

Living a Worthy Life 2

A Connected Life Ephesians' 4 Verses 7-11a

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Introduction: I do not know why, but I have been in a mood lately for games. So I am going to have every one stand up, When you get a question wrong you need to sit down.

1. How Many Apostles in the New Testament do we have record of?

A. 11

B. 12

C. 17

2. Matthias was one of the New Testament Apostles?

T or F

3. In the Movie Apostle, Who plays Euliss "Sonny" Dewey, a popular Pentecostal preacher?

Robert Duvall

Robert Downey Jr.

David Busey

4. Who was the least of the Apostles?

A. Andrew

B. Matthias

C. Paul

5. Jesus Appointed the twelve Apostles after doing what?

a. Pray all night

- b. Fasted 40 days
- c. Called them

It is interesting to me, after Paul writes one of Scripture's greatest descriptions of the unity we have in Christ, he introduces a subject that is as contentious today as it was in the first century. The apostolic gifts caused many arguments, then and now, doubt me read 1,2 Corinthians and Acts 8.

Who were the Apostles?

Maybe you heard the joke about the garden gnome. The gnome is in the garden busily destroying some bushes when a house cat appears. "What are you?" asks the cat.

A gnome-I steal food from humans. I kill their plants. I make annoying music late at night to drive them crazy. And I love mischief! And what may I ask are you? The cat replies; I guess I am a gnome! Just as confused as that cat was, many of us are just as confused as to who the apostles were.

Apostles are named in Eph 4:11 and twice in 1 Cor 12:28-30. The word "apostle" (apostolos) comes from a common Greek verb, apostello, which means "to send, to send out, to send on a mission." In a generic sense an apostle is anyone sent on a mission, such as the three men (Titus and two others) whom Paul sent to Corinth to facilitate the offering he was collecting for the poor in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:23); also Epaphroditus, sent by the church at Philippi to minister to Paul's needs (Phil 2:25); and Jesus himself, sent from heaven to be our Savior (Heb 3:1).

The word "apostle" is linguistically equivalent to our word "missionary," and is probably used in that sense of "Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 13:2-4) in Acts 14:4, 14, and of Andronicus and Junias in Rom 16:7. It is almost certain that the gifts of apostles refers to the office of apostle, i.e., to the men chosen by Jesus Christ to be his personal representatives in establishing the church following his ascension. These are "the twelve apostles" (Matt 10:2), commonly referred to simply as "the twelve" (with Judas being replaced by Matthias, Acts 1:26), to which was added the apostle Paul (2 Cor 12:11-12; Gal 1:1, 17). When Paul says in 1 Cor 12:28 that "God has appointed in the church, first apostles," he is saying that this gift is of first importance. It is also the most comprehensive gift, since apostles seem to have been

given other gifts as a part of their calling, e.g., prophecy, teaching, administrations (involving their general authoritative leadership), tongues, and miracles (2 Cor 12:12).

Acts 1:21-26 give us the qualification for the office of Apostle; so let's read the passage. . .

For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms, " 'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,^[d] and, " 'May another take his place of leadership.^[e] ²¹Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

²³*So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.*

²⁴*Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." ²⁶Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.*

From this passage it is clear to be an apostle and to share in supernaturalistic apostolic gifts, you needed to walk with Jesus during his earthly ministry and personally witness the resurrection of Jesus.

What are the major views of the Apostolic Gift?

Apostolic Succession

Apostolic succession is the doctrine, prevalent among the more ancient Christian communions,(Such as Catholic, Orthodox and Episcopalians.) that the succession of bishops, in uninterrupted lines, is historically traceable back to the original Twelve Apostles.^[1] From this succession, the bishops are believed to have commendation from God and therefore ministerial authority. This authority is not said to be equal to that of the original twelve apostles, but nonetheless legitimized through them. This is why some of those churches believe in a Papal Edict as direct revelation from God and have closed communion because their apostolic authority makes them the one true church.

