

## Intro:

### 1. God Has Graced Each Individual Member of His Body. (v7)

- a. It is from His grace (define and expound)
  - i. These gifts are not earned and therefore are not seen as more valuable or less valuable in the building up of the body of Christ
  - ii. They are gifts and we ought to be grateful for what is given
    1. It is childish and sinful to envy others gifts
    2. It is faithless and weak to not use your gifts for the building up of the church
- b. The gifts vary (according to His measure): there is a diversity of gifts within the unity of the community for the purpose of its edification
  - i. The variation of gifts is in-line with His multi-faceted wisdom and grace
  - ii. Every gift is different so that we would be interdependent upon each with humility and completely dependent upon Him as the source of strength and the giver of all the gifts
- c. It is given to "each of us"
  - i. literally, "each one of us was given grace"
  - ii. contrasted with the unity, or "all together", there is a difference in gifts of grace, though all receive the same grace
  - iii. Every believer has been gifted by God to build others up *in their dependence upon Christ* (as opposed to their trust in anything else: *their* flesh, performance, humanity, goodness, wisdom, etc.)
- d. it is "according to the measure of Christ's gift"
  - i. limitless, boundless, abundant wealth of Christ, the "immeasurable riches"
  - ii. Each person is gifted, but not in the same measure (see Romans 12:6)
  - iii. Every gift is equally valuable to the Body, even if differently measured out by Christ
    1. All are "filled" or "completed" by Christ (v10)
    2. The emphasis is that Christ gives gifts out of His victorious position as the Risen Lord

### 2. The Risen Conquering Christ Gives These Gifts of Grace (v8-10).

- a. allusion to Ps 68 (not direct quote), part. v18, 35
  - i. v18 shows His triumphant procession of captives
  - ii. v35 shows His giving of strength and power to the people
  - iii. The entire psalm is a Victorious Song of the Reign of God
- b. Victorious Christ is pictured
  - i. Victorious generals often paraded their spoils through their cities to show the extent and greatness of their victory
  - ii. They often would give gifts to their soldiers and sometimes the people if the victory was exceptional
  - iii. Basic idea in Ps 68 is that God reigns over His people and has defeated all of His enemies and thus has the power and right to give gifts
- c. The ascended Christ, the reigning Christ, has graced with gifts
  - i. Because of His victorious ascension He can give gifts
    1. powerful, effective, victorious
    2. "far above all rule and authority and power and dominon..."(1:19-23)
  - ii. **fills (completes) all** as Lord and Victor, right NOW in the Church
  - iii. This marks the end purpose and goal of our gifts
- d. The Ascended Christ is the Sacrificed Christ
  - i. descent was all the way to the grave
    1. "lower parts of the earth"
    2. NOT Hell, but the grave, i.e. death

- ii. the suffering servant became the victorious Lord
- iii. His atoning sacrifice gained Him the victory (Heb 2:14-15; Rom 8)

### 3. So What?

- a. We cannot trust our own power (distrust ourselves)
  - i. Because they are “gifts of grace” that are given by Christ, we cannot claim them as our own or puff ourselves up when they are effective
  - ii. Constant attitude of repentance (giving up our own power) and faith (dependence upon Jesus alone and His Word)
  - iii. We do not treat each other as more or less valuable to the Body (us together) or to the purposes of the King
    - 1. Our gifts are limited; we are not all given the same gifts, but they are all of grace
    - 2. We need each other to grow in Christ; we are interdependent upon one another and the grace of God through others to bring us to the unity of faith and the knowledge (heart and mind) of the Son of God
- b. We can make great effort to point each other to the Christ (great trust in the Lord!!)
  - i. Christ is powerful and victorious
    - 1. The resources of the Risen Lord are super-abundant and unstoppable!!
    - 2. We lack NOTHING that we need to serve each other and find unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, the stature of completion in Christ (v13)
  - ii. Because Christ is powerful and victorious we CAN use our gifts for others’ benefits (in love) with full expectation of success, no matter what the gift is or the extent to which it is “successful”
  - iii. He is the completer of all that is broken in our world
  - iv. His Spirit is present among us to effect great change and transformation, so act like it!!

