

*I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God IN KING JESUS.* (Philippians 3:14)

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### ***Five-Fold Ministry***

The Lord has been leading me along a certain path of revelation lately—namely, the anointing, specifically, what it truly is and what it isn't, and what it produces. This leads to what many call the *five-fold ministry* that Paul mentions in his circular letter titled *Ephesians*.

And indeed, He gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; with a view to the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, ... (Ephesians 4:11-12 LITV)

Four things to note that will be taken up in what follows: First, note that He gave *some to be*, implying He didn't give *many to be*. Second, Paul seems to join pastor and teacher together as if they are one gifting (i.e., a teaching shepherd). This would make it the four-fold ministry. But then again, why do we even need to refer to it in this fashion in the first place, as if to make it the top tier of some hierarchical structure? Third, the sole purpose of these *some to be* is for perfecting and building up the saints. Fourth, the work of the ministry is one work, not many, meaning that the *some to be* are representative of this one work of the many, not central to it.

Recently, a brother sent me a link to a prophecy about a “revival” that is coming that will include “the full expression of Christ’s five ministry-gift anointings: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher”, with these anointed working together, “multiplying power and effectiveness”, as the Lord “intended for them” to do. There was much more to the prophecy, but I’ll leave it here for the moment, as well as stick with my general rule of not mentioning the person’s name or ministry associated with it.

In some respects, this is not new: for years, certain groups have been proclaiming a restoration of the so-called *five-fold ministry* is coming and, when it does, revival will break out. The ones often prophesying this are also the ones who see themselves as one of the five giftings already, especially the apostle and the prophet. In other words, they have their place reserved on the stage; all they need is recognition from many faithful followers that they belong there as the anointed. The difference in this playbook is that all the “five ministry-gift anointings” will work together in such a way that their “power and effectiveness” will be multiplied. And, to make sure people go along with the program, they add that this is the way the Lord intended it to be.

Excuse me, but there is nothing new about this playbook. It's the same old elevation of a select few above the many in what could be called *platform ministry*. Like a stage coming up out of an orchestra pit, the platform rises up and up until it is elevated above the adoring audience that awaits with tickling ears to hear what great things will be imparted to them. The crowd is not disappointed, for they are worked up into an exuberant, soulish response as they feel the power exuding from the platform.

Yes; this is an exaggeration, and it is not meant to impugn the character or intent of any of my brethren that mean well. What it is meant to do is emphasize the danger of these giftings being elevated over the body of Christ, as this is where the anointing primarily resides, which it doesn't. It is hard to imagine that John the apostle of love would have ever taken the platform as an anointed one. If anything, he would have, more than likely, sat among the brethren as one with them, not one elevated above them. As for working together in power and effectiveness, consider Paul, the striving apostle, and how powerful and effective he was (and still is to this day); yet, at the end of his journey, he was nearly alone as most had abandoned him. This apostle, who died daily for the ekklesia, was not one to grandstand his calling (i.e., a platform performer) and was willing to go it alone if the Lord led him to do so. His sole mission was to lift up and reveal the Messiah and to lay down his life for the building up of the body of Christ in love. Without doubt, like John, Paul would be in the crowd among the brethren, even clapping and rejoicing whenever he saw them growing in the Lord, being built up together.

For who is our expectation, or joy, or wreath of glorying? Or is it not even you, in front of our Lord Jesus, in His presence? For you are our glory and joy. (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 CLV)

So that death is operating in us, yet life in you. Now having the same spirit of faith, in accord with what is written, "I believe, wherefore I speak also, we also are believing, wherefore we are speaking also, being aware that He Who rouses the Lord Jesus will be rousing us also, through Jesus, and will be presenting us together with you." (2 Corinthians 4:12-14 CLV)

Paul's heart was to die daily, so that the brethren would be alive in Christ with the outcome of seeing the brethren standing in the presence of the Lord. The laid-down life of John, Paul, and the others is the standard by which to discern whether a gifting is of the Lord and being led by His spirit. Anything that exalts men over the Lord Jesus is to be rejected.

Somewhere along the way, I have shared on the Lord's word that the walls of religion are coming down and He is not in these exalted platform ministries (my term). Why? The [\*nominal church\*](#) has taken what is meant to be life and made it into form; men and women have been lifted up and exalted, not Christ; ministries have been mostly man-centered

driven by the soul, rather than Christ-centered, driven by the spirit of the Lord; the anointing has been relegated to the few, mostly called *faith leaders* as if they are the head, rather than to the entire body of Christ with only one Head. Much could be added to this list, but these are enough to make the point.

