

by Glenn Bleakney



# Mentoring Moments for Leaders

## “Activating the Apostolic/Prophetic”

“Where Have All The Apostle’s Gone?”

*Teaching by Glenn Bleakney*



## Key Scriptures: Ephesians 4:11-13 (16)

### 1. REVIEW:

In our text, we are introduced to what is commonly known as the Ascension or Equipping Gifts. These gifts include the office of apostle, prophet, evangelist pastor and teacher. The purpose for these gifts is to establish and equip each individual Christian [saints] to function in their life-calling, resulting in the church collectively becoming a Kingdom force of righteousness throughout the earth.

Eph 4:12-13 summarizes the mission and results of the APEPT Gifts fully-functioning. Maturity Mechanism

Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, 13 until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ. NLT

In our last study, we learned that as important as prayer and intercession is for the vitality and effectiveness of the Church, mission is the primary calling of the Church. We further learned that Jesus' praying was rarely directed to the non-believer; almost exclusively, it was for His disciples, that through their testimony and lifestyle, they would be a faithful witness to the world: **"I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours"** (John 17:9).

To take it a step further, there is no record in the Gospels of Christ instructing His disciples to pray for the *harvest*. Instead, he charges them to earnestly intercede for more harvest-hands and to personally go into the fields and reap! (Cf. Matthew 9:38; 10:7-8).

### 2. **HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORARY APOSTLES**

Today we continue our study on *Activating the Apostolic/Prophetic*. The New Testament declares that these dual offices are foundational to the Church (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Cor 12:28). This is because they literally create the environment from which all other ministries emerge as we will see in our further studies. Today we will limit our study to the ministry role of *apostle* in the contemporary church. Is there a place for the apostle today? If so, in what capacity?

✓ **APOSTLE** = Gk. *apostolos*, lit., "one sent forth" (apo, "from," stello, "to send"). The word is used of the Lord Jesus to describe His relation to God (Heb 3:1; see John 17:3). Additionally, it is employed in relation to the Twelve that were chosen by Jesus for special training as apostles (Mark 3:13-16).

***And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:***

#### **WHERE HAVE ALL THE APOSTLE'S GONE?**

Some teach that there are no modern day apostles or prophets. That ministry of the apostle ceased with those recorded in the New Testament. This is partially true, in that, the foundational office of Apostle ceased with the TWELVE (See Acts 1:21-22). However, we know that there were other apostles beside the original twelve, particularly, Paul.

To this some say Paul was the very last of the apostles based on His own testimony in 1 Cor 15:7-8, "Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

The problem with this is that the Scripture clearly records additional apostles:

In Acts 14:4, 14, it is used of Barnabas as well as of Paul; in Rom 16:7 of Andronicus and Junias (a woman). In 2 Cor 8:23, two unnamed brothers are called 'messengers (Lit., apostles) of the churches.' In Phil 2:25 Epaphroditus is referred to as 'your apostle.' It is used in 1 Thessalonians 2:6 of Silas and Timothy in addition to Paul.

### Job Description of the Apostle

1. **Taking the gospel to unreached areas.** Paul said to the Romans, "It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation" (Romans 15:20).

**Relevance Today** - Although the gospel has gone out to some degree to every nation of the earth, there are still an estimated 16,000 "people groups" that are geographically or linguistically isolated and have never even heard of Jesus Christ.

2. **Laying a firm foundation (Christ Himself) for the churches being established.** Paul speaks of this important apostolic role: "By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise master builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:10,11).

**Relevance Today - Foundation Laying** - Many churches in Canada and all over the world have never really been established on a solid biblical foundation. They have been built upon human traditions and human opinions, but not upon Christ Himself and His eternal Word.

3. **Training & Appointing Leaders.** Paul took Timothy under his wing and mentored him (Acts 16:1). When Paul and Barnabas made their second visit to Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch, they prayed and fasted and ordained elders in each church (Acts 14:21-23).

Acts 14:23 - So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Paul likewise instructs Titus to "set in order" the churches in Crete and appoint elders in every city (Titus 1:5).

