

Ephesians VIII

8/2010

Beginning with chapter 4 Paul speaks of how we can be cleaved/crucified on the cross in great detail. First 6 verses are on the need for a church to be united. Like a principle that all separated things are unified in the cross Paul is addressing the importance of unity in a community. The practical method to achieve unity is in “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love” according to Paul.

Paul addresses how to build a glorious church in detail from verse 7 to 16. Verse 7 smoothly begins that. First 6 verses are about how to build up a unified church and everyone is given grace according to the portion of gift of Jesus Christ.

The Book of Ephesians was written to build up the Ephesian Church because it had not been planted yet. It refers not only to the whole community of church but also mostly to build up each individual. Verse 16 Paul speaks “according to the proper working of each individual part.” We are to train each individual according to the highest working of each individual part that the Lord has given them. God has given them grace according to His gift. We see this in verse 11 again that He gave accordingly. Paul says in verse 11, “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.” Grace God gave to each member of the body can be seen as spiritual gifts. It can also be perceived as offices in a church like an office of apostle or an office of prophet.

I personally perceive it as a spirit. Why? Because a church must receive a spirit to do certain things according to the spirit. A spirit of apostle will empower one to be an apostle. Not only apostle existed on earth 2,000 years ago, but we also have the office of apostle in current churches. Of course the apostles are not the same as the twelve apostles of Jesus. We have apostles in this generation because the spirit of apostle came down upon them. Let's look at verse 7 “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.” I also perceive this as a spirit. When God gives us these spirits, we can function as an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist and a pastor/teacher. God gave grace according to the measure of Christ's gift to establish a church. Pastor is supposed to arrange the spiritual gifts in congregation and reveal them in the life of church members so they can use them as their official duties.

So, why does God give grace according to the measure of Christ's gift? The answer is found in verse 16 “from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” Connection, joint, part all become one. How do the parts become one? They become fitted and held together according to the proper working of each individual part causing the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. As soon as the individuals come inside the spiritual system and go through training, they will be established according to the full measure God gave them and they will be united to raise up a church. It is possible because a church is life.

As much as a member of the body becomes a “hole” it is a loss to the whole community. Therefore, we can't help but to give all we have for each believer in church. Achan became a big “hole” that he halted/stopped the whole community of Israel.

A church is supposed to become a life not an organization. That's how the Holy Spirit desires to build a church the best it can be. With the system of church completed everyone will grow and mature to a full measure and such believers with full measure will be united to become a community. Let's look at “for the building up of itself in love.” I think it is better to translate “in love” with “by love” which is more suitable.

Let's recognize the system. This system is not visible to our eyes. A good analogy is like how water comes out of the faucet in the bathroom traveling all the way from waterworks through the pipes. This network of pipeline is system. The Holy Spirit forms a network of pipelines in a church minimizing any loss. How this system is then formed in a church?

The senior pastor should recognize that you become a church the Holy Spirit reigns. He also should wait, pray and wait more for the Spirit to touch the church being aware that He reigns. That's his life waiting for the Holy Spirit to touch the people through his prayers. It is yielding to the Lord so He can minister the church members and desiring Him to build up the church. Through this process the Holy Spirit builds up the system in a church. The important thing is that it is not like a building project in a secular world but it is giving the Holy Spirit a time to build up His church. Furthermore, it is admitting and laying down your hindering personality and your weaknesses through prayers so they can be supplemented. A church becomes great in the system established by the Holy Spirit. It is not made by man.

People say that in order for a community to become a community of love it needs spiritual gifts, power, and so on. However, that's not how a church becomes great. Instead of revealing spiritual gifts and power, a church should let love reign in it mixing/harmonizing them.

What do we see in the fourth chapter of Ephesians in terms of church? Like 1 Corinthians 12:31 love is a way. A church should build up a highway of love in her foundation. In order to build up a highway of love a pastor must proclaim the practical code of conduct of love to his church and the believers should live it out in their life. When believers embrace each other sharing the pain and crying together, they can build up a highway of love in church. As wide and well made the highway of love is the more powerful a church becomes. No matter how fast a vehicle is without a road it cannot be driven. The spiritual infrastructure we call a highway of love should be established in churches. The reason Romans ruled the world was the infrastructure according to Shiono Nanami in her book *The Story of Romans*. As the depth of love increases the road becomes wider.