Now, let's pivot to the positive side of the message as given to us by Paul. Jonathan Mitchell's expanded, amplified version is included because it highlights a point that the Kingdom-NT obscures. We'll come to that in a moment.

There is **one body** and **one spirit**; you were, after all, called to **one hope** which goes with your call. There is **one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and father of all**, who is over all, through all, and in all. But **grace was given to each one of us**, according to the measure the king used when **he was distributing gifts**. (Ephesians 4:4-7 Kingdom NT [bold added])

And He Himself gave, on the one hand (indeed), the ones sent with a commission (the apostles), yet also the prophets, and on the other hand those who announce good news (the evangelists), and the shepherds and teachers, toward the preparation (mending; knitting together; adjusting; repairing; perfectly adjusted adaptation; equipping; completely furnishing) of the set-apart (holy) ones unto (into) a work (action; deed) of attending service, unto (into) construction (building the house) of the body of the Christ, until we all may come down to the goal (attain; arrive at; meet accordingly; meet down face-to-face) into **the state of oneness (unity) of the Faith, and of the full, experiential and intimate knowledge** (recognition; discovery) **of the Son of God, into** (unto) **a perfect** (complete; finished; mature; full-grown) **man**, into (unto) [the] measure of stature (full age; prime of life) of the entire contents (of that which fills up; of the fullness; of the complement; of the full number; of **the completing) of the Christ**, (Ephesians 4:11-13 JM-NT)

*Alternate reading:* **Then we shall reach the stature of the mature Man measured by the standards of the king's fulness.** (Ephesians 4:13 Kingdom-NT [bold added])

Instead, we must speak the truth in love, and so grow up in everything into him—that is, into the king, who is the head. He supplies the growth that the whole body needs, linked as it is and held together by every joint which supports it, with each member doing its own proper work. Then the body builds itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:15-16 Kingdom-NT)

When taken as a whole, one can't help but notice that Paul's emphasis is not on a special group of ones gifted in a certain way, but rather, on the entire body of Christ being gifted for the sole purpose of being built up together into the complement or full measure of *the*

Christ, the mature Man, not only patterned after but also manifested as the Son of God, both Head and body, in oneness.

Anything, even a prophecy, that does not line up with God's building work of oneness, centered in His Son and His ultimate purpose of all in all, must be rejected. To achieve His ultimate purpose, God must have many sons patterned after His Son—that is, being conformed and transformed into His image—many sons of glory, corporately united as one body. Those that stress “five ministry-gift anointings” as if they are official positions that have some special anointing over and above the anointing that has been given to the entire body of Christ miss the heart of the Lord, as expressed through Paul. In so doing, the emphasis is misplaced—those that call themselves one of the so-called five-fold anointed ministers take on a position not granted to them, one that puts them on the platform, as they woo an adoring audience with their “power”.

To put it bluntly, those gifted in one of these five or four ways are not the top of some hierarchical church structure with them claiming to be faith leaders. They are no such thing; there is only one apex of the church and that is King Jesus Himself. There is only one leader of the faith—the one whose faith we are given to believe in Him.

Repeating Mitchell's rendering but with some modification: the goal is to arrive at **the state of oneness, the unity of *the* Faith, and of the full, experiential and intimate knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect, complete, finished, mature, full-grown man, into the measure of stature of the fullness of the Christ.**

To this, we need to add another word from Paul: Christ ... **as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement (fullness) of the One completing the all in all** (Ephesians 1:22-23 CLV).

So, at the start of his epistle, Paul lays out the fact that, as Jesus' body, the ecclesia is full of Christ (i.e., *the* Christ; 1 Corinthians 12:12), the very one who fills or completes all in all (or: all things), which, in turn, leads to 1 Corinthians 15:28, where Paul declares God's ultimate purpose to fill all in all. This makes the Lord's ecclesia an integral part of God's plan to achieve His purpose. Just so no one misses this most important point: Christ is given the mission to complete the all in all for God, but He is not going to do this alone—He requires a complement to Himself, much like He Himself is a complement to God. On earth, the beloved Son was the visible image of the invisible God who called forth a body for Himself that would be in His image (filled with His life by His spirit of truth) on earth after He rose in glory. The Lord made it clear to Peter that He will build His ecclesia. Do any of us truly believe He is failing in doing so? Of course, not! But here's the point: He is building one body (or: one house of God, a temple in the Lord) with Himself as the Head. He is not building a divided one with many little heads, meaning the five-fold whatevers are not the

heads of His ecclesia; they are part of the every joint-supplying member of His body. Each and every member has the very same goal that the Lord Himself is bringing about: to arrive at the oneness, the unity of *the* Faith. As stressed of late in my writings, the Faith is the faith of Jesus that we were given at the outset of our new creation life. But this poses a new question: What is the faith of Jesus? Simply, it is the Son's faith in His Father. So, when we receive the Son's faith, we receive the same faith He has in His Father.

