

**The Ministry of Evangelists and Pastors and Teachers and Your Ministry**  
**(Ephesians 4:11-12a)** Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on 2/5/2012  
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Please turn again to Eph 4:11. Last week we looked at the apostles and prophets of the NT, the foundation of the early church, as Eph. 2:20 calls them, and their very important ministry. This morning in 4:11-12 there are other important ministers as well, including you.

Eph. 4:11-12a (NKJV): *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry ...*

**How Many Other Times Are These Words in Ephesians 4:11-12 used in the Bible?**

Evangelist	2
Evangelism	0
Missionary	0
Missions	0
Pastor	0 in NT (ESV translates it “shepherd” in Eph 4:11)
Reverend	0
Clergy	0
Saint	100
Christian	3
Believer	3 (KJV, differs slightly in some versions)
Unicorn	9 (KJV)

Some Bibles have 3x more to say about unicorns than Christians (9x more than pastors)! Actually *unicorn* is a KJV mistranslation from the LXX and Latin (*unicornis* or rhinoceros, better translated “wild ox”). But it is interesting that the word “Christian” only appears 3x, and “saint” (like v. 12) is used of believers 62x in NT (101 total). “Saint” doesn’t mean we’re sinless or “holier *than thou*,” but it does mean God sets me apart to be “holier *than I was* by grace.”

Ephesians 1-3 develops our *identity in Christ*, and then chapters 4-6 develop our *responsibility to Christ*. The first half of the book explains what God has done; the second half is what we’re to do by His grace and for His glory, in His power not ours (3:20-21). In Eph 2:8-9 it says even our faith is part of the gift of God, and now in Eph 4:7-8, God’s grace also gives gifts and gifted people for the early church (v. 11a) and gifts and gifted people for today’s church

Before Paul talks about the responsibility of every “saint” in v. 12, he first in v. 11 talks about some specific unique people in the NT church, not using general terms for all like *saints/slaves/disciples/ elect/brethren*, but specific terms: *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers*. The Bible rarely uses the term “evangelist” or “pastor” or “deacon” and never the term “missionary/evangelism” but it does have a lot to say about those who preach the gospel. In some cases, the way we use certain words is different from the NT.

Let me ask you, and you can respond out loud: what are some of the images or ideas that come to mind when you hear “evangelist”? I’m not looking for a right or wrong answer from Scripture, but the first things that you think Christians think of about “evangelists”:

- maybe some of us think of TV preachers, “televangelists”?
- maybe a southern sweaty preacher of hell-fire, brimstone, who shouts and gives long invitations with lots of music?
- maybe travelling itinerant speaker, big tent, crusade, rally?
- maybe somebody really gifted at apologetics who can argue with atheists and skeptics, religious Muslims, cultists, etc.?
- maybe somebody who goes knocking on doors, or stands on street corners or soapboxes, maybe an open-air preacher

It’s possible to *evangelize* doing some of those things, some more effectively than others, but the biblical word “evangelist” in v. 11 is used somewhat differently than those pictures I just mentioned. It’s not a professional or preacher only, or primarily. It surprised me to learn the Bible never uses the word *evangelism* or *missions* or *missionaries*. There are gifted *evangelists* mentioned in 2 other passages, but the NT emphasis is on the verb form of the word, *euangelizo* (evangelize) used 54x, an action that all Christians do:

- Acts 5:42 uses the verb for what they kept doing everyday
- In Acts 8, when Paul the writer of this book (then named Saul) was an unsaved persecutor of the church, it says as the persecuted brethren scattered, this same Greek verb is what they went around doing everywhere they went (8:4)
- It’s the verb used in the same chapter (8:35) for Philip’s one-on-one conversation with an African court official in a chariot heading back to his country, where he explained the Scriptures and proclaimed who Christ is, and he believed
- Some others from Africa were saved, and in Acts 11:20 it says some of them from “*Cyrene ... came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord ...*”
- Sometimes the Greek verb form of evangelist is translated literally “bring good news,” other times “preach/proclaim” with the content being Christ, the gospel, the Word, etc.
- In Acts 14:21 the same word is connected with making disciples, which is part of our Great Commission, Mt 28:19

The most important cross-reference for the *noun* “evangelist” is 2 Tim 4:5 where Paul tells Timothy “*Do the work of an evangelist.*” That’s in the context of a local church. Timothy wasn’t a travelling itinerant speaker jetting in and jetting out of town, he was a leader in the church of Ephesus (that Paul is writing Ephesians to). And in Acts, Philip was also one of the 7 servant-leaders of the Jerusalem church (Acts 6, like a “deacon” today), later sent out by them. The key is that “evangelists” are connected to and under church leaders

Warren Wiersbe tells of a rogue unconnected ‘free-lance missionary’ self-styled evangelist who visited a pastor friend asking for financial support. ““What group are you associated with?” my friend asked.

