaders to His church (Ephesians 4:11).

[P] [11] And he himself gave [AAI] [καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν]

[M] 1.) [/] some ~~to be~~ [as] apostles [τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους],

2.) [S] [and] [/] some [as] prophets [τοὺς δὲ προφήτας],

3.) [S] [and] [/] some [as] evangelists [τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς],

4.) [S] [and] [/] some [as] pastors and teachers [τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους],

These leaders equip saints for ministry and Christlikeness becoming matured truth speakers (Ephesians 4:12-15).

[Ed] [M] [[12] to equip the saints] [πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων]

[Ed] [M] [for the work of ministry] [εἰς ἔργον διακονίας],

[Ed] [to build up the body of Christ] [εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ],

[T] [13] until [W] we all reach [AAS]

[Ed] 1.) [unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son],

2.) [growing into maturity]

3.) [with a stature measured by Christ's fullness].

[I'] [14] Then we will [PAS] no longer be little children [νήπιοι],

a.) tossed by the waves [PMP] and blown around [PPP] by every wind of teaching [διδασκαλίας],

1.) [by human cunning]

2.) [with cleverness]

3.) [in the techniques of deceit].

b.) [A] [15] But [M] speaking the truth [PAP] [in love],

[E] let us grow [AAS] in every way [into him who is [PAI] the head—Christ].

This maturing flows from Christ, who unites us, for growth, strength, and work (Ephesians 4:16).

[C] [[16] From him]

[E] the whole body, [M] fitted [PPP] and knit together [PPP] [by every supporting ligament],

[Ed] promotes [PMI] the growth of the body

[for building itself up] [in love]

[by the proper working] of each individual part.

This is how I parse Greek verbs:

- I use a three-letter combination in square brackets (e.g. [PMI] for Present, Middle, Indicative) after a verb, which I underline.
  1. First letter indicates the tense. Tense deals both with time and kind of action.
  2. Second letter indicates the voice. The relation of the subject or agent to the action.
  3. Third letter indicates the mood, participle, or infinitive.
- Tense:
  - P: present, continuous or linear action.
  - I: imperfect, continuous action in the past.
  - F: future, both progressive and punctiliar action.
  - A: aorist, expresses punctiliar action that has happened.
  - R: perfect, represents an action that is complete but has an ongoing resultant state of being.
- Voice:
  - A: active, reflects the subject that performs the action.
  - M: middle, the agent participates in the results of the action.
  - P: passive, subject is being acted upon by someone or something else.
- Mood/participle/infinitive:
  - I: indicative, reality, that which is actually occurring.
  - S: subjunctive, likely to occur.
  - M: imperative, a command that is possible.
  - P: participle, participles are verbal adjectives that behave like a verb and an adjective..
  - N: infinitive, verbal nouns that use the preposition "to", and they can also be used with "ing".

This is how I indicate the function of conjunctions:

