

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Jo Anderson (*on-going medical*), Karen Berry (*sick*), the Boyetts (*sickness*), Joe Brown (*cancer*), Mildred Church (*shut in*), Linda James (*surgery postponed*), Paul Lloyd (*rehabilitation in Toledo, Ohio*), the Marschall family (*exhorting Kirk to faithfulness*), Kirk Marschall (*in need of spiritual encouragement*), Linda McKenzie (*tending to her mother's ailing health*), Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), Timothy Payne (*sick*), Dottie Reynolds (*ongoing medical*), the Sadler family (*addition of Raelyn Elizabeth; 8lbs. 12 oz., 21 in. arrived at 9:35 on 2-7-19*).

Family and friends: Scott Bower (*friend of the Lawson's; health*), Nell Goodall (*undergoing physical therapy*), Leslie Gleaton's family Ned Hicks (*Larry Hicks' father, ongoing medical*), Brian James (*cancer*), Rowena Lawson (*health issues*), John Marschall (*Bob's father*), Lindy McReedy (*Cindy Hicks' aunt, terminally ill, under hospice care*), Ardis Tucker (*Paula Sullivan's sister-in-law*). Remember and encourage others who are struggling physically and spiritually.

Group Meeting: Group 1 will meet next week after the evening worship service.

Kids' Review Class: Will take place **tonight** after the evening worship service.

Ladies Bible Class: Next class will be February 11th (**tomorrow**) at 7PM in Angela Wisdom's home (*Please see bulletin board in foyer for more details*). In preparation, please do lesson number 12 on page 50 in the book provided for the class (Woman, Her Blessings and Responsibilities, by Irene S. Foy).

Men's Training Class: The 4th Sunday of each month at 5 pm (*Feb. 24th*).

Winter Study 2019: The next class on how to study the Bible will be Tuesday, Feb. 26th, in the Rice's home (7PM).

Third Sunday: Jordan Lawson is scheduled to preach during the PM assembly next week.

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 2/13/19

Song Leader: Joe Brown
 Opening Prayer: Jerry Williams
 Invitation: Colby Sadler
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: Jim Elliot
 Recordings: Clay Sadler
 Usher: Leon Miller

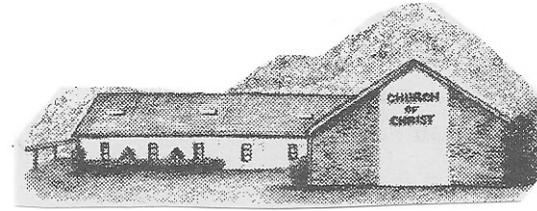
Sunday Evening: 2/17/19

Song Leader: Joe Brown
 Opening Prayer: Ian Rice
 Lord's Table: Ryan Boyett
 Announcements: Leon Miller
 Closing Prayer: Mike Sadler
 Recordings: Bob Marschall
 Usher: Gus Johnson

Sunday Morning: 2/17/19

Lord's Table: Ryan Boyett (B)
 Clay Sadler (C)
 Serving: Jerry Williams
 Timothy Payne
 Song Leader: Larry Wisdom

Opening Prayer: Steve Parker
 Announcements: Leon Miller
 Closing Prayer: Charles Goodall
 Recordings: Bob Marschall
 Usher: Gus Johnson



**Lakeland Hills
 Leader**

LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST

2510 Lakeland Hills Boulevard Lakeland Florida 33805 (863) 688-4336

www.lakelandhillschurchofchrist.com

ELDERS

Larry Hicks (863) 899-7405
 Leon Miller (863) 640-6378
 Larry Wisdom (863) 583-4311

SERVICES

Sunday
 Bible Study 9:00 A.M.
 Morning Services 9:50 A.M.
 Evening Services 6:00 P.M.
 Wednesday
 Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

DEACONS:

Robert Marschall
 Michael Sadler
 Moses Stevens
 David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

The Restoration of the All-Sufficiency of the Church

When God created the heavens and the earth He saw that it was very good (**Gen. 1:31**). Such is characteristic of everything God does. We cannot imagine that the Lord would do anything less than perfect. The church is a part of God's grand scheme of redemption and is a reflection of the manifold wisdom of God (**Eph. 3:10-11**). One can not imagine that this new creation of God (**Eph. 2:1-10**) is less than good.

The Church Fully Equipped

The church for which Jesus shed His blood is fully equipped to do all the Lord gave it to do. Perhaps the greatest passage in the New Testament which sets forth this is **Ephesians 4:7-16**. The text teaches that Christ gave gifts unto men that the church might be filled (**vv. 8, 10**). Note carefully that this passage does not say that Christ gave "spiritual gifts" to men. It says, rather, that he gave gifts to "every one of us" (KJV), or to "each one of us" (NASB) (**v. 7**). Christ gave the gifts here considered to the whole church. The gifts were not "spiritual gifts," but consisted of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (**v. 11**). Note briefly the function of each.

(1) Apostles and prophets. These laid the foundation of the church by their teaching (**Eph. 2:20**). The prophets are New Testament prophets (**cf. Acts 13: 1; 1 Cor. 12:28-29**), chosen by the laying on of the apostles' hands (**Acts 19:6**). We now have their work in the completed revelation (**Eph. 3-1-5; 2 Tim. 3:16-17**).

(2) Evangelists. These announce the good news, preach and teach the word of God (**2 Tim. 2:2; 4:1-5**).

(3) Pastors. Pastors are shepherds and are the same as overseers or elders (**Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2; Phil. 1:1**). Each local church is to have a plurality of pastors. The New Testament authorizes no organization smaller or larger than the local church for the collective functioning of the saints in the work of the church. Those who argue for a confederation of local churches overlook (or disregard) the fact that God gave pastors for the tending and oversight of the local church.