### 4. What’s the Goal?

- a. Our purpose in our gifts is the same as God's purpose in the reign of Jesus: That Jesus would complete everything, **“so that He might fill all things.”**
  - i. Sin has disintegrated our relationship
    - 1. Derek Kidner Quote: “Sin sets up strains in the structure of life which only end in breakdown.”
      - 1. The Fall as evidence of sin’s disintegration (Gen 3:6-24):
        - a. Spiritual –
          - i. Adam/Eve run & hide from God, v10
          - ii. Adam blames God, v12
          - iii. Sin creates not merely mistrust, but anger, hostility, blame-shifting, and enemy-making
        - b. Social –
          - i. Adam/Eve mistrust each other, v7, as shown by covering their nakedness
          - ii. Breakdown in male/female relationships, v16, domination/usurpation
          - iii. Constant warfare between people groups and disharmony in relationships
          - iv. Cain kills Abel (4:8)
        - c. Psychological –
          - i. Adam/Eve realize their nakedness – shame, v7
          - ii. Cf. 2:25 where nakedness is related to being “unashamed”
          - iii. Adam deflects the truth out of shame, v10

- iv. We cannot face the truth about ourselves, so we lie and deceive ourselves
- d. Natural –
  - i. Work, created good, has become “painful toil”, v17
  - ii. Humanity “returns to the ground”, v19
  - iii. Disease, old age, death, natural disasters, creations groaning
  - iv. Created order: God – over Man – over Creation
  - v. Fallen order/curse: God – over Nature – over Man
  - vi. We fight, struggle, and toil over Nature, and in the end Nature wins, “to dust you shall return.”

2. Cornelius Plantinga: “The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrews called *shalom*. In the Bible, *shalom* means *universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight* – a rich state of affairs... Human communities would present their racial and regional specialties to other communities in the name of God, in glad recognition that God, too, is a radiant and hospitable community of three persons. In turn, each human being would reflect and color the light of God’s presence out of the inimitable resources of his or her own character and essence. *Shalom*, in other words, is the way things ought to be... We may safely describe evil as any spoiling of *shalom*, whether physically, morally, spiritually, or otherwise. Sin is the disruption or disturbance of what God has designed... Sin tends to disintegrate both its victims and its perpetrators.”

- ii. Spiritual completion – God reconciling man to Himself (Gospel)
- iii. Social completion – God reconciling man to man (Gospel)
- iv. Psychological completion – God reconciling man’s mind to its joyful purpose in worship (Gospel)
- v. Natural completion – God reconciling and restoring Creation to its perfected state (Gospel)
- b. In the church we are to be reconciling these things under the powerful Headship of Christ
  - i. We are in the Kingdom now, with foretastes of the Lord’s future completion (fullness) of bringing all things together under Christ (1:10)
  - ii. For His glory and renown, that He would be praised in all the earth
  - iii. Are we doing these things in our home groups? Are you involved in a small group where these gifts with the intimacy which softens the soil of the heart fertilizes such growth?
    - 1. In your home groups is there:
      - 1. Prayer
      - 2. Accountability
      - 3. Encouragement
      - 4. Burden-bearing
      - 5. Instruction
      - 6. All pointing us to Christ through the Gospel?

#### Conclusion:

When Adam and Eve fell into the self-centered deception of godless self-rule in the Garden, sin entered into the Universe and the curse of God decimated the very fabric of what He had created “good.” It is in this broken world that we live. However, God has revealed His plan to bring all things together, reconciled and healed, under His Chosen One, Jesus. Through His death and resurrection Jesus reigns over the Universe and God is, right now, bringing all things together under Him. You, the community of the Redeemed, humbled in repentance and emboldened by your Redeemer, are the beginning of this New Creation. It was promised to Adam and Eve (and Satan) when the Lord slipped in a promise of an Offspring that would crush the Deceiver’s head. Jesus is the One.

In this New Humanity, together under Christ, God has gifted each individual by His grace so that we would all be built up into the unity of faith in Jesus, the knowledge of the Son of God, and the fullness of Christ who fills all in all. These gifts are given in tremendous abundance with all the wealth and power of the Christ who defeated death and triumphed over the enemies of God!! Take heart and great boldness, not in your efforts, but in the Lord's triumphant bounty of provision for our success in seeing all of us brought together in the unifying depth of dependence upon Jesus.