The most sublime words of faith were uttered from the mouth of God's Son dying on the cross: *Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit* (Luke 23:46).

My dear brethren, this is the faith, and the only one way for any of us to arrive at the full goal of unity is by coming into the **full, experiential and intimate knowledge of the Son of God**. Take note of how Paul pivots from using the title Christ to using the deeply relational concept of Son. This unity has everything to do with *the* faith and a father-son relationship, and nothing to do with title. We approach our God by sonship not by title, and a true son knows his father.

This speaks to eonian life or life in God's age of knowing God and Jesus Christ the one He sent. We know the Father through the Son, and we know the Son through life's experiences that drive us deeper and deeper into an intimate knowing of the Son. If we know the Son, then we know the Father. If we have the faith the Son has in His Father, then we too have the same faith in the Father. When we are called to take up our cross in life's experiences, dying to self, we too commit our lives to our heavenly Father. All of this leads to the goal of sonship.

Yes, there is an individual component to all of this, but it is driving toward making all of us together—a corporate expression **unto a perfect, complete, finished, mature, full-grown man, into the measure of stature of the fullness of the Christ**. Using Paul's earlier description of the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ, the unity of the faith leads to a body that is a full complement of Christ, fully grown into all that He is.

Now, where does this leave the so-called *five-fold ministry*? Well, it doesn't put them on the platform to be exalted as anointed ones or as "men of God". It puts them among the brethren as members of the one body. Their mission or, if you like, their work to do is to equip the rest of the body with their gifting, meaning the entire body is to manifest all that is associated with being sent forth, of prophesying (hearing and knowing the heart of God), of proclaiming the good news, and of taking up the care for one another and sharing with one another the Reality of the Son of God. The sharing of Reality comes through the experiential and intimate knowledge of the Son.

You see; if the five-fold ministry does its task well, there will be less need for them; perhaps putting themselves out of a job, leaving them to sit among the brethren applauding how well the body is functioning. In my book, this is the definition of successfully equipping the saints.

Unfortunately, in our day, the five-fold ministry, at least outwardly, has largely failed. Why? Because it has grown into a platform ministry to showcase a gifting that has been sold as the anointing that uniquely resides in (or: upon) a select few and not the entire body of Christ. The platform ministry has become a hierarchy of official positions over the nominal church, drawing attention to itself, even as it lifts up the name of Jesus. The result is that the centrality and preeminence of Christ is lost and those caught in the web of this platform ministry are ill-equipped to function as a body.

Today, I'm hearing many saying a great awakening is coming. However, there seems to be two types of awakenings being talked about. The first is an awakening of the general population to the evil that is working overtime to destroy humanity. Added to this is an awakening to the lies and deception we have been fed by governments, the establishment, the media, and the deep state. The second is an awakening of God's people—that is, revival is coming. To be sure, there are various views of what this will look like. The view that we started with is one in which the revival will start with the five-fold ministry uniting in "power and effectiveness".

I agree with this first view, for there are signs that more within the general population are waking up to the evil of the day. How many and how far this will go, we'll have to wait and see, but there does seem to be some momentum at the moment. Will it survive and grow stronger through the massive event that is coming, or will it succumb to it?

However, those who have been reading my posts should know by now that I do not share the latter view, based on what the Lord has spoken to me over many years. The great awakening that is coming is not top down, as in the existing five-fold ministry leading the charge of a revival. It is going to be a full-bodied awakening of our true identity and what it means to be in Christ and Christ in us, and what it means to have the anointing, the spirit of truth residing in us. This awakening is going to be in the streets (i.e., at the local level) and not on the platforms. It is going to be a full-bodied awakening to one another and what it means to be built together. It will be based in life and love, not in doctrine or any sort of emphases. We could call it a bottom-up awakening that will arise among the many without name recognition or without platforms. Names, titles, ministries, or any of the existing trappings of the today's nominal church will have no part in this, as all will be united as brethren. There will only be boasting in the Lord, as no flesh will have any part in this. It will be led by the one spirit of God. Its center of gravity will be King Jesus. The good news is that this has already begun.