- I put a letter in square brackets before a clause to indicate a logical relationship.
  - [S] - SERIES, Each proposition makes an independent contribution to the whole (and, moreover, furthermore).
  - [P] - PROGRESSION, Each proposition is a further step toward a climax (then, and, moreover, furthermore).
  - [A] - ALTERNATIVE, Each proposition expresses an opposite possibility arising from a situation (or, but while...).
  - [W] [Ed] - WAY-END (ACTION-MANNER), Statement of an action and one which tells more explicitly what is involved in carrying out this action (in that, by).
  - [/] [/] - COMPARISON, Statement that clarifies an action or idea by showing what it is like (even as, as…so).
  - [-] [+] - NEGATIVE-POSITIVE, The relationship between two alternatives in which one is denied so the other is enforced, implicit in contrasting statements (not…but).
  - [Gn] [Sp] - GENERAL-SPECIFIC, Statement of a whole and one or more statements which set forth parts of the whole.
  - [Ft] [In] - FACT-INTERPRETATION, Statement and clarifying statement; does not set forth a distinguishable part of the preceding whole.
  - [G] - GROUND, Statement followed by the argument or reason on which it stands; supporting proposition follows the supported proposition (for, since, because).
  - [I'] - INFERENCE, Supporting statement followed by the conclusion drawn from it; supporting proposition precedes the supported proposition (therefore, wherefore, consequently).
  - [C] [E] - CAUSE-EFFECT (ACTION-RESULT), One action and another action which results from the first as an automatic consequence (that, so that, with the result that).
  - [C?] [E] - CONDITIONAL, Like cause-effect except existence of the cause is only potential (if…then, if, except...).
  - [M] [Ed] - MEANS-END (ACTION-PURPOSE), One action and another that is intended as the goal or purpose of the first (in order that, that, lest, to the end that).
  - [T] - TEMPORAL, Proposition and the occasion when it occurs (when, after, before).
  - [L] - LOCATIVE, Proposition and the place where it can be true (where, wherever).
  - [Adv] - ADVERSATIVE, Main clause that stands despite a contrary statement (although, yet, but, nevertheless).
  - [Q] [A] - QUESTION-ANSWER, Statement of question and answer to that question (question mark ?).
  - [S] [R] - SITUATION-RESPONSE, The relationship between a situation in one clause and a response in another.
  - [B] [L] - BILATERAL, A proposition which supports propositions in both directions, rarely used.

This is how I use colour highlighting:

- Orange: structure indicator, conjunctions, and prepositions.
- Yellow: verbs, Greek, and Scripture reference.
- Green: keywords.
- Red: repeated words.
- Pink: imperatives.
- Blue: main idea.

On my sermon preparation sheet, these are the questions and an explanation:

1. **How has the author organised this passage?**
   a) An outline: The author's organization (or structure) is a way of talking about the shape or form of a biblical passage. Beneath the surface of each passage is an underlying arrangement of material and a logic that the author has used to organize the passage. And each part of the passage has a role to play in that structure.
   b) Tools: Identify the text type, and any grammatical tools used to identify the structure.
   c) The emphasis: The structure will reveal an emphasis that the author is making.
2. **How does the context inform the meaning of this passage?**
   a) Literary context: How do the passage that comes before and the passage that comes after relate to your passage?
   b) Historical context: The historical situation or circumstances experienced by the first audience at the time when the book was written.
   c) Cultural context: The setting in the daily life of the people/characters in the book and how that will have been understood by the first audience. This is distinct from historical context in that it does not relate to a particular audience in a particular place at a particular time, but the details of life that the people/characters in the text had in common. Anything that requires extra-biblical knowledge should be treated skeptically.
   d) Biblical context: Is the author citing or alluding to some previously written Biblical passage? What connections could the author have reasonably expected his first audience to make.
3. **What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?**
   The author's main point is a way of talking about the aim of a passage as a whole. It can be descriptive or prescriptive. It is not simply a summary statement. But rather, it is the idea of which the author is trying to persuade his audience. As you work on articulating the author's argument, please keep in mind that it needs to be specific enough to the passage that it clearly comes from the particular passage (and not any other passage), it is for the first audience, it should be one single sentence that is both short and clear, and captures the argument of the passage.
4. **How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?**
   What part of the gospel (the death and resurrection of Christ) is in view? Every part of the Bible, every passage of Scripture, in some way relates to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What parts of the passage connect to the gospel? The connection must be legitimate and textually driven.
5. **What is the main point you will argue to your audience?**
6. **What applications will you make? a) To believers, b) To unbelievers.**
   The main point of a sermon is the fundamental statement of what you, as a speaker today, are trying to convince your audience today. It will certainly be intimately related to the author's main point for his original audience and it will consider the gospel connection. It should be well reasoned and, perhaps, articulated as the result of proof (so depending on premises and building arguments).
7. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) Sermon outline, b) Sermon title.

