

NORTHEAST HOUSTON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sermon: Spiritual Office, Part 2

Topic: Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists

Scripture Text: Ephesians 4:11–16

05/04/2014

Quote: Churchgoers Are Like Coals in A Fire. When They Cling Together, They Keep the Flame Aglow; When They Separate, They Die Out. - Billy Graham

Ephesians 4:11–16 (NKJV) ¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 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 of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Last week we began talking about specific "gifts" listed in the Bible as Spiritual gifts. But we looked at four often named that are listed in our focus passage.

Over the years I have come to the conclusion that there is no, "set in stone", exhaustive list of Spiritual gifts. I mentioned that those listed in the focus passage they are not "spiritual gifts" but "Spiritual offices/Activities or Ministries.

Definition - Spiritual gifts are gifts of abilities (not necessarily talents) and knowledge given by the Holy Spirit as He sees fit to individual believers for the work of ministry, for spiritual activity and for the edifying and profit of the body of Christ when and as they are needed.

A source for my definition is in the passage we covered the last time we discussed gifts of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4–7 (NKJV) ¹ Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: ⁴ There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

Spiritual gifts are different than Spiritual Ministries and Spiritual activities are different from both. The three are different but related. The four mentioned seems to fall under "ministries". In many countries the term "Ministry" or even minister relates to an office held by a person to be responsible or perform a specific work. We substitute the word with "Department" or "Secretary".

Example: Winston Churchill was England's Minister of Defense in 1940. Today his counterpart would be Chuck Hagel, Secretary of Defense

We do the same today when we refer to a clothing ministry, ushers ministry, even "Minister of the Music and "Ministers of the Gospel."

V11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

These listed are OFFICES of MINISTRY.

Let's look at Moses whom we said is the prototype of a Prophet. He held the "Office, Position and Title of a Prophet.

Deuteronomy 34:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,

He heard from God to speak to the people as one of his duties. He also was gifted to by God to perform his called Ministry. On occasion God gave him specific "Activities" to perform associated with his calling.

Last week we covered the first two offices, Apostles and Prophets. Today we will look at evangelists, pastors and teachers.

Evangelists - Three occurrences; AV translates as "evangelist" three times. **1** a bringer of good tidings, (Good News, Gospel). **2** the name given to the NT heralds of salvation through Christ **who are not apostles.**¹

In hopes of getting a clear picture of this office I want to spend a few moments looking at the one person in the bible that was identified with that title/office. That person is Phillip.

Acts 21:8 (NKJV) ⁸ On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

Phillip is first mentioned as one of the seven chosen to be deacons

*Acts 6:3-6 (NKJV) ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;(serving the widows, Acts 6:1-2, Financial administration) ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose **Stephen**, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and **Philip**, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, ⁶ whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.*

Just as a person may have more than one Spiritual Gift, they also may be called to more than one office/ministry. Phillip was called to be a Deacon and an Evangelist. He was also gifted to perform miracles, discern and remove unclean spirits (demons), the gift of healing (*Acts 8: 6-7*). But he was not an Apostles nor a Prophet.

Another one that I think may have been and Evangelist was Stephen. He also had several spiritual gifts and was the first Christian martyr. (*Acts 7*).

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Acts 6:8 (NKJV) ⁸ *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.*

Philip is most know for being sent as an Evangelist to preach to the Ethiopian eunuch. (*Acts 8:26-39*)

He continued traveling and preaching.

Acts 8:40 (NKJV) ⁴⁰ *But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.*

The role of an evangelist is to "preach" (proclaim) the good news (Gospel) to others. Although Philip is the only one named as an "Evangelist" I truly believe that there were others. Look at this next verse.

Acts 8:4-5 (NKJV) ⁴ *Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.* ⁵ *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.*

Others, like Philip left Jerusalem, by the persecution of Saul, to go others places to preach the word. I am not saying that they all were called to the specific office of an Evangelist but they seemed to be doing the "work of an evangelist".

Paul to Timothy

2 Timothy 4:5 (NKJV) ⁵ *But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

Just as we see that Philip had a calling to an office Evangelist, he also had another ministry as a deacon. Timothy was called to the office as a "pastor and Teacher but was also urged to do the work of an "Evangelist".

Commentary Comment: Based on Eph. 4:11, it is very basic to assume that all churches would have both pastor-teachers and evangelists. But the related verb "to preach the gospel" and the related noun "gospel" are used throughout the NT not only in relation to evangelists, but also to the call for every Christian, especially preachers and teachers, to proclaim the gospel. Paul did not call Timothy to the office of an evangelist, but to "do the work" of one.²

We are all called to proclaim (preach) the Gospel, to do the work of an Evangelist but there are those that Evangelism is their primary calling, this is their office.

Well, here's the question, is the office o Evangelist a valid office today? I do believe it is. All of you here have witness those who claim the title "Evangelist", but be warned that the devil has many counterfeits and imposters.

