

Ephesians 4:7-13
The Five Faces of Jesus: Intro
Sunday August 14th, 2016

Awhile back I used this sermon illustration to make the same point I am driving at today. It comes from a little study book called, *"If You Know Who You Are You Will Know What to Do."*

The story is told about Dr. Hendrik Kraemer, a remarkable lay missionary from the Dutch church who spent much of his adult life in Indonesia. He was in his native Holland when the WWII broke out. The Gestapo dominated the nation of Holland, forcing Dutch Jews into death camps like Buchenwald and Dachau.

Late one night a group of Dutch laypersons came to see Dr. Kraemer. They said to him, "Dr. Kraemer, what shall we do? Our neighbors are dying. We don't know what is going to become of us as a nation. Please, please, if you can, tell us what to do. We have got to do something, and we have got to do it now."

Dr. Kraemer replied to them, "I am not going to tell you what to do, but I will tell you who you are. And if you know who you are, then you will know what to do." He opened his Bible to 1 Peter 2:9 and began to read:

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, and a people claimed by God as

his own, to proclaim the triumphs of Him who has called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light."

Dr. Kraemer closed his Bible and asked. "Do you know who you are?", "Then you'll know what to do." Thanking him, the group left his house. That night, they formed the Dutch Resistance. If You Know Who You Are, You Will Know What to

Do: Living with Integrity by Ronald J. Greer

Now we are not learning who we are, so that we can go to physical war, but to spiritual war against things that tear down the unity of the

Body of Christ. Verse 12 in our scripture today enjoins us “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”

In other words, we are to learn who we are, so we as individuals and as a Church can remain in unity and grow up into the full stature of Christ. That is a tall order especially if we are looking for professionals in the ministry to be for us what we are called to be on our own. This is a tall order that only can be fulfilled if each of us discovers who we are and then seeks to do what being made that... way.... has gifted us to do.

Over the next 5 weeks it is my desire to help you further discover who you are. To help you discover or further enlighten your purpose within the church, so that you can pursue that purpose. The thing I am after, and this series of messages is after, “It is not what you “do” in the church but who you “are” in the church that matters most.”

It is bad English, but I believe this gets the point across. It matters more who we “be” than what we “do.” Being comes before doing. Being with God, resting with God knowing who we are comes before us doing any work for God.

Now I have titled this series the “Five Faces of Jesus” because these are 5 ways people saw Jesus in ministry while he was here on earth. That’s why the background for my slides for this series is a picture of 5 people in a friendship circle.



These 5 faces are also 5 ways Jesus' ministry continues here on earth through his Church, through you and me. To be disciples of Jesus Christ is to follow him, to do what he did, to be what he was.... for other people. We are to function in this world as Jesus did and the miracle is that God has graced and gifted us to do so.

We are to be the ones, the Church, that when people look at us they see Jesus' face. We need to be Jesus to each other to build each other up and the church up. And again, God has gifted us and graced us to do so.

Ephesians 4:7 says, "**But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.**" This is an extremely powerful and important statement. It says, and I can't emphasize this enough, in terms of this series, the phrase here "**each of us**". That phrase tells us that all of us as baptized believers have been given gifts. Absolutely all of us!!! These gifts are first referred to as "grace" in verse 7. Every gift any of us gets is a gift of the grace of God, so Paul refers to these gifts as "graces".

You must note again that no one is excluded here. All lay people, all clergy; everyone is gifted by Christ for the purpose of building up the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:7 makes this point again, it says, "**To each has been given a gift of the Spirit for the common good.**" Again, no one has been excluded, and Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 12 is that no should be thought to be excluded from the gifting of God. And furthermore, no one's gift is any more important than anyone else's, even those who are designated as Apostles.

All have an important and vital function in the Body of Christ and if one person is excluded the whole body suffers and if one member decides they and their gift are more important than any other the whole body again suffers.

The source of the gifting is God. God gives to individuals in the Body of Christ the gifts necessary for the whole body to thrive. The source of the gifting here in our verses is depicted as Jesus Christ as he ascends into heaven. Verses 9-10 are an aside for Paul in the midst of him making his point that all have received gifts from God and all need to use those gifts, not for personal enlargement, or ego, but for maintaining unity and encouraging growth.