What is the spiritual system? It begs another question; what are you going to pave the road with? We want to pave the road with the system of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor/teacher. First, we build the highway of love. Second, build the system over the highway of love. Next, all the spiritual gifts, power and everything will travel over it. That's how we understand the relationship between love and system. In short, the most important element in a church is love which considers, serves, understands others. A church should become a community of love. Once we become such church every individual will become like Jesus, every family will become like Jesus and a society will also become like Jesus. In conclusion, God will wage a powerful spiritual warfare through such church. That's the conclusion of Ephesians.

Let's look at an office God gave onto this system. We see this in verses 8-10. In verse eight Paul says, "Therefore it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.'" Not only in Ephesians but Paul praises Jesus Christ from time to time in his letters. Why? Because Paul was so touched while he was writing the epistle by the fact that God had created a church and given His grace. He restores the focus on Jesus. Paul praises the amazing grace of God for creating such spiritual system and points to Jesus Christ who is the Giver of such amazing grace according to the portion of our faith and grace. Paul speaks about Jesus Christ from verse 8 to 10. When Jesus ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.

Paul is quoting Psalm 68:18 and adapted little bit but he is making a point. In the past after kings won wars, they would seat on their throne, decide the fate of the prisoners, and distribute the spoils of war as the victor. Likewise God has given His all spoils to the churches according to the

portion of their grace. At the end what should church do after receiving the power of God and spiritual gifts according to the portion of their grace? According to Ephesians 6:10 God has given them for the complete victory. A church is supposed to be victorious every day. Believe in the ultimate victory!

In the city of Siwha (Siheung) 30 new churches are planted and 30 churches close down every year. Why churches of God go “out of business” like the businesses in the world and disappear? That’s the ultimate defeat of churches of God! How does that happen? The reason for the down fall of churches lies on the weaknesses of pastors. That’s not the church of Almighty God.

In the gospel of Matthews Jesus speaks to Peter, “I have given you the authority to build a church on the rock.” The rock refers to Peter and he will be built up on Jesus Christ. It is building a church on Peter himself. If Peter is not excellent, a church will fall out. God and we build up a church in partnership. God’s essence (nature) does not fall out but if our essence falls out, a church will fall out.

Let’s turn our attention to Ephesians 2:20 “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.” A church is built up on the foundation of apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ Himself becomes the cornerstone. This is also adaptation of Paul. In ecclesiology the Rock, Jesus Christ, is the Foundation. We don’t build a church up on Jesus but on apostles and prophets who are people. A church is built upon people. Without the authority of apostles and the spirit of prophets a church only owns the surface/building but not the land. The ownership of a building without the ownership of land leads to insecurity. Growth of church is dependent upon a pastor and his level.

Jesus gave us everything. Jesus ascended on high means He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth. This is the same thing. Jesus had triumphed on the cross and ascended “far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.” In short, Jesus incarnated and descended to earth, died on the cross, resurrected, confirmed the complete victory, and ascended to heaven to fill all things. We saw earlier in 1:23 that Jesus summed up all things through a church, had a complete triumph over His rule and ascended to His heavenly throne. It is simply Paul’s recording of the ascension of Jesus and His sitting down on the throne. Paul’s focus is on church’s perfect victory and her authority to rule over the whole creation.

Jesus came to earth through incarnation, died, and rose again for a complete victory. According to Psalm 68:18 God gave all the spoils and likewise He provided all things to churches. Why? So they can sum up all things. “Fullness” and “Sum up” have the same meaning in Greek. Jesus did all of them to sum up all things. Do you believe the fate of whole universe depends on you? This is not a theory!

Let me explain the offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors & teachers briefly. “Pastors & teachers” have an article in the original Greek. So I don’t call it a system of 5 spirits but a system of 4 spirit. I call “pastors and teachers” just spirit of education. The spirit of pastors and teachers work together for the nurturing purpose. It really doesn’t matter to interpret it as 5 or 4. Why do we want the system? When a new member joins a church, this system of spirits function to raise him/her up and equip him/her through the system.

The system of 4 spirits can be revealed in a pastor or in all the church members. When the church members are raised up in this system, each will reveal one, two, or four spirits in them. When a new member joins a church, the authority of apostle begins to work. The authority of apostle is the proclamation of the truth. The authority of apostle begins to work so that a new member can repent in the truth. Through the sermons the authority of apostle works to extract,

destroy, and give up one's false truth system leading through a painful process. Everyone must have a sculpture time by the authority of apostle which is given according to the will of the Spirit in a church.

