

## **(Ephesians 4:1-16) "Out of Christ's Ministering Abilities"**

This portion of Ephesians is revealing to us the gifts that God gives us as a church so that we might walk in balance, in equilibrium with the call – so that we might bear witness in word and deed to God's eternal purpose in Jesus to put everything that is out of place in the world back into its proper place.

### **Read Ephesians 4:1-16**

1. (7-10) Paul is expressing that Jesus has given each of those who are found in Christ by faith a portion of Jesus' ministering abilities. Reflect on Jesus' ministry while he was on earth. What were those ministering abilities?
2. Are all of these meant to be the ongoing work of the church – the body of Christ – here and now? Why or why not?
3. *Read Psalm 68* Paul uses an image from Psalm 68 to speak of Jesus as King descending to the battlefield to take on our enemies, victorious he parades behind him the defeated army and the spoils of war, and ascending his throne he lavishes upon his people gifts from the spoil. How does this psalm and the imagery help us to see and understand the work of Jesus on our behalf?
4. One of the best places we can uncover the gifts we have been given is in the context of a group of people who know and love us. What do you personally believe is the gift that God has given you in Jesus? How could your group support you in your exercise of that gift?
5. (11-12) These are roles within the early church that were given the task of bringing the apostolic faith to different people in different ways. Their purpose was to "equip the saints" – equipping had the general sense of being restored to the condition we should be in. In what ways does the reading, studying, teaching, and preaching of the scriptures do this work? How can we as individuals and as a community come more under the equipping of the word of God?
6. We are equipped – brought back into the condition we should be in – not just for our own sake but for the work of ministry. How might God be calling you to use your gifts for the sake of others? How can your small group support you in that?