

Perhaps... the “5-fold” ...Was Never About Five People

Perhaps It Was Always Meant to Mature Within Us

Perhaps one of the greatest invitations hidden within the New Testament has quietly become one of its greatest misunderstandings.

For generations, we have spoken of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher as though they were five separate offices occupied by a select few.

We have admired them from a distance, honored their titles, attended their gatherings, and often assumed that what belonged to them did not belong to us.

But perhaps...

Perhaps Christ was never creating a hierarchy of ministry.

Perhaps He was revealing the maturity of His own life within every believer.

This would seem beautifully consistent with Paul's declaration that **"you are complete in Him."** If we are complete in Christ, perhaps the question is not what we are lacking, but what Christ is continually maturing within us.

After all, we are *saved* by grace.

We are *sustained* by grace.

Grace *teaches* us.

Grace *transforms* us.

Grace is not merely *God's kindness toward* us.

Grace is *God's own life finding expression through* us.

Could it be that what Paul describes in Ephesians 4 is not merely five positions within the Church, but five dimensions of Christ's grace being formed within His people—within you and within me?

If Christ truly lives within us, then His life is continually maturing in us.

Not something we strive to become.

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Something we awaken to.

Perhaps every believer is invited to discover and develop these beautiful graces:

The grace to **ground** others in truth... TEACHER

The grace to **guard** hearts through compassionate presence and relational accountability... PASTOR

The grace to **gather** those who have wandered; discovering authentic belonging... EVANGELIST

The grace to **guide** others toward what is true and life-giving by the integrity of an authentic life... PROPHET

And finally, the grace to **govern**—not by ruling over others, but by faithfully stewarding the life God has entrusted to us... APOSTLE

...like the skeleton within the body: rarely noticed, yet providing the support and structure that allows every other part to function with harmony, strength, and fruitfulness.

Notice the progression.

We do not begin by governing.

We begin by becoming grounded.

Before anyone can faithfully lead another, they themselves must become rooted.

Before we organize “ministries”, we learn to live faithfully.

Before we presume to speak on God's behalf, we first learn to listen.

Before we shepherd others, we discover that we ourselves have been gently shepherded.

Maturity always grows from the inside outward.

Jesus demonstrated every one of these graces.

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He *grounded* people in truth... TEACHER

He *gathered* the forgotten... EVANGELIST

He *guarded* the vulnerable... PASTOR

He *guided* with wisdom... PROPHET

He faithfully stewarded the Father's mission, creating *governance*... APOSTLE

These were not competing offices.

They were the beautiful expression of one life: His life.

Perhaps discipleship has never been about discovering which one of the five we are.

Perhaps it is allowing the fullness of Christ to mature within us until each of these 5 graces begins to find expression according to the unique measure God has entrusted to every person.

This also changes how we understand the Church.

The Church is not primarily a building.

A building simply provides a place where the Church gathers.

Nor is the Church an organization sustained by professional ministers.

The Church is a living people in whom Christ dwells.

A building never *worships*.

A building never *comforts the grieving*.

A building never *forgives*.

A building never *feeds the hungry*.

A building never *embraces the lonely*.

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Only people do.

More accurately...

Only the Christ-life within people creates fruitfulness of expression.

This echoes Paul's language, *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"* (Galatians 2:20), *"Christ in you, the hope of glory"* (Colossians 1:27), and *"For to me, to live is Christ"* (Philippians 1:21).

The Church does not become the Church because people arrive at a building.

The Church becomes visible whenever the people of God gather together in love, each one bringing, expressing, and reflecting the grace Christ is developing within them.

Perhaps this is why Paul writes that these gifts were given "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry."

Not so that a few would minister while many observe...

But so that every believer would discover that ministry has always been growing within them.

Perhaps our calling has never been simply to attend church.

Perhaps our calling is to become so aware of Christ within us that wherever we go, the Church has arrived.

And perhaps the greatest evidence of spiritual maturity is not that others become dependent upon a few people carrying impressive titles, but that every believer begins discovering these same graces quietly awakening within themselves.

The world does not need more celebrities in the Church.

The world needs mature sons and daughters who quietly carry the presence of Christ into every conversation, every family, every workplace, every hospital room, every neighborhood, and every ordinary moment.

Perhaps that has always been the Father's dream.

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Not that we would merely gather in religious buildings.

But that we would remember:

We are His living temple.

His dwelling place.

His hands.

His feet.

His voice of compassion.

His presence in the world.

And wherever His people gather in love, humility, and grace...

the Church is already there.

Perhaps the fivefold was never about five extraordinary people.

Perhaps it has always been about the extraordinary Christ maturing His life within ordinary people.

Sincerely,

Your brother, Carlo