On my sermon preparation sheet, this is how questions relate to one another:

- 1 a) should be driven by the text.
- 1 c) should be driven from the outline in 1 a).
- 2) should be directly relevant to 1 c).
- 3) cannot be disconnected from 1 c), and should be clarified by 2).
- 4) must be found in the text.
- 5) cannot be disconnected from 3), and should be driven by 4).
- 6) should flow from 5).
- 7) should structurally relate to 1 a), and make the argument in 5).

Sermon preparation worksheet

Passage: Ephesians 4:11-16

1. How has the author organised this passage? *a) An outline, b) Tools, c) The emphasis.*

a) 1) Jesus Christ gave gifted leaders to His church (Ephesians 4:11).

2) These leaders equip saints for ministry and Christlikeness becoming matured truth speakers (Ephesians 4:12-15).

3) This maturing flows from Christ, who unites us, for growth, strength, and work (Ephesians 4:16).

b) I identified discourse and used syntax analysis. I paid attention to the verbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and repetitions.

c) Christ gifts His church so she may be equipped for ministry and Christlike maturity, connected to Him as a unified, healthy body.

2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage? *a) Literary, b) Historical, c) Cultural, d) Biblical.*

a) In Ephesians 4:1-10, Paul urged believers to live a life of humble, peaceful unity, made possible by the diverse gifts given to the church by the ascended, victorious Christ. In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul describes gifts Christ gives, and how, because of Him, that results in maturity and Christlikeness. In Ephesians 4:17-32, Paul explains how believers must "put off" the old self, and "put on" the new self, which is the outworking of that maturity, and what Christlikeness looks like. This matters because the gifts in Ephesians 4:11 are the means to achieve the unity commanded in Ephesians 4:1-3, and the maturity described is what makes the holy living in Ephesians 4:17-32 possible.

b) Paul spent two years planting the church in Ephesus. Now, having left her in infancy, he explains how Christ will ensure she grows to maturity. This matter because the emphasis on maturity through equipping is Christ's answer to the problem of apostolic absence.

c) 1) The Roman body metaphor argued for social harmony where each class knew its place. Paul subverts this, in Christ's body, unity comes from diversity in function, not uniformity in status. And the head is not the Roman emperor but Christ.

2) Ephesus was a port city on the Aegean Sea. Paul's audience knew the danger of being tossed by the waves, or blown around by every wind.

3) Cunning and craftiness were associated with trickery, dice-loading, and rhetorical sleight of hand.

d) Ephesians 4:8 quotes Psalm 68:18. The idea is that the victorious Christ is the divine warrior who ascended on high and distributes the spoils of His victory to His people. This matters because it roots Ephesians 4:11-16 in Christ's victory. The gifts are not random blessings but the spoils of war, making the church's growth a display of Christ's conquest over sin and death.

3. What is the main point the author is arguing to *his audience?*

The ascended, victorious Christ gifts His church, so his people may be equipped for ministry and Christlike maturity, empower by Him for unity and vitality.

4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Ephesians 4:11-16 flows from the gospel, showing that the ascended, victorious Christ uses the spoils of his conquest to build a church which benefits from His resurrection life.

5. What is the main point you will argue to *your audience*?

Christ gifts, builds, and empowers His church.

6. What applications will you make? *a) To believers, b) To unbelievers.*

a) This week, I want you to take one step out of the stands and onto the field. For some, you need to head over to the sign up sheets in the lobby put your name down for Pizza with the Pastor because you're not even sure you're on the team yet. For others, it's finally Getting Equipped by joining a small group because you're tired of learning about God and you're ready to know God with others. For others, it's clicking Get Involved because you're ready to stop being a consumer and start being a contributor. Take a step out of the stands and onto the field.

b) You've been hearing us talk about the body of Christ. Maybe you feel like a disconnected limb. You're trying to move, but nothing works. You feel numb. Life has no purpose. That's because you're separated from the head, Jesus Christ. The blood isn't flowing. Today, you can be grafted in. The moment you place your faith in Him, His life, His victory, His Spirit, flows into you. You're not just saved from sin; you're saved into a body. You're saved into a purpose. You're saved into a family. Would you like that?

7. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? *a) Sermon outline, b) Sermon title.*

b) The key to a healthy, growing church

a) 1) The gifts Christ gives (Ephesians 4:11) – Jesus Christ gave gifted leaders to His church.

2) The goals Christ sets (Ephesians 4:12-15) – Leaders equip saints for ministry and Christlikeness becoming matured truth speakers.

3) The growth Christ empowers (Ephesians 4:16) – This maturing flows from Christ, who unites us, for growth, strength, and work.

Pray

Read

11 And he himself gave some as apostles, and some as
prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as
pastors and teachers,
12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to
build up the body of Christ, 13 until we all reach
unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son,
growing into maturity with a stature measured by
Christ's fullness. 14 Then we will no longer be little
children, tossed by the waves and blown around by
every wind of teaching, by human cunning with
cleverness in the techniques of deceit. 15 But
speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way
into him who is the head—Christ.
16 From him the whole body, fitted and knit together
by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth
of the body for building itself up in love by the
proper working of each individual part.

Introduction

- I've been watching a Netflix series about crab fishing. It's a dangerous business. They captured the story of a boat caught in a violent storm. After it took on water, the crew abandoned ship into life rafts. Most were lost. Survivors later described the terror of being tossed by waves in the pitch black. Nothing to hold them steady. Tumbling around untethered in the ocean.
- That image would have hit home for Paul's readers. Ephesus lay on the coastline of the Aegean Sea. Ephesians knew the sea provides life. But it destroys the unanchored.
- Paul says immature Christians are like that. Boats tossed by waves. Blown off course by every new teaching. But his message isn't just about the storm. It's about the rescue. The ascended, victorious Christ hasn't left us to drift. He has launched a rescue mission by gifting his church with everything it needs to thrive. To be equipped. Mature. Unified. And strong.
- Here is the big idea this morning. The ascended, victorious Christ gifts his church so that we can be equipped for ministry, matured into his likeness, and empowered by him for a vital, unified life. In short, Christ gifts, builds, and empowers His church. He is the anchor, and His gifts are the rescue line.

1) **The gifts Christ gives** (Ephesians 4:11)

Jesus Christ gave gifted leaders to His church.

The he himself is Jesus. Take a glance at the preceding verses in your Bible. From Ephesians 4:1-6, Paul urges believers to live a life of humble and peaceful unity. Church unity is never going to rest on human achievement. From Ephesians 4:7-10, Paul explains that unity comes from Jesus. The ascended Christ gives diverse gifts to His church. Jesus is the source. Jesus is the victor. Jesus is the giver.

Ephesians 4:8 quotes Psalm 68:18. Jesus is pictured as the divine warrior. The heavenly victor who has ascended on high. Like a conqueror He now distributes the spoils of His victory to His people. Everything in our text this morning flows from His conquest. His gifts are not random blessings. They are the spoils of His war. They are the direct result of His crucifixion and resurrection. His triumph secures our unity and our blessings.

I love gifts. It's exciting to get a present. What gifts does the victorious King distribute to His people? And gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers. Consider these gifts. Apostles are the sent ones. They were eyewitnesses of the risen Christ. The 12 carried unique authority to establish the church. Prophets spoke forth the word of God. They brought revelation and correction. Mark this, according to Ephesians 2:20, the apostles and prophets were foundational. You lay a foundation once. And then you raise a building. Apostles and prophets are no longer operational today. There are phonies, in fancy suits, with snake skin shoes. They're charlatans. Frauds. The church is the building, built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets.