Keep in mind that we are talking about spiritual offices and all may have false people within them. The office of Apostles had Judas, the office of a Prophet had Balaam (*Jude 11*), and the lying Prophet (*1 Kings 13:18*). From the beginning the scriptures warn of false prophets.

² *The MacArthur Study Bible*. 1997 (J. MacArthur, Jr., Ed.) (electronic ed.) (1880). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

Today there are those that claim to be evangelist but beware. How can we tell who is a real "Evangelist" given by Christ and who is false?

Using those in the Bible that seem to be true and some lately that seem to be true here are a few things I look for.

1. Did they demonstrate faithfulness in another office? - Philip and Stephen were serving as a Deacons to the widows not the wealthy.
2. Are they called to be by Christ - It is hard to question someone's calling but watch, for by their fruits we will know them. It's hard to doubt that Billy Graham, Billy Sunday, Dwight L. Moody, Luis Palau and George Whitefield were not called. I picked them because their life's work is behind and their fruit is evident.
3. Are they preaching the Gospel, the word of God for the salvation of men and women? Both Philip and Stephen preach for the salvation of men and women not to enrich themselves, by charging admission or begging for money.
4. Are they preaching the Gospel free of charge regardless of difficulty, inconvenience or receiving fame, fortune, power or pleasure? - Philip and Stephen were chosen by other members because their fruit and character stood out in meeting the criteria set by the Apostles.

We all too often hear of some that claim to be evangelist and multiple spiritual office holders proving to fall short of their calling.

5. Do they go to the people or do they have their own stationary location and expect the people to come to them? Philip and Stephen and other were on the move fulfilling the commission to "go".

Let us all be aware of the need to do work of an evangelist. The calling for this office is open to both men and women.

1 Pet. 2:25). One who holds this office is also called an "elder" (*see notes on Titus 1:5-9*) and "bishop" (*see notes on 1 Tim. 3:1-7*). Acts 20:28 and 1 Pet. 5:1, 2 bring all 3 terms together.³

Message Scriptures: **Ephesians 4:11-16**, 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-7, Deuteronomy 34:10, Acts 21:8, Acts 6:3-6, Acts 6:8, Acts 8:26-39, Acts 8:40, Acts 8:4-5, Acts 8:4-52 Timothy 4:5, (1 Kings 13:18, 1 Pet. 2:25, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 5:1

END

³ *The MacArthur Study Bible*. 1997 (J. MacArthur, Jr., Ed.) (electronic ed.) (1809). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

MOODY, D. L. (DWIGHT LYMAN) (1837–1899)

American evangelist

From 1875 until 1899 Dwight L. Moody was unquestionably the chief spokesman for the revivalist wing of the flourishing American evangelicals of his day. In addition to regular evangelistic tours through American and British cities. His central leadership role was very similar to that played by Charles Finney before the Civil War or that of Billy Graham in the era after 1950.

Moody left his boyhood home of Northfield, Massachusetts, at age seventeen to seek a career in Boston. There he was converted and joined a Congregational church. He soon left Boston, however, moving in 1856 to Chicago, where in a few years he developed a very successful business as a shoe salesman. In the meantime he was touched by the enthusiasm of the city revivals that spread through America in 1858, and he turned more and more toward Christian work.

In 1860 he abandoned his shoe business to work full time with YMCA evangelism to young men in the cities and to found a Sunday school for poor children. Soon after the war he became president of the Chicago YMCA and also built the Sunday school into the independent Illinois Street Church.

Throughout his career it was characteristic of Moody to carry on his work independent of denominational structures. His message was essentially simple. It has been characterized by the “Three R’s: Ruin by sin, Redemption by Christ, and Regeneration by the Holy Ghost.” Moody focused his ministry on saving souls. His most famous remark was, “I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, ‘Moody, save all you can.’ ”

Moody’s principal means for perpetuating his influence was through establishing educational institutions. In 1879 he founded a school for girls at his home base, which was in Northfield, Massachusetts, and in 1881 followed it with the Mount Hermon School for boys. In 1886 he adopted Emma Dryer’s recently founded Bible training school, the Chicago Bible Institute (later Moody Bible Institute) to quickly train “gapmen” or laymen in those things necessary for them to become effective Christian workers.

Christian leaders from all parts of the English-speaking world assembled to learn particularly about evangelism and the necessity of Spirit-filled lives of holiness. The outstanding outgrowth of these Northfield conferences was the formation of the immensely influential Student Volunteer Movement in 1886. This movement inspired missionary efforts by thousands of young persons during the succeeding decades, carrying with them the motto of the Student Volunteers, which also summarized the goal of the lifework of D. L. Moody, “the evangelization of the world in this generation.”G.M.MARSDEN⁴

⁴ Marsden, G. (1992). Moody, D. L. (Dwight Lyman). In J. Douglas & P. W. Comfort (Eds.), *Who's Who in Christian history* (J. Douglas & P. W. Comfort, Ed.) (483–485). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House.