Apostolic Gifts (Speaking in Tongues, Direct Revelation, Healing and Reading of a person motivation still in operation) not apostles-some believe apostolic gifts and apostles are still with

us.

Apostolic Gifts Temporary gift given by God to establish the Church and give us New Testament. To me It is quite clear that the gift of apostles was a temporary gift, intended only for the founding era of the church universal (Eph 2:20). The existence of this gift is limited by the conditions laid down for the choosing of Judas' successor in Acts 1:21-26, i.e., it was necessary for an apostle to have been a direct witness of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ (or at least to have witnessed the risen Christ, as did Paul, Acts 9:1-6). Since both are no longer a possibility, the Apostolic gift passed away after the birth of the church and the New Testament was completed. In any case this inherent limitations upon those who are qualified to be apostles justifies in my mind the distinction between temporary and permanent gifts.

Now, I know this is a controversial view, I would just ask you to accept me as I am. Second, because of the diversity of opinion on this topic, I would urge you to not just be angry, but use it as motivation to restudy this question and come up with a greater understanding of the Apostolic gift in the New Testament!

When the Apostles laid their hands on another what happened?

Let's read Acts 6:6 which says; ***They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.*** In this passage we see the Apostle laying hands on those chosen to wait on tables-but in the chapters to follow we see these men empowered miraculously after the Apostle's hands are laid on them. Let's go to Acts 8:14-17: ***When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into ^[c] the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*** This passage says these believers did not receive the manifestation of the Holy Spirit until the Apostle laid their hands on them. 2 Corinthians 12:12 describe these manifestations; ***The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done***

among you with great perseverance.

These gifts were only ever given as signs to accompany and witness to the teaching and preaching of the apostles while the Scriptures were still incomplete. Heb. 2:3-4 says; . **This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.** ⁴**God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.** Now that we have the complete Word of God, inspired and infallible, we not only do not need these signs, but by asking for their return would be showing our refusal to receive and believe the Scriptures as the all-sufficient Word of God.

Lastly, there is no record in Scripture of these gifts being passed on by anyone other than the apostles. Because of that fact I believe scripture teaches the apostolic gifts was temporary to establish the church and the authorship of the New Testament. I would urge everyone on this complicated issue, to thoroughly study it for themselves.

Where in the New Testament does it allude a passing away of certain gifts?

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will **pass away**. 1 Corinthians 13:8 Now this is the most famous passage and most controversial one in the New Testament that touches on the subject. There are two main understandings of this scripture 1. Is the Second Coming of Christ. 2. The maturation of the early church and completion of the New Testament. I hold to the second view and it is one of the reason, I believe Paul that is why in I Corinthians 14:19 he says But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible **words** to instruct others than ten thousand **words** in a tongue.

But I think a much stronger teaching is the New Testament approach to Scripture when it says in 2 Peter 1:14.15 says ***because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.*** ¹⁵***And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.*** . . It is clear that Peter knew his mission before he died was to pass on a written record that others could rely on. In Verses 19-21 it says ***And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the***

day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peters point was His and other Apostles and Prophets writings were given by the Holy Spirit and were sufficient to meet all a believers needs. We finalized this and we call it the New Testament. In any case, to believe in and seek the continuation Apostolic gifting is to deny the sufficiency of Scripture (II Tim. 3:16-17; Rev. 22:18-19).

What was their Purpose?

Rule the Church

This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down. 2

Corinthians 13:10 Along with Acts 15 makes clear part of the Apostle God Given Purpose was to rule and settle disputes within the first Century churches. In fact two of the early heresies' were Gnosticism and Marcionism. The Gnostic heresy is not easy to give the basic doctrines of the Gnostics, since they were not one group, but rather several similar philosophies. But a common element is they believed they had special knowledge over and above Scripture! Marcion believed the Creator attempted (and succeeded) in deceiving the apostles about the true message, mixing it with various Jewish elements and connecting it with his OT scriptures. These corruptions must be rejected.

