

#### 4. The Leader Who Serves – The Teacher

Three topics ago, we gave a basic foundation for the leader who serves. In our last two topics, we talked about the leader who has the gift of evangelist and the leader who has the gift of pastor. Today, we will build on that foundation as it relates to the leader who has the gift of teacher. In Ephesians 4:11-12, we see that teachers are to, “Equip the saints for the work of the ministry”. Today, we will see that Christ has equipped certain spiritual leaders, called teachers, to equip all the saints to teach the Word of God and show the saints how to apply the Word in daily living.

In 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11, Paul called himself a teacher. In 1 Timothy 2:7, Paul said, “For which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” Then, in 2 Timothy 1:11, he said, “To which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” The only other time the word “preacher” is used is in 2 Peter 2:5, where it refers to Noah.

The other word with the same basic meaning as preacher is the word “ambassador” which is used to describe Paul and all believers, in 2 Corinthians 5:20, where we read: “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” A preacher or ambassador is a messenger who represents the King of heaven. As ambassadors, we are to plead with the people of the world to be reconciled to God, the true King. In this verse, we see that God is pleading with the world through us.

We mentioned in an earlier topic that Paul was appointed as an apostle. We saw from Acts 1:21-22 that the key ministry of the apostles was to be an eyewitness of the resurrection. Paul saw Christ on the road to Damascus, because God had appointed him to be an apostle to the Gentiles.

The third word Paul used to describe himself is a teacher of the Gentiles. The same word is used in 1 Corinthians 12:28, where we read: “And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.” As we see in Ephesians 4:11-13, the primary ministry of teachers is for “...equipping the saints for the work of ministry...” just as that is also the primary ministry of evangelists and pastors.

Paul gives us a key to understand how teachers equip the saints for the work of the ministry in Acts 20:20, where we read: “*And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house.” Acts 19:8-10 shows us that Paul taught these people publicly in the synagogue and in the school of Tyrannus. However, he also went to the homes and gave instruction to the individuals and households.

In the public meetings, Acts 19:9 tells us that the primary method Paul used was discussion. Christ used a similar approach when He was in the temple at the age of twelve. Luke 2:46 says, “Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.” Often, today, the church has adopted the Greek method of teaching, which was lecture, rather than the Hebrew method of teaching, which was

discussion and questions. Today, many Christians are familiar with the Word of God, but they have no idea how to share the Word with others, because they have never learned to discuss the Word by both listening and asking questions.

In the meetings from house-to-house, Paul, and the team with him, would go to the various homes of those who become Christians to discuss the Word of God with them and their households. This provided a double opportunity. First, Paul and the team with him were able to discuss the questions of each family. Second, this also provided an opportunity to share the Gospel with the people in that household that had not yet become Christians. Paul reminded the elders at Ephesus, in Acts 20:20, that he had shown them how to teach as he had taken them with him to visit the various households.

We see that Paul was not the only one to show developing leaders how to teach by taking them with him as he went from house-to-house. In Acts 2:46, we read, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” Here, we see that the early church in Jerusalem also did much of their teaching in the homes of those who had become believers. In fact, the early church even had communion as they went from house to house. That provides an ideal opportunity to teach the Christians how to explain the Gospel. It also provides an ideal opportunity to share the Gospel with family members who are not yet Christians.

Of course, much of the ministry of Christ was carried on in the homes of people. In fact, we never read of Christ turning down an invitation to visit in a home, including the homes of those who opposed him. Christ was teaching His disciples how to share the Gospel in Matthew 9:10-13, where we read: “Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ When Jesus heard *that*, He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what *this* means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’”

Christ taught the disciples how to recognize teachable moments as they observed while Christ talked to Mary and Martha about the resurrection when their brother Lazarus died. Christ also showed the disciples how to show love to these in sorrow that day. John 11:33-36 says, “Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to Him, ‘Lord, come and see.’ Jesus wept. Then, the Jews said, ‘See how He loved him!’”

When Christ gave us the Great Commission, He also taught us a key lesson about teaching. Matthew 28:20 says, “...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.” The word that is translated “observe” is usually translated “keep”. A good illustration of this is found in John 14:15, where Christ said: “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” As this verse makes it very clear, we are to teach

people how to obey all that Christ has commanded.

True Biblical teaching teaches Christians how to obey what they are learning. As a result, as a teacher equips other Christians to teach the Word of God, he must focus equally on helping them show others how to obey what they are learning. In John 15:5, Christ told the disciples, “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” Then, in Philippians 4:13, Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

A key part of the ministry of the teacher is to help Christians learn to depend on the strength that Christ provides instead of their own strength. Dependence on Christ is best taught by example, as the teacher models the fact that he is dependent on the Lord in all he does. This means that the effective teacher is learning to yield to the Lord as a pattern of life. Romans 6:16 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?” As the teacher yields to Christ, he demonstrates that the Lord gives the strength to obey and live a righteous life.

Whether you have the gift of evangelist, pastor, or teacher, you will be most effective at equipping the saints for the work of the ministry as you take people along with you as you minister. As we have mentioned, that helps people to:

- ◆ Grow in Biblical knowledge, as they see you share the Word of God with others
  - ◆ Grow in godly character, as they see godly character modeled in your life
  - ◆ Grow in effective ministry, as they are shown how to obey all that Christ has commanded
- The Lord multiplies our ministry as we show others how to obey all that Christ has commanded. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip the saints for the work of the ministry.