

The Local Church 2 - Part 6

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of every believer being involved in ministry and exercising their gifts in the church to be a good representation of Christ.

Duration: 5:41

Scripture: Ephesians 4:16

Topics: "Church Growth", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of believers growing and maturing in their faith to reflect the likeness of Jesus Christ. It highlights the need for every believer to actively participate in the ministry, exercise their spiritual gifts, and contribute to the edification of the church. The passage from Ephesians 4 underscores the idea that all believers are called to be ministers and work together for the growth and unity of the body of Christ.

Transcript

From the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect, that means a mature man, a grown-up man, well-built man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. God wants the church on earth to be a good representation of the Lord Jesus. That's what it means.

He wants every believer to be such that when people meet him, they think he makes me think of God. Unsaid people. They say, he makes me think, she makes me think of Jesus.

Something about her that makes me think of Jesus. How do you get this? By the exercise of the gift in the church. Not by paying some man to do it for you.

That's what has arisen in Christendom. Paying somebody to do your religious duty for you while you go into the business world and make a fortune is not the New Testament way at all. The work of the ministry is committed to every believer in the Lord Jesus.

Every believer in Christ is in the ministry. Notice what it says in verse 14, that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to be. What it's saying is if you, if Christians don't exercise their ministry in this way, they become prey to every crazy cult that runs along, that comes along.

Somebody knocks at the door, and he's carrying a Bible. He's carrying a Bible. He must be good.

He'd know better than that if he was, if he knew his Bible better. And they're taken in by cultists, by people who deny the deity of Christ, and they don't know any better. But speaking the truth and love may grow up in him to all things who is the head even Christ.

This is God's program for the growth of his body. I think verse 15 is beautiful, from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does it share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. In a way, what it really means is that the ideal church, instead of having one man doing all the work, and all the rest of the people sitting in pews, contributing their money in the offering, and then just going about their work during the week.

Instead of that picture, it's a picture of a church where every person is an evangelist. Every person is witnessing for the Lord Jesus. Every person is a Bible student, growing in the knowledge of the Lord.

Every person is exercising his gift for the glory of the Lord. And that's why I feel this is such a revolutionary passage of Scripture. This is the passage of Scripture, more than any other, the reason why I work with simple New Testament assemblies today.

When I was in the Navy, the question came to me, why are you in that assembly? Is it because your father was in it? Would you be just as happy in a denominational church? And I said, that doesn't. I said, Lord, I'm going to go to New Testament and see the truth for myself. And I went, and I really believe as I stand here today that God led me to Ephesians chapter 4, and I saw this truth, that the gifts were given for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry.

And that gave me convictions. We all need to get convictions, not from your father, not from your mother, but from the Word of God. Get convictions, and when you get convictions, stick to them.

They really are important. All believers are a gift. And the passage we read today excludes the idea of a one-man ministry.

Absolutely excludes it. We're so used to it, it's hard to think in terms of it. It's hard to think that God's will for the church is to have a group of elders as overseers in the church, under shepherds in the church.

But that is God's will, not one man, but a group of elders exercising their gift and their work in the local church. So we will go on and study this more. We're going to be thinking about the priesthood of all believers, and they're going to listen to the voices of men who say that's what this passage of Scripture means.

And yet they themselves were ministers of churches when they said it. It's going to be the great enigma of this conference. Lord, bless His Word to our hearts.

Father, we pray that your people might be a people of the book, that we might go back to the Bible more and more, not be guided by tradition, not be guided by centuries of practice of the church. We might go back to the Word of God and find your will for the church. Help us all to know, Lord, what our gift is and live it out to the hilt.

For your glory, for the salvation of sinners, for the edification of saints, and for the progress of the work of God here on earth, we pray in the Savior's name. Amen.

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