Consequently, Marcion, who created the first known canon of New Testament scripture, accepted only the "edited" epistles of Paul and a cut-down version of the Gospel of Luke. He deleted all statements which asserted that the Christian Gospel was the fulfillment of OT prophecy, since it was not the fulfillment of anything promised by the evil Creator.

What is interesting is Gnosticism one of the earliest heresy's is dated around the end of the first century, when many of the Apostles had already died and their rule had diminished. Marci on success in part was because the Apostle had passed on and their disciples to refute the heresy.

What we see in the later letters of the New Testament 1st and Second Peter and the letters of John is a slow transition from the rule of Apostles to the rule of Elders. But in these letters the Elders confront error in 1 Peter 5 by being an example and a leader, not supernaturally reading a person's motivation like Ananias and Sapphira being put to death. 2 John 1 does not urge the Elders to write authoritatively to refute the deceivers who taught Jesus did not come in the flesh, but to not house them. To me this demonstrates to me they did not have the same supernatural gifts the Apostles had to rule the church, and it was the difficult task of the Elder to rule, lead, and protect the flock without the same gifting of the Apostle. This is one of the reasons it is so important on how we choose and set aside the leaders of Elbert Christian Church.

Bring us the New Testament

One of the biggest tell tale signs of a cult from genuine biblical teaching, is their need for either more revelation, a better translation or a direct authoritative word from God. Whereas, historic biblical Christianity is in agreement with Jude 3 ***Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith (The Gospel-Scripture) that was once for all entrusted to the saints***

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.
2 Peter 3:15-17

By the time of Peter's writing, Paul's letters already had a widespread reputation. Notice that Peter spoke of Paul's letters as if they were on a level with "the other parts of Scripture."

Already the early church was thinking of Paul's letters as inspired by God. when you study these type of sections, ask yourself isn't it clear-they understood as part of their gift as an apostle was

to give scripture to guide and direct all Christian. Next ask yourself; if once these writing were completed is the gift still needed . . .

Foundation of the Church

Ephesians 2:19-21 says ¹⁹***Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,*** ²⁰***built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*** ²¹***In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.***

What does it mean to be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets? It means that the church is not built on modern ideas but rather on the spiritual heritage given to us by the early apostles and prophets of the Christian church.

But it also means that according to Ephesians 2; the Church is People and Paul calls it a house a building or temple. But according to Paul the Apostles were it's foundation. What is important about this analogy is this; when a house is built how many foundations are built for one house? One. So once this foundation was built the function of Apostle was no longer necessary.

What this means is yes-I believe the manifestation of the Holy Spirit no longer dwells with mere man so that his mere shadow heals. But I do believe that God intervenes and performs miracles to intervene for the good of his kingdom. What this means is I believe that Scripture has everything we need to make the journey home. What this does not mean-is God only speaks to man through scripture. I also humbly acknowledge I am only one Christian amongst thousands trying to understand the mysterious Apostolic Gifts! I pray we can all be good students of God's word, to give honor and glory to our Savior Jesus!

Conclusion: Someone has imagined a story of the angel Gabriel meeting Jesus on the day of His ascension into heaven and asking: "How did it go Master, how did it go?"

"It went poorly," said Jesus, "they nailed me to a cross. But I preached the love of God as long as I could."

Then Gabriel asked, "What did you do to see that it would be carried out?"

"I chose twelve Apostles," said Jesus, "and I gave them the gospel of God's love for all mankind. I told them to go and tell others."

"But what if they don't do it?" Gabriel asked.

And the story has it that the master said: "Then there is no other way."

It is time that the church recapture that purpose that was given it on Pentecost day.

It is time at ECC we continue the sermon the Apostle started so long ago-on God's love. The most honoring thing we do for the apostle and their Lord Jesus who died for the Gospel is to share it some one else. Are we willing to go and share God's love with others?