So, are all the gifts opened? Is there nothing left? There's more. Christ gave evangelists. Heralds of the good news. They are the proclaimers of the gospel to the unconverted. They extend the borders of the church. We may call them missionaries. And He gave pastors and teachers. The grammar suggests pastors and teachers are a single group. Pastors who teach. Teachers who shepherd. Their charge is to care for and instruct the flock of God. They protect the sheep from error. They feed the sheep with truth. This is not a five fold ministry. This is four gifts to the church.

Thus the ascended Victor gifts His church. Not leaving us orphans. Providing the leadership necessary to equip us for ministry. Mature us into His likeness. Empower us for unity and vitality. For our good. For our growth. For His glory.

Jesus Christ gave gifted leaders to His church.

These gifts are given with purpose, our edification.

2) **The goals Christ sets** (Ephesians 4:12-15)

Leaders equip saints for ministry and Christlikeness becoming matured truth speakers.

What was Christ's goal gifting His Church? To equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.

Paul spent years planting the church in Ephesus. She was his baby. Now he explains how Christ will ensure her growth. Maturity through gifted equipping is the answer to Paul's apostolic absence. The result of Christ's ascension.

Mark this well. Leaders equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Your pastor is not the only minister at Benoni Baptist Church. We are a priesthood of all believers. We have a shared mission. To *reach Benoni with the gospel, and equip all for life.* We're in this together.

My daughter Kathryn entered the world 20 years ago. Ten fingers. Ten toes. 3.2kgs. 48cms. A teeny, tiny, ugly, baby girl. She is not teeny, tiny anymore. Neither is she ugly. Nor is she a baby. She is a woman. *An adult human female.* You can spot the difference between a baby and an adult. But can you tell the difference between an infant church and a mature church? Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching.

Ephesus was a port city. The Aegean Sea was its life blood. And its danger. The Ephesians knew the terror of the waves. The fear of shifting winds. A immature believer is like a boat adrift at sea. In a storm. Anchorless. Rudderless. Unstable. Directionless. A mature church stands firm. Fights for the faith against heresy. Holds the line against false teaching.

Human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. These words speak of trickery. Loaded dice. A conman's sleight of hand. False teaching is not wisdom. It is a rigged game. A spiritual scam. TBN. DayStar. Faith. The mature church spots it. The mature church rejects it.

How do tell the difference between an infant church and a mature church? Paul tells us. Second with a positive. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ.

Here is the goal. Not just truth. Truth spoken in love. Not just growth. Growth into Him. Christ is the target. Christ is the measure. Christ is the goal. A mature church is not known by its size. It is known by its speech. It speaks truth to itself. In love. It speaks truth to its city. In love. That is maturity. That is Christlikeness.

Leaders equip saints for ministry and Christlikeness becoming matured truth speakers.

This growth does not come from ourselves, but from our Head.

3) **The growth Christ empowers** (Ephesians 4:16)

This maturing flows from Christ, who unites us, for growth, strength, and work.

- The final word anchors everything. From him. Not from programs. Not from personalities. From him. From Jesus Christ. The whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament.
- The Romans loved the body metaphor. They used it to argue for social harmony. Each class must know its place. The emperor is the head. The slaves are the feet. Do not rise above your station. Paul subverts this entire idea. In Christ's body, unity comes from diversity in function. Not from uniformity in status. And the head is not Caesar. The head is Jesus Christ, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords.
- You know, a body is only alive so long as it is attached to its head. Chop off a man's head and his body dies. It may twitch for a moment. But it is a corpse. Benoni Baptist Church is only alive so long as we are attached to our Head. Jesus Christ. He is our Sovereign Lord. He holds ultimate authority over His church. He is our authoritative voice. Speaks through His Word. He is our life giver. We draw our very breath from Him. He is our one true Head. This is non-negotiable. Any attempt to establish another head is rebellion to the crown. It is a rejection of Christ's sovereignty.
- Christ as head, unites His diverse body. Jew and Gentile. Black and white. Rich and poor. Male and female. Old and young. Jesus unites us together under His banner, and makes us one body.
- From Him the body promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part. This is the miracle of the body. The proper working of each individual part causes growth. Every ligament. Every joint. Every member. Working together. Working properly. We're not a one man show. We're a whole body activity. And when we get it right we flourish. We're alive. Things get exciting. And we grow.
- Connected to Him we grow. We are built up. We work. Our growth is not self-generated. Our strength is not self-made. Our work is not self-powered. Everything flows from Jesus. The ascended Victor. The generous Giver. The supreme Head.

