

2. The Leader Who Serves – The Evangelist

In our last topic, we gave a basic foundation for the leader who serves. Today, we will build on that foundation as it relates to the evangelist. Then, in the next two topics, we will build on that foundation as it relates to the pastor and the teacher. In Ephesians 4:11-12, we see that evangelists are to, “Equip the saints for the work of the ministry”. There is no gift of evangelism. Instead, Christ has equipped certain spiritual leaders called evangelists to equip all the saints to do the work of evangelism.

In Acts 8:1-4, we see that persecution came to the church that was at Jerusalem. In verse one, we see that most of the Christians were scattered throughout Judaea and Samaria except the apostles. Then, in Acts 8:4, we read, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” The rest of Acts 8 focuses on the ministry of one man named Philip. In Acts 8:5-25, we see that Philip shared the Gospel in Samaria where Peter and John later joined him. In Acts 8:26-39, we see Philip sharing the Gospel with the Ethiopian eunuch. However, in this chapter, we do not see that Philip is called an evangelist. Instead, we see that he was just an obedient Christian sharing the Gospel wherever he went. This is illustrated in Acts 8:40, where we read: “But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”

It is more than twenty years later that we next read about Philip. Acts 21:8 tells us that Philip was still in Caesarea after all of those years, “On the next *day* we who were Paul’s companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was *one* of the seven, and stayed with him.” In this verse, we see two things about Philip:

- He is called Philip, the evangelist
- He was one of the original seven appointed to care for the needs of the widows in Acts 6

As you notice, by comparing Acts 8:1-40 and Acts 21:8, Philip fled from Jerusalem due to the persecution and first went north to the city of Samaria where he shared the Gospel. The Lord interrupted his ministry there and sent him south to take the road that goes southwest from Jerusalem to the town of Gaza. There, he shared the Gospel with the eunuch from Ethiopia along that road. The next place we see him is in the town of Azotus, a few miles north of Gaza. From there, Philip took the road along the coast until he came to the city of Caesarea. As he traveled along this road, Philip shared the gospel in all of the cities along the road.

Once Philip reached the city of Caesarea, we see that he established a home and developed a family in that city. He apparently remained in that city for the rest of his life. However, Acts 21:8 tells us that he was an evangelist. In Acts 8, we see that Philip did much evangelism, but he is not called an evangelist there because he was just being an obedient Christian like all of the others who were scattered from Jerusalem. Once he settled down in Caesarea, the leaders of the church recognized that Christ had given Philip the gift of evangelist, and he apparently spent the rest of life equipping the Christians in the city of Caesarea to do the work of evangelism.

By comparing these passages, we learn some important things about the equipping gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11-12. Philip had learned how to share the Gospel in the city of Jerusalem. As a

result, he shared the Gospel wherever he went. As far as we can tell, no one was traveling with him as he shared the Gospel in Acts 8. However, once Philip got to Caesarea and became a part of the church there, it became his habit for the rest of his life to take others with him as he shared the Gospel so that others could learn how to share the Gospel by the example of Philip.

In addition to the references in Acts 21:8 and Ephesians 4:11, the only other place where the word “evangelist” is used is in 2 Timothy 4:5. In that verse, Timothy is told, “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

In 1 Timothy 4:11-16, we see that Timothy was told to do several things, “These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” In these verses, we see that Timothy:

- ◆ Was to teach others to practice godliness
- ◆ Was to be an example to others
- ◆ Was to share the Word of God faithfully
- ◆ Was to exercise his spiritual gift
- ◆ Was to give himself wholly to doing these things
- ◆ Was to continue to be both an example and a teacher of sound doctrine

Verse 14 tells us that Timothy had a spiritual gift that had been recognized by the other leaders of the church. Then, we have already seen that Timothy was told to do the work of an evangelist in 2 Timothy 4:5. That brings us to the question of how an evangelist carries out his work. Timothy was given instructions about the way he was to do his work in 2 Timothy 2:2. “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” In this verse, we see the way that Timothy was told to carry out his work as an evangelist. He was to commit the things that Paul and others had shared with him to other faithful men so that they could become reproductive disciples.

Paul tells us about himself in 1 Timothy 2:7, when he says: “...for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” In this verse, we see that Paul had a different equipping gift than Timothy. However, that did not hinder his ability to help Timothy develop and become a mature spiritual leader with a different equipping gift.

In Acts 16:1-3, we read, “Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.” Timothy learned from Paul and Silas as they traveled

and ministered together. Timothy gained Bible knowledge, but even more importantly, he was shown the way to walk (character) and he was shown how to do the work of ministry. Now, Paul was telling Timothy to train faithful men in the same way that he and Silas had trained Timothy.

Paul had mentioned earlier to the Christians in Corinth that Timothy would remind them of his ways. 1 Corinthians 4:16-17 says, “Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.” Paul knew that Timothy would be able to remind them about the character of Paul because Timothy had witnessed that character over an extended period of time.

Timothy was to take faithful men with him as he ministered so that they could grow in Bible knowledge, continue to grow in godly character, and become equipped for effective ministry. These faithful men would be learning both from Timothy and from one another as they ministered together. Whatever equipping gifts these faithful men developed as they matured spiritually, they would be effective at developing others, because they had been shown by example how to equip others for effective ministry.

The Lord calls all of us to share our lives with one another so that we can continue to grow in knowledge, character and ministry. If you do not know how to share the Gospel effectively with others, go regularly with someone who does so that you can learn from the example of that person. If you are effective at sharing the Gospel and leading others to Christ, regularly take others with you so that they can observe your example of how to share the Gospel with others. You will grow in the effectiveness of ministry as you observe others and they will grow in effectiveness as they observe you. May the Lord richly bless you as you minister with others and give others an opportunity to grow by observing your example.