The man replied, “I belong to the invisible church.”

My friend...asked, “Well, what church are you a member of?”

Again he got the answer, “I belong to the invisible church!”

Getting a bit suspicious, my friend asked, “When does this invisible church meet? Who pastors it?”

The missionary then became [angry] and said, “Well, your church here isn’t the true church. I belong to the invisible church!”

My friend replied, “Well, here’s some invisible money ...”

Now, my pastor friend was not denying the existence of the one body [a worldwide, spiritual, universal church]. Rather, he was affirming the fact that the *invisible church* (not a biblical term [i.e., the *universal church*]) ministers through *the visible [local] church*<sup>1</sup>

We may not consider ourselves a gifted “evangelist” in the sense that Philip was (only person who the NT calls “evangelist”) but we need to think of “evangelize” as a *verb and work* for us to do in the context of the local church and the community where we live, like Timothy was called to do (verb form Acts uses of all believers).

Eph 4:15 tells us to speak the truth in love, including gospel truth, and a future message on that I hope helps us in evangelistic work. But for today, notice that Eph 4:11 mentions evangelists but v. 11 says they are given: “**to equip the saints to the work of ministry...**”

It’s not only certain people we call “evangelists” who God calls to do the work of the ministry of an evangelist *instead of the saints*, instead of you. God gives gifted individuals *to the saints to equip the saints to do the work of ministry* where they are not as gifted! It may be that evangelistic ministry is harder work for you, but God gives the church evangelists *to help equip you to do evangelism*. I think of Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron (Way of the Master) or of the late D. James Kennedy (Evangelism Explosion) or Discipleship Evangelism back at Grace Community Church which was a great example of how this works best in a local church (GCC wall sign).

God gives gifted evangelists not to excuse us from that ministry but to *encourage us to that ministry and equip us for that ministry!* The people in v. 11 are not to take “the ministry” *from the saints* in v. 12, they are to equip the saints *for the work of ministry*. Those in v. 12, the saints / church / believers, *are to do the work of ministry*. The ministers in v. 11 are to *equip the saints to be ministers*, v. 12. The same is true of the next “ministers” in v. 11: *pastors/teachers*.

NKJV “... *some evangelists and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry ...*”

Not as clear in original KJV: “... *Pastors, and teachers: For [Greek pros] the perfecting of the Saints, for [Greek eis] the worke of the ministerie, for [Greek eis] the edifying of the body of Christ*” [Note: the first "for" is the Greek preposition *pros*, the 2nd two occurrences of "for" are a different Grk preposition *eis*]

In the KJV English, each of the phrases begins with “for,” which might make you think they’re the same and all parallel statements of what pastors and teachers are here for. But in Greek it’s not the same for all 3. There’s a direct connection between pastors and teachers perfecting or equipping the saints, but then there’s a different preposition for both the work of ministry and edifying the body, which is what *the saints are to do, not pastors*.

In other words it's the saints, it's believers, who are to do the work of ministry and building up the body, not just pastors. The comma after the word "Saints" was not in the Greek NT. Even Erasmus in his edited Greek texts before the Reformation did not put a comma here, but unfortunately this wrong punctuation in the 1611 KJV and this translation has misled many to a strong "leader-laypeople" separation where the pastors and teachers are the ones God gave the church to do all the ministry in all 3 of the phrases.

One writer called this the "fatal comma."<sup>2</sup> James Boice calls it a 'small but serious error that may have contributed to the church's blindness at this point [that] the professionals do it all ... But that translation was wrong! ... Without that comma, the passage says something entirely different. Instead of giving three tasks to "ministers," it gives one task to [teachers] ("equip the saints") and another to [all] ("do the ministry").'<sup>3</sup> This is a revolutionary truth!

NKJV "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"

"Perfecting" was a little misleading or confusing because no man can make another perfect; "equipping" is better

NASB "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" [happens when saints serve]

\*Notice the translation "service" – the English versions use "service" and "ministry" interchangeably. This is another revolutionary concept: *ministry and service are the same word in the Bible. Ministry = service. Minister = servant. It's a word for all people, not just pastors or professionals.*

The Greek root word usually involves serving physical needs, not just Sunday ministry or a select few church officers/leaders. Don't think "church program," think serving people, meeting their needs.