Verses 9-10 are an aside where in Paul's writing; the thought of Jesus Christ ascending into heaven reminded Paul of Jesus "descent to the dead" as it says in the Apostle's Creed before his resurrection. The captives he led to heaven were all the dead he preached the gospel to between his death and resurrection. More on that in the series, "What Happens When You Die."

Now the heart of our study for today and the next 5 weeks is Ephesians 4:11 which says, "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers," These are what are the 5 faces of Jesus are, and these are what I and others refer to as the "fivefold ministry of Jesus Christ".

Now this for some... is a radical statement... and I had to think about it for months before I understood and accepted it, these are also the 5 base gifts or roles given to all Christians for the building up of the Church. Each of us is graced or gifted to fulfill at least one of these roles within the Church. All of us have some gifting in each area, but there are areas in which we excel.



One face of Jesus was that of an **apostle** going out into new territory bringing new things into existence like the Church.



Another face he showed was that of a **prophet** proclaiming the will of God in the present and into the future.



He was an **evangelist** sharing the good news that the Kingdom of God was near and now was the time to repent.

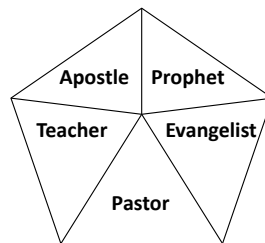


He was the Good Shepherd. The word **pastor** in the New Testament means “shepherd” and Jesus was that for his disciples then and now.



He was also **teacher** par-excellent. His parables speak to all down to this day.

These are the five faces of Jesus and reflect ministries that must be present in the church today for the Church, the body of Christ to be healthy, alive and growing.



They are like the 5 facets of the diamond shape on the screen right now. Each facet gives a deeper understanding and brilliance to the whole and each is necessary for the church to shine forth the light of Christ.

Each week for the next five weeks, I will be speaking about each one of these faces of Jesus, each one of these roles that each one of you has in the Church and world today.

It is my desire and hope that you take the time to go to this web site fivefoldsurvey.com to take this test to see which grace, which gift or role Christ has given you for the building up of the body of Christ. We also have some paper copies of the test in the back so you can find out who you are so you will know what to do. I would also ask you that when you take the test you bring the scores with you to church each Sunday to find out in greater depth what they mean for you and your church.

Now here's where I am working myself out of a job. Most of you do not think you are or ever could be an apostle, or prophet, or evangelist, or pastor, or teacher. Now you are right if you just think of these as reserved for specific persons, like the 12 Apostles or professionals like ordained clergy, or highly gifted people.

But if you conceive of these as roles that God has gifted people for... to this very day... that are vitally necessary for the unity, health and growth of the church you will understand. You will be empowered to fulfill your role to be who God has made you to be.

It seems down through the centuries highly trained professional men and women were seen as the only ones who could fill these roles. I believe that has been perpetrated by people who wanted to stay in power.

The result of assigning these roles only to a professional class has been to weaken the church as a whole. One person or a handful of professional staff cannot properly fill for the whole church these roles that are given to each and every individual.

Part of what has happened in our culture is the commercialization of the Church where the push for bigger, better, brighter has turned the church into a religious Circle K and the clergy and staff into the clerks

who provide religious goods and services. Thus the huge crowds on the Holidays and then the rest of the year. The crowds have come and consumed and gone and disciples are not left in their wake.

What I am proposing in this series is the Biblical concept that one and all who gather here who believe in Jesus Christ is a priest in the Kingdom of God.

Remember this, *“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, and a people claimed by God*

as his own, to proclaim the triumphs of Him who has called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.”

I am lifting up the priesthood of all believers as the legitimate face of the Church now and into the future. I believe that face will actually have 5 faces one of which will be yours as you fulfill the role that God has graced and gifted you to be.

My intent over the next 5 weeks is to help you discover who you are and commission you to live out of that role/grace/gifting.

It is my prayer to further unleash and unshackle the priesthood of all believers; so that there will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the lives of people who have discovered who they have been created to be and live out of that in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In Jesus' Name. Amen.