

Episide #1026 Ephesians 4 Part 3-What Happened to the Gifts?

I. In Ephesians 1-3, the Holy Spirit revealed to us all the glorious things that are true of us “in Christ.” Now, in Ephesians 4-6, we are told of the “worthy walk” that we should live in love and gratitude to God for the glorious position we have received.

II. In Ephesians 4:7, Paul speaks of the giving of gifts. These gifts were given to all in the book of Acts. Yet as we consider the reality of today, we see that such gifts are not given to all believers. Today we will consider why this is, and what happened to the gifts.

III. Ephesians 4:7. Paul explains that in Acts, to every one of them (though NOT to us) grace was given, not according to some superior faith they had, but according to the measure of the gift of Christ. The gift was according to Him, not them! “WAS,” not “IS.” Paul is talking about something that is in the past, in the Acts period. Yet most today insist that the miraculous gifts are still relevant for today. Why have these miracles disappeared? What happened to the gifts?

IV. Mark 16: the commission promises the signs.

- A. Mark 16:15-18. The promise is clear. Those who believe WILL work miraculous signs. Note: the signs follow them. They do not have to follow the signs!
- B. No way out by manuscripts: this is mostly based on the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, and both show signs of tampering here.
- C. Some try to insist that these were only relevant while the Scriptures were being written. I Corinthians 13:8-10. But this is talking about the kingdom of God, not the completion of Scripture. Besides, Christ said no such thing.
- D. The commission is clear: their part is to go and make believers. Verse 15. God’s part is to send the signs. Verses 17-18. There are only three possibilities.
 1. The commission is being fulfilled. The claim of some today.
 - a. Their signs fall short.
 - i. Tongues were languages. Acts 2:4, 8-11. Tongues today are not
 - ii. Healings were universal. Acts 5:16. Today only a few claim healing, and most go away disappointed.
 - iii. Healings were done on people everyone knew. Acts 3:2, 10. Healings today are done on someone you never saw before, and probably will not see again.
 - iv. The dead were raised. Acts 9:40. Where are resurrections today, besides a “land far, far away”?
 2. The fault is with us.
 - a. We do not truly believe? This is slanderous!
 - b. We do not believe in the signs? This is not what it says.
 - c. We have little faith? Matthew 17:20. But this is not true! John 20:29. We believe without seeing. This takes great faith!
 - d. Ephesians 4:7. The gifts are given according to the measure of Christ, not of the ones receiving. If the gifts have failed, it is because of Christ, not because of us!
 3. The fault is with God.
 - a. God failed to keep His promise. Unthinkable!
 - b. God is keeping His promise, but for some reason we do not qualify.

- c. The “third world countries” argument. This violates the truth that all nations are now equal! Ephesians 3:6. An empty claim, but people get away with it because you cannot really check it.
 - d. God’s promise has already been fulfilled, and so He does not need to fulfill it any longer.
 - E. Mark 16:20. They did their part, and God did His. This is in the past. They had already accomplished this work before Mark even wrote His gospel!
 - F. Colossians 1:23. The past tense and the exact same wording in the Greek make it clear. They accomplished Mark 16:15. God no longer needs to fulfill this promise!
- V. Ephesians 3 presents the truth of God’s work today.
- A. God works graciously. Ephesians 3:2. No miraculous punishments, like Ananias and Sapphira!
 - B. God works with all nations equally. Ephesians 3:6. The “third world countries” argument is contrary to this. If He is not doing it here, He is not doing it in any other nation either. Cell phones do not scare away the Spirit!
 - C. God works in secret. Ephesians 3:8-9. This means when He does work miracles, He always hides them so you cannot trace them back to Him.
- VI. Ephesians 1:19-20. There is exceedingly great power for us today!
- A. It is the same power used to raise Christ from the dead and raise Him to sit at the right hand of God!
 - B. It is at work in us “who are believing.” God’s power raises faith in the heart of a fallen, corrupt sinner. This is great power indeed! Now, His power is still at work in changing our lives.
 - C. It is often claimed that those who teach God is not working in clear, evidential, mediatorial miracles today do not believe in God’s power. Yet who really does not believe in God’s power: those who insist we do not see miracles like Acts because God has changed His work, or those who insist that the weak, disappointing miracles of today are the same thing as Acts?
 - D. God has worked powerfully in the past. God will work powerfully again in the future. Now, He is working powerfully, but that power is concentrated inside those of us who are believing. Any work He does on the external work, He does untraceably.
- VII. Conclusion: Many ask: “What happened to the gifts?” When we look closely at Mark 16, we see that the purpose for which they were given was accomplished. Now, God’s work is as is defined by Ephesians 3, not by Mark 16. God is working graciously, with all nations equally, and in secret. He is not giving out miraculous gifts today. He is not working in open, manifest, evidential, and mediatorial miracles. Yet He is at work powerfully in the lives and hearts of those who truly believe in the gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ, and who are in Him. Praise God for His current, powerful work!