After passing through the authority of apostle how do we build up the truth system? The spirit of prophet begins to work concurrently. It defines the new member's past, present, and future. In a pastor's sermon both the authority of apostle and the spirit of prophet work at the same time. As he listens to the message he realizes how painful his walk with God has been because of his roots from the past. When a spirit of prophet is strong in one person, he would define the past, present, and future through his prophecy. Of course he doesn't have to explain/loosen up one's whole life but whoever comes into the system in a church he doesn't suffer anymore due to uncertainties over his past, present, and future. When church members do not have a clear definition/explanation over their past, present, and future, their uncertainty leads to the lack of commitment and sacrifice. We have both apostle and prophet in a church. There is one important principle with regard to them. The authority of apostle goes before the spirit of prophet.

Next is the spirit of evangelist. After this time of pruning/sculpturing, renewal, establishment, and of acceptance of definition/explanation of past, present, and future there will be those who be corrupted in a church. The spirit of evangelist preaches "Repent! The Kingdom of God is near!" It can be revealed in one sermon or more. The important thing is that the members of body should urge the repentance by the spirit of evangelist.

I have mentioned this in *Strengthening the Spiritual Gifts*; the spiritual gifts differ according to which office is at work. It is not always true but based on my experience I have noticed that word of knowledge and prophecy on behalf of God fall into the office of apostles. Prophets usually use obviously prophecy and spiritual discernment. For evangelist the spirit of deliverance, spiritual discernment, and wisdom are the major ones. As a result, the urging of repentance should take place in the body. When the believers hear the sermons, they should beat their chest in the course of the message or as a result of the message. The word of God should be a challenge to the listeners. This is the characteristic of a church that has the spirit of evangelist at work.

Next, let's look at the spirit of education/nurturing (henceforth the spirit of education). Here, I am referring to pastor and teacher. I believe teaching shepherd would be a good translation. The spiritual gifts listed in Romans 12 are powerfully used for the spirit of education. These spiritual gifts from Romans 12 should not be used without the spirit of education. The gift of exhortation is about embracing other believers, hugging them and healing them. It works within the parameter of a spirit of education. When a new member joins a church, he/she goes through this spiritual system and becomes an equipped saint. We should raise up people who have such characteristics out of our congregation. We need to recognize them, pray for them and wait on God.

How much of this spiritual system should be established to make things easy for a church? It is like a parable of sower we see in Mark 4 that a good soil will naturally bear fruits on its own. When a spiritual system is established in a church, the Holy Spirit touches His church according to the principle of good soil to a point of bearing its own fruits. When a pastor focus wholly on the word of God and prayer without any spiritual loss, a color of church will be very beautiful. A pastor should devote at least 90% of his energy to sermons and prayers. How can that be possible? When this system is established in the church, it is possible. This is the system that moved the Ephesian Church.

Paul speaks in verse 12 "For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." Why do we build up the body of Christ by such system? For the

equipping of the saints and for the work of service. The order of it is important. Believers in a church should not serve first. They should be equipped first before they serve. If this order is reversed, a church will be damaged. Paul addressed with regard to the equipping of the saints in **verse 13 “until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”** We are supposed to be equipped until we all attain the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. We should be equipped with spirituality and intelligence.

In the Book of Ephesians when Paul speaks of knowledge, he means the knowledge of love. We see this in verse 15 “but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.” The believers can become great through several ways. The common denominator is that they can become great on their own. First, they can become great as much as they understand the portion of God’s character. The knowledge of how much God loves me is expressed in the Greek word of *genosko*. It is an experience. As much as the portion of knowledge of God’s love for me grows, I become great.

As we see in verse 15 why don’t we deeply understand the truth and what is right? Truth is the expression of God’s character; therefore, as much as we don’t receive His character, our level of understanding of His word becomes shallow. The knowledge Paul speaks of in Ephesians is the character of God. God speaks in Hosea 4:6, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” Paul means the same that as much as we understand the portion of God’s character, the truth enters us. As deep as the truth we grow to the fullness of knowledge of Jesus Christ; how much God loves me to send His only begotten Son; and to know the depth of love of Jesus Christ. A believer grows as much as his understanding of the love of Jesus Christ.