**Relevance Today - Training Leaders** - Today the apostolic function of training leaders has been largely replaced by seminaries and Bible schools. Appointing the leaders of local churches has been made a matter of congregational voting, selection by a denominational hierarchy, or ambitious aspiring young preachers simply starting their own churches and appointing themselves the pastors. The result has often been that leaders are put in places of responsibility that they are not really called to by God, and are not adequately equipped to fulfill. They may have been good students at the seminary, but are likely to miss the kind of personal training and character development that Timothy received from Paul.

4. **Dealing with specific problems, false doctrine, in the churches that had been established.** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians illustrates his use of apostolic authority to speak to a number of

problems in the church he had planted at Corinth: disunity, immaturity, pride, immorality, taking other believers to court before secular authorities, questions about celibacy and marriage, disputes about meat sacrificed to idols, wrong handling of the Lord's Supper, misuse of spiritual gifts, confusion about the resurrection, etc.

Paul also had to use his apostolic authority to deal with disunity and schism. In Corinth, there was apparently city wide disunity in the church because of various believers choosing to rally around dynamic leaders such as Paul, Apollos, and Peter. Paul also performed the apostolic role of providing a link of communication and sharing with the universal Body of Christ around the world.

In Philippi, Paul had to deal with a situation of contention between two ladies in the local assembly, Euodia and Syntyche.

**Relevance Today - Problem Solving** - It is clear that local churches frequently encounter problems that they have difficulty solving without outside assistance. Pastors are often without any personal accountability and often have no one to give them input regarding church problems. Sometimes local leaders have blind spots and cannot even see the shortcomings that exist. There still a need today for men of apostolic authority to pierce through the blindness, ignorance and pride, speaking the Word of God to areas of sin, imbalance, false doctrine, division and other problems.

The disunity of the Body of Christ is still a scandal that robs us of the full blessing of God and undercuts our testimony to the lost. Men of genuine apostolic heart have a burden to see God's people come together as a united family and a united army. They see an overview of the universal church around the world and can sense the heartbeat of what the Lord is speaking. The vision is sorely needed in the church today, and only men of apostolic insight and authority can bring it about in a significant way.

5. **Demonstrating and imparting the supernatural dimension of the Kingdom of God.** 2 Cor 12:12. Although it is God's intention for all believers to heal the sick, cast out demons and perform miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit, those in apostolic ministry are particularly to bear this credential. Thus it is said that God did extraordinary miracles through Paul. Apostles were often used in a special way to impart the power of God to other believers.

**Relevance Today - Supernatural** - We live in a day when God is moving mightily to restore signs and wonders to the church. For too long we have relied upon our intellect, human wisdom, and persuasive words - the very things Paul put no confidence in: **"My message and my preaching were not in wise and persuasive words, but with demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power (1 Corinthians 2:4,5).**

It is also important to realize that having an apostolic calling did not automatically mean that the apostle had the right to exercise full authority in all places and situations.

2 Cor 10:13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us -- a sphere which especially includes you.

It was a ministry based upon relationship and not only on calling. "Apollos was not willing"

Also, it means that the authority of an apostle waned in certain ways once the local church was firmly established and provided with the oversight of local elders. The relationship and the authority still

existed when necessary to intervene in problems not being remedied by the local leadership, but it was Paul's perspective that he was like a father whose role of authority diminished once his son or daughter reached adulthood. His heart was not to establish a "chain of command," but rather to see each church established under the headship of Christ.

### We Need Apostles Today to Have An Apostolic Church

There is even a clear sense in which the whole Church - not just certain leaders - is to be an apostolic force in the world, going out into their communities and cities and even to the nations of the world for the express purpose of "making disciples" (Matt. 28:18-20. See also Luke 10:1 where the seventy are "sent out).

Most churches today are maintenance -oriented and not mission-focused. They have replaced the Good Shepherd with Little Bo Peep. The Good Shepherd goes after the Sheep (Luke 15:4); Little Bo Peep *modus operandi* is,

*Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep*

*And doesn't know where to find them.*

*Leave them alone, And they'll come home,*

*Wagging their tails behind them*

Most of our evangelistic initiatives are programs and events geared toward *attracting* pre-Christians to the church rather than the church going out to them. Just build it and they will come! Warning: about our focus on a facility right now!

The New Testament is clear that the purpose for God giving His church power is for mission (Acts 1:8). This being so, does it not make sense then that the more we are engaged in mission the more power from on high will be released through the Church!