NIV "pastors and teachers **to prepare** God's people for works of service, **so that** the body of Christ may be built up"

NET "teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, **that is, to build up** the body of Christ"

HCSB "**for the training** of the saints **in the work** of ministry, to build up the body of Christ"

WNT "pastors and teachers **in order fully to equip His people** for the work of serving—for the building up of Christ's body"

Kenneth Wuest's Expanded Translation: "some as **pastors who are also teachers**, for the equipping of the saints for ministering work with a view to the building up of the Body of Christ"

Amplified Bible: “His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints [**that they should do**] **the work of ministering** toward building up Christ’s body”

ESV may be the best: “**shepherds** and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”

Here’s something else revolutionary: In all of the earliest English translations of Scripture, the word “pastor” is not in the N.T. We hear “pastor” and we think of a paid staff guy at a church. But the biblical word just means “shepherd.” The Bible doesn’t say much about ‘staff’ except to talk about a shepherd’s rod and staff (Ps 23). For some reason the KJV translated shepherd as “pastor” only here but all earlier English translations of v. 11: *shepherds and teachers* (ex: Wycliffe in 1380, Tyndale in 1534, and Cranmer’s in 1539).

Some later translations began to use the synonym “pastors” in this text (only place the word “pastor” is used in modern translations) and later traditions began to associate an evolving clericalism and professionalism that’s different than the meaning of the biblical term. Eph. 4:11 has same Greek root word used for all Elders in 1 Peter 5 and Acts 20 (verb form of *shepherd*). ESV and Young’s Literal Translation keep “*shepherds and teachers*” in Eph. 4:11.

Churches may support one or more shepherds (also called Elders) part-time or full-time to fulfill their biblical mandates (ex: 1 Tim. 5:17-18) but paying of wages or a pastoral title does not put the man in a different class or office biblically than the other Elders. The NT does not give 3 offices or categories of leaders, Pastor(s), Elders, Deacons (and no hierarchy of pastors, or ruling elders vs. teaching elders). Biblically there are only 2 offices or categories: Elders (also called overseers or shepherds or pastors and teachers, depending on verse/version) and Deacons (1 Tim 3; Phil. 1:1).

The biblical pattern is a plurality and equality of godly men who lead the local church as under-shepherds with Christ as our Chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:3). That’s why in our new photo directory, the opening page doesn’t have a bigger picture of me, not just so you won’t see zits or blemishes on my face ... it just lists my name and says Elder/Pastor-Teacher. That’s why the picture of the Elders in the foyer isn’t me on top of a pyramid as “the *Senior Pastor*” (not a biblical phrase and if anything I’m a freshman pastor!). The ESV never even uses the word “pastor” but it mentions Elders 70x as spiritual leaders (Gentile or Jew or church) and other descriptions of these men who shepherd. I do not have a higher rank or double vote among our Elders here. We submit to each other, for better or worse, that’s why in the picture it’s alphabetical, on the same level.

The term “Pastor-Teacher” comes right out of the end of Eph 4:11 because these two are joined in the grammar differently than the others, and what that means is that certain pastors in a church may be gifted and devoted to be the primary teacher (2 Tim 5:17 calls them supported Elders who “labor in the word and teaching”). But I don’t think v. 11 means only one man but a plurality of shepherds and teachers in each local church are the ideal so v. 12 can happen.

The role of shepherd and teacher are joined in the grammar and not to be separated. It’s true that pastors/shepherds must be able to teach and it’s true that teachers in a church (who may not be elders or pastors), they are to be *shepherds of the people they teach*.

This is important for everyone who has a teaching role in the church on any level: *you are not just to be a teacher but to be a shepherd of the people you teach*. What God has joined together (*shepherd* and teacher) let no man in this church put asunder by not caring for the sheep in your care, by mere lecturing without loving shepherding.