Believers in the Early Church had no doubt that Jesus was coming back before the generation passes because they loved the world just like Jesus Christ had loved it according to 1 John 4:17. Why can’t we believe the word of God? Because we don’t have the perfect love for God. What is the goal of pastors to build up the believers in churches through the spiritual system of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and education? The goal is for the believers to grow to the fullness of Jesus Christ which in turn is determined by their understanding of depth of God’s love.

I shared this during the exposition of 1 John that Apostle John had a powerful revelation from God that he completed the revelation about the end time Daniel had opened up. John also amazingly understood all three heavens. In light of these great revelations John could only utter one thing, “God is love!” The revelation of God was opened up wide to Apostle John because he had a merciful heart even on the Romans’ persecution and tyranny. If he had hatred in his heart, revelation wouldn’t have opened up.

Church should lead the believers to the full measure of Jesus Christ and to the level of love by the spirits of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and education and by the amazing depth of love of Christ. This shouldn’t become a theory. The difficulty of being a leader is to demonstrate what they teach in life for the followers to see. We want to be equipped with the full measure of Jesus Christ.

Paul says in verse 17, “So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.” He is saying the same thing that we build up a right relationship with God through faith. Paul also speaks, “and that you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.” The knowledge of love in verse 19 continues to grow in the breadth and depth of love.

“But speaking the truth in love” is also the same. We are to speak the truth which is the word of God. Speak the truth in love! We are also to grow up and mature in all things to the fullness of Jesus Christ who is our head. Since Jesus is our head, our love should elevate to the level of His love. Knowing the truth in love means obeying the truth in love. Therefore, if love is not supplied to the believers in a church, they cannot obey the truth. That’s how love is important. Love is obeying the commandments. Bible makes that clear and it never talks about love in abstract. When the believers are in love, they will thoroughly obey.

A good secret is found in verse 14 “as a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.” Children are shaken up easily and they lack faith and knowledge. The reason believers are shaken up is that they are like children. If we don’t grow out of children, we will fall by the trickery of men, craftiness and deceitful scheming. The trickery means throwing up a dice in Greek and we should not be ripped off by tricks of others.

Let’s look at “every wind of doctrine.” Believers are supposed to cut off the words of the world and secular concerns. The spiritual battle of this age is not about who has the most information but who has the right information. Why can’t you hear the voice of God? Because you are listening to the sound of the world all the time. The craftiness of deceitful scheming refers to a false gospel. It is speaking of a different gospel. Pastors should proclaim the gospel as a matter of life and death. We shouldn’t vaccinate people with Jesus. If you vaccinate your people with Jesus that is half dead, they have strong resistance against real Jesus. So when real Jesus comes, this Jesus vaccine results in rejection of real Jesus. We should feed the people with real Jesus. When they eat the real Jesus, their constitution becomes so powerful. They can overcome any suffering and adversity.

Now, what does an equipped/prepared man do? He serves! The Greek word is diakonia which has five different meanings. We build up the spiritual system of four spirits and have the church members go through this system equipping them for the works of service, diakonia. A church is established through their service. When God commands His church a certain task/ministry, He will provide everything so she can complete the task. That’s a church of God. Does a church need money? Then God will provide it. Does she need people? God will provide them. Does she need power? God will give her the power. Amen?

Let’s look at five services. First, we have service of ministers. When a church member is equipped/prepared through the spiritual system of four spirits, he must make a commitment to become a minister. Second, we have service of worshipper or worship leader. When a believer is equipped, he should become a powerful worshipper. He would receive much blessings in every worship service. Third, we have service of missionaries. When a believer hears in his prayer “Go to Cambodia,” then he should go out. If God speaks him to go to Bhutan, he should go to Bhutan. Fourth, we have service of authoritarian of word. An equipped man should live his life according to the word of God. Finally, we have service of contributor. An equipped man should serve with contribution. An ordinary Christian is supposed to receive the material authority except for those with a gift of poverty. He should serve with materials he has. He should have no possession. If God desires it, he should contribute all. Isn’t that what we see in the Early Church? Isn’t that the true church of God?

The fruit of saint/Christian is revealed through this five service as a result of the work of spiritual system of four spirits. There are ministry, service, mission, authority, and contribution. The evidence of the spiritual system is this five services. Whenever a new member joins a church, he should exhibit these five services.