(4) Teachers. These give instructions in the faith (**2 Tim. 2:2; Acts 13:1**). There is a possibility that the phrase "pastors and teachers" refers to one function, that is, teaching pastors. Such does not affect our argumentation here and will not be considered further.

(5) Deacons. Deacons are not mentioned in **Ephesians 4**, but other Scriptures show that they are servants of the local church (**Acts 6:1ff; Phil. 1:1**).

Each of the "gifts," workers or functionaries named by Paul in Ephesians 4 (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) have in common the function of teaching. From this one should be able to draw some conclusion about the main purpose of the church and the primary thrust of its activity. It is true that some of these workers had "spiritual gifts" in New Testament times, but that is not what Paul says here. These workers are the gifts of Christ to the church in order to make it sufficient for His purpose.

The Purpose of the Gifts

The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers were given to the church "for the equipping of the saints" (**NASB, v. 12**). The King James

Version uses the word "for" three times in this verse: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The Greek text uses two different prepositions. The first "for" is from the Greek preposition *pros*, which is used "of the goal aimed at or striven toward . . . with conscious purpose for, of the purpose of, on behalf of . . ." (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, & Danker, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 710). The goal or aim of the gifts is the perfecting of the saints. The second and third time the word "for" is used in the King James Version the Greek preposition is *eis*. This word means "in order to" (Bauer, p. 229). The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says of the consecutive and final *eis*, "The preposition denotes the direction of an action to a specific end" (11:429).

Paul is teaching that God gave gifts so that (*pros*) the saints might be perfected in order that (*eis*) the saints might do the work of ministry or service in order that (*eis*) the body might be edified or builded up. Before we go too far we must look at the "perfecting of the saints."

The word translated "perfecting" or "equipping" is from the Greek *katartismos*, which basically means "putting a thing or a person into the condition in which he or it ought to be." The word is "used in surgery for setting a broken limb, or for putting a joint that is out of place back into its place. In politics it is used for bringing together opposing factions so that government can go on" (Barclay, *The Letter to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p. 176). In the New Testament it is used of "mending" nets (**Mk. 1:19**), or "restoring" erring saints (**Gal. 6:1**). The saints must be perfected or they can never do what God intended for saints to do. We have seen that the Lord gave the "gifts" (workers, functionaries) necessary to perfect or equip the saints. Once the saints are

perfected through teaching they will be able to do the work of ministry or service, and this in turn will result in the building up of the body.

The Work of Service (Ministry)

Brethren have commonly stated that the term "ministry" (Greek, *diakonia*) in verse 13 refers to the work of benevolence. It is true that the word is used of benevolence or relief in the following passages: **Acts 6:1; 11:29; 12:25; Rom. 15:31; 2 Cor. 9:12, 13**. But the word is also used of the general ministry of a servant of the Lord in preaching and teaching. Notice some of the places where the word is used. (1) Paul frequently mentioned his "ministry" (**2 Cor. 4:1; 6:3; 1 Tim. 1:12**). (2) Timothy was instructed to "do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (**2 Tim. 4:5**). (3) Paul stated that his "ministry" was to "testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God" (**Acts 20:24**). (4) He told the Corinthians that he robbed other churches that he might "serve" them (**2 Cor. 11:8**). What did Paul do when he ministered or served? Acts 18:5 explains that when Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia (obviously with the "wages" from the other churches) he "began devoting himself completely to the word. . ." (NASB). It is clear from these passages that the word *diakonia* (ministry, service) is used of evangelism as well as benevolence.

Edifying or Building Up The Body

When the saints are perfected through teaching they are able to perform the acts of benevolence as well as the preaching and teaching which God expects of them. Paul states that this will lead to (*eis*) the edifying (building up) of the body of Christ. The word edifying (Greek, *oikodome*) is used figuratively "of spiritual strengthening. . . edifying, edification, building up. . ." (Bauer, p. 559). As a congregation does its work of ministry (benevolence and evangelism) and worships and studies in God's appointed way it will build up or edify itself in love (**Eph. 4:16**).

Summary

If the church is not being built up it is not because Christ failed to equip it adequately. He gave the essential gifts to the church. We have the work of the apostles and prophets in the revealed New Testament Scriptures. When evangelists, pastors, and teachers do their work of teaching and overseeing the saints will be perfected. Perfected saints will do the work of ministry or service (benevolence and evangelism), and this will cause the church to be builded up or edified. The church of Christ is sufficiently equipped to do everything the Lord wanted it to do. Each local church, under the oversight of its own pastors, can do everything God wanted the church to do.

Churches in New Testament times were able to provide for their own needy (**Acts 6:1-6**) and assist the needy of other churches (**Acts 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25-26; 2 Cor. 8, 9**) without building or maintaining human organizations for the purpose. They were likewise sufficient to preach the gospel without forming missionary societies and without some of the congregations becoming sponsoring churches through which the others might work (**cf. Acts 11:22-26; 13:14; Phil. 4:15-16; 1 Thess. 1-8; 2 Cor. 11:8-9**).

The all-sufficient church is the right relationship for every accountable person. A denial of the adequacy of the church to do the work God has assigned is an admission that the saints have not been "perfected," and this in turn argues that Christ did not give the necessary "gifts" to get the job done. This kind of thinking is a reflection on the wisdom of God. "May he be glorified in the Church, and in Christ Jesus to the last generation of eternity" (**Eph. 3:21, Knox**).

~ by Ferrell Jenkins