This maturing flows from Christ, who unites us, for growth, strength, and work.

How does the passage connect to the gospel?

- How does Ephesians 4:11-16 connect to the gospel? This passage displays of the ongoing power of Christ's finished work. The gifts are not random blessings. They are the spoils of His war. The direct result of His conquest over sin and death on the cross. His death defeated our sin. His resurrection secured our life. Now, as the ascended victor, He distributes gifts to us.
- This means the goal of maturity in Ephesians 4:12-15 is not a self-help program. It is the fruit of Christ's victory. The equipping isn't just practical training. It is us benefiting from Christ's resurrection life. And the growth. It is the direct result of being connected to Him, the head.
- We are a church built by grace, through faith, for good works. Therefore, getting connected, equipped, and involved is never about earning God's favour. It is the grateful response of a rescued people living in the power of the victory Jesus has already won. This is the gospel in action.

Believers, how ought you to live?

- This week, I want you to take a step. One step out of the stands and onto the field. The game is in play. Not in the stands. For some here, you need to head to the lobby. You need to put your name down for Pizza with the Pastor. Because you are not even sure if you are on the team yet. You need to Get Connected. Pizza with the Pastor is how you start that process.
- For others here, you need to Get Equipped. You need to join a small group Bible study. You are tired of learning about God. You are ready to know God. Well, that happens with others. In the lobby, there is a signup for Get Equipped. Put your name down and we'll connect you with a Bible study.
- For others here, you need to Get Involved. It's time to step into the scrum. Serve. You're a gift to this church. It's time to start serving among us. Building up the body.

Unbelievers, how ought you to respond?

- You have been hearing about the body of Christ all morning. Perhaps you feel like a disconnected limb. You try to move but nothing works. You feel numb. Life has no purpose. No meaning. This is because you are separated from the head. You are cut off from Jesus Christ. His blood is not flowing through your veins. Today you can be grafted in. The moment you place your faith in Jesus His life flows into you. His victory becomes yours. His Spirit enters you. He died for your sin. And He rose from the grave. And He promises that all who come to Him He will never cast out. Would you like that? Friend, repent of your sin, and cast yourself upon Him. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved.

Conclusion

- Remember that night on the raft I described at the beginning. Waves battering, men tossing and turning in the pitch black, with nothing solid to hold onto? Imagine being in that raft and then, suddenly, seeing a rescue ship on the horizon. A rope comes down. Hands reach out. Somebody hauls you aboard. The difference between the raft and the ship is everything. One is about helpless survival. The other is about purposeful mission. Paul's message is that in Christ, we've been hauled from one onto the other.
- This morning we have discovered:
- The gifts Christ gives (Ephesians 4:11). Jesus has not left the church to drift. He gave gifted leaders. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. As part of his victory and gift to us.
- The goals Christ sets (Ephesians 4:12-15). Those gifts are given on purpose. To equip the saints for ministry, to build up the body, to bring us to unity and to maturity. That we would speak the truth, in love. And stop being tossed around by whatever new teaching or slick idea comes along.
- The growth Christ empowers (Ephesians 4:16). And where does this growth come from? From him. From Christ the head. The whole body, every ligament and member working rightly, promotes growth in love. It's not about personalities or programs. It's about connection to Jesus and each other.
- So may we, anchored to our Head, Jesus Christ, live as His rescued, gifted, and empowered people, for His glory alone.

The benediction

- Ephesians 3:20-21, Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us—to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.