The same Paul told the Elders of this same church in Acts 20:28: *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. **Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood ...***<sup>31</sup> *So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.* [And Paul wept with these Elders and they wept with him and embraced him; these were tender caring shepherds, not CEOs, not stoic executives or whatever stereotype we have of Board members in a business]

Paul was not just a preacher or teacher who didn't shepherd people as he said in that same chapter, he taught them both publically and from house to house whatever was profitable for each one (v. 20), urging both repentance and faith to them, not hesitating or holding back anything that was what they needed to hear, even if it wasn't what they wanted to hear (v. 20), giving them God's whole counsel (v. 27) so that he considered himself innocent of their blood (v. 26)

Jeremiah 23 (KJV) <sup>1</sup> ***Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.*** <sup>2</sup> *Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors ... **Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings ...***<sup>4</sup> ***And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.*** [and that chapter goes on to say that He would do this through the LORD Himself who is my shepherd, I shall not lack. Christ is the Good Shepherd who enables us to be]

Christ could make a shepherd out of a stubborn sheep like Peter:

1 Pet 5:2 NIV *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;*<sup>3</sup> *not lording it over...but being examples to the flock.*

John 21:15 describes the resurrected Christ commissioning Peter: *Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "**Tend My lambs.**"*<sup>16</sup> *He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "**Shepherd My sheep.**"* [that's the verb form of word *pastor*]

It's a fulfillment of Jeremiah 3:15 in the KJV where God promised: *"I will give you **pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding ...***<sup>17</sup> *At that time ... all the nations shall be gathered ... to the name of the LORD ...*

Pastors after God's heart equip the sheep, not entertain the goats. God uses faithful pastors and teachers, it says, to reach all nations. In the grammar of Eph 4, the work of *shepherds and teachers* in a church is not to do all ministry themselves, but to equip the saints to do the work of ministry/service (v. 11-12).

These shepherds are not to monopolize ministry but are to mobilize it and to multiply it. How? Through their shepherding and teaching (implied not just in public as teachers but also as shepherds working with the flock until each member is working properly in ministry, fulfilling its role, so that the body is being built up and building itself up, v. 12).

As a part of the Elders here, something that has become very clear to us is that we're at a crucial juncture in our leadership to focus our energies more not in educating only but in engaging others in the ministry and equipping them to ministry outside of Sundays. We don't just need more classes or more programs; we see a need for more purposeful and personal development and discipleship of the sheep to minister to each other, that's how we as shepherds are to focus on energies and efforts. And if or when God allows us to hire another staff member in the future, that's where we want him to focus, to help us fulfill Eph. 4:11-16 as shepherds and sheep. As we shared with you in the Dec annual meeting and Sunday school a few weeks ago, we're very actively as Elders pursuing the Lord's will in regards to a future pastor to join our team, not to do what God calls the whole team of Elders to do, and not to do what God calls all of you to do, but one to help us fulfill this passage better.

What I'm sharing with you is part of a study I just went through with our Elders on shepherding priorities. The role of "shepherds and teachers" is sometimes summarized as "leading and feeding" to emphasize that the feeding (teacher) aspect is not enough in public or from the pulpit; there also is an equally vital leading (shepherd) aspect, guiding practically further.

The Greek term "equip" in v. 12 was a very hands-on term used for "setting of bones ... different parts and portions of the body should be put into the right alignment, should be properly adjusted, and that each one should be fully developed" (Lloyd-Jones, *Ephesians*, p. 199). The word has the ideas of preparing, conditioning, training with attention to individuals. In Hebrews 13:20-21 the shepherd equips with everything necessary to do God's will. The noun is only used in Ephesians 4:12 in the NT, but its related verb form:

- used of hands-on care, repairing, mending/fixing net (Mt 4:21)
- to form, or bring something into its intended shape (Heb. 11:3)
- restoring to spiritual health a person who has fallen (Gal. 6:1)
- someone becoming like their master through teaching (Lk 6:40)
- providing whatever is lacking in someone spiritually (1 Th. 3:10)
- preparing something or someone to be used (Heb 10:5)
- bringing people into functioning harmony together (1 Cor. 1:10)

Tonight: Equipping the Saints to Minister to Sick and Suffering  
 Rest of this month different shepherds and teachers will help me:  
 -Equipping Saints to the Ministry of Hospitality/Fellowship (v. 12)  
 -Equipping Saints to the Ministry of Discipleship (v. 13-14)  
 -Equipping Saints to Counsel/Speak the Truth in Love (v. 15)  
 -Equipping Saints to Speak Gospel Truth in Love to others (v. 15)  
 -Equipping Saints to Apply and Speak the Gospel to Ourselves, etc

<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996), Eph 4:12.

<sup>2</sup> Mackay, p. 185, cited by Stott, *Ephesians*, 166.

<sup>3</sup> James M. Boice, *Ephesians*, p. 140-41.