

Gift - APOSTLE SERMON – Tim King -CBTB Worship Service 12th September 2021

REVIEW

APEST Hand

***Ephesians 4 - God has given gifts to his body, to build it up. To help it grow.*

Today we will talk about the gift of apostle.

Bunches and Gifting

A bunch (20-40) gives us opportunity to practice various giftings AND opportunity for the church to recognise gifts in one another. Then we can train in skill.

So we are unpacking each of these 5 giftings This is an opportunity to say to yourself:

- 1. What makes me excited, what inspires you*
- 2. Practical application - how do I start to develop this*
- 3. Tell your bunch leader - I feel this gifting - How can I help?*

****Review the cycle.**

Inspiration - have a go - recognition - train for skill

****What about other gifts?**

Now with this series drawing to a close, it must be mentioned that the NT mentions many gifts administration, generosity, miracles etc. 20 or so others.

****But in Eph 4 here most commentators agree today that the best rendering of the Greek is to consider the gift as the person. So God gave APEST - he gave 'people' to the body. So one holds the office of evangelist, prophet.**

So the Eph 4 giftings are a little different from the other gifts bc they do seem to revolve around a calling or an office. Then the calling is to practice that skill and empower the church to do it. This is why we keep saying - we believe that a healthy believer in the body should be active in some way in all 5. You may discover that you are called to lead in one of them?

So...

So what works would the evangelist help the you to become better at?

What works of service would the prophet help you become better at?

What works of service would the pastor help you become better at?

What works of service would the teacher help you become better at?

What works of service would the apostle help you become better at?

APOSTLE

****Definition**

Greek - The term apostle is derived from Classical Greek ἀπόστολος (apóstolos), meaning "**one who is sent off**", from στέλλειν ("stellein"), "to send" + από (apó), "off, away from".

Brief

To go and commence new works. To break new ground and establish the gospel, indeed to establish the kingdom by establishing the church in new places:

How many apostles were there in the NT?

12? Actually about 25 mentioned.

James, the half brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church

****I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother.** Galatians 1:19

Barnabas

****But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd...** Acts 14:14

Apollos, Timothy, Silvanus etc...

What does an Apostle do?

****Planter**

The Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthian church that he started says:

⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 1 Corinthians 3:6

****Foundation layer**

Then he says: ¹⁰ *By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.* ¹¹ *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.* 1 Corinthians 3:10-11

****Parent**

¹⁴ *I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as my dear children.* ¹⁵ *Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.* 1 Corinthians 4:14-16

****Example**

Follow me as I follow the example of Christ 1 Corinthians 11:1

Personality of an apostle

Jesus selected a team - See we would think that if Jesus came to start a church. He needs admin, employment contracts, graphic artists, musicians, childrens pastor, he needs to do the BUV safe church training and get his working with childrens checks sorted.

But when Jesus selected a team, he selected dangerous men. Deliberately.

And they were called the 12 Apostles. (sent out ones)

Business owners, (Andrew Peter James John)

Political revolutionaries (Simon the zealot)

Individuals who would risk public humiliation and hang out with sinners in order to get ahead - (ambitious men like Matthew the tax collector)

Very few of the 12 Apostles are the kinds of guys you would want on your church leadership. Some of them, you would not even want in your church. The reality is that the majority of us prioritise safety and risk avoidance. To be honest, the kinds of individuals that may have apostolic gifting make the rest of us feel uncomfortable. Church revolves around risk avoidance. But the Jesus chose men that would run toward risk.

Why are more churches in Australia closing than we are planting?

Why do only 2% of churches plant another church in any given year in Australia?¹

¹ NCLS Research - Church planting in Australia

2% of Australian churches plant in any given year

200 churches being planted in Aus per year - but more than 200 are closing per year

Is it because we fail to recognise and deliberately train and deploy this gifting?
Is this why young men are leaving the Australian church in the greatest numbers? It is just too safe?

The tragedy is, I reckon too many young entrepreneurs have been lost by the church to the corporate world because they spend time in a church and say - there is nothing here for me.²

I am not suggesting that we all must become more reckless! But as a body we need to be intentional about exposing our young people to risk, to the front line of gospel work. And we need to take more seriously our mandate to plant more churches.

Why would Jesus select such men? It was because the church was not his first priority. The mission to declare the kingdom and making disciples was his priority. Making disciples results in churches.

*"It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world,
as that God has a church for his mission in the world.
Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God's mission."
Chris Wright*

NOTE: Once the church is planted, policy and procedure and risk avoidance is essential to create a safe place for families to grow. But if you put policy and procedure and risk avoidance first then the church will not grow.

Calling of an Apostle - to be a spiritual parent and spiritual example is a big deal.

Some of you say, sounds good. I wouldn't mind being the boss.
Boss gets to sit at the top and tell everyone what to do right?

And yes many of Pauls letters to his churches he had to correct them, and tell them what to do!

****But... Jesus kingdom is upside down.**

Just as Jesus said - *The greatest among you shall be the least.* Matthew 23:11

And just as Jesus demonstrated - I am your Lord and I lay my life down for you.

****So most apostolically gifted individuals who are doing great work, are probably not posting about it on instagram. They are probably only known by those they are ministering to.**

Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 9:1-2

****They are likely to be immersed amongst peoples who have never heard the gospel in small dusty rooms in iran or iraq or in tents in with foreign people in the desert of Niger or in the remote jungles of Vietnam.**

What we are doing is not working.

We need to not just do the old things better but we need to do new things.

Currently about 10 000 protestant churches across Australia

² Individuals with this kind of personality are rare. Only 2.5% of people are innovators, and 13.5% are early adopters (they don't come up with the idea but want to be part of it).

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 1 Corinthians 15:10

******And their qualification has nothing to do with how much money they make, or how big a crowd they preach to. It has everything to do with the lifestyle they model.

“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Acts 20:32-35

Application.

Church planting is not the same as church starting.

In Australia traditionally we have engaged in church starting. Which is taking a bunch of Christians from one church and planting them in a new location and doing church there. This is what happens when you send pastors and teachers to plant.

Church planting begins with evangelism which leads to discipleship which leads to the formation of a church that consists of primarily new believers. To truly do church planting you need apostolic, evangelistic and prophetic giftings being very involved.

A and P are the START and GO team.

E, S and T are the stay and grow team.

To be honest I think for us to be able to identify apostolic gifting we need to be planting churches. You learn how to church plant by watching someone else church plant.

******Back to the circle.

Apostolic gifting is not even on our radar yet. Let's start to pray into this.

I would argue that the CWW vision is a step in the right direction. The bunch sized group is a great opportunity to identify and develop prophetic, evangelistic, teaching, pastoring gifts and some of those individuals will turn out to have an apostolic gifting.

We NEED TO BE PREPARED to recognise it, bless it and empower it.