

163. He Gave Gifts unto Men.

When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. *Eph. 4, 8.*

It was promised in the Old Testament, Ps. 68, 18: "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive; *Thou hast received gifts for men*, yea, for the rebellious also." What are these gifts which Jesus received on 'the day of His ascension and which He gives to us? The first is the one promised Acts 1, 8: "Ye shall receive *power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you*." The Lord Jesus had often promised this gift of the Holy Ghost to His disciples. And He kept His promise.

The next gift is the *Gospel*, through which the Holy Ghost works in our hearts, Can we ever thank our dear Savior enough for this most necessary and precious gift, without which we would be spiritually dead, having no part in the Gospel or in the kingdom of God?

The third gift is the *ministry*, through which the Gospel is preached. When David prophesied of Christ's exaltation and its glorious power, he said, Ps. 68: "The Lord gave the Word; great was the company of those that published it." And St. Paul explaining this prophecy, writes: "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. ... And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." And why does Christ give us the ministry with its apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers? For no other reason than that we should not walk through life in blindness and ignorance, in uncertainty and fear, in doubt and desperation, but that we should recognize His grace and gifts, that we should be convinced of His grace and mercy, and that in life and in death we may trust and believe in Him and rejoice and take comfort in His divine gifts. And we should bring these gifts to others. Before the Lord entered the heavenly mansions, He said: "Preach the Gospel to every creature."

Prayer.

O Lord, I realize in very truth that not every man has faith. I believe, O Lord; but help my unbelief! Do not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax. O Lord Jesus, Thou who sittest at the right hand of God, make intercession for me that my faith fail not. Let not the work of the Word of God through the ministry be in vain in my heart. And let the Gospel be a power unto salvation, not only to us Christians, but also to many who do not yet know Thee. O Lord, do not forsake us; be merciful to us and all men. Amen.

The Lord forsaketh not His flock,
His chosen generation;
He is their Refuge and their Rock,
Their Peace and their Salvation;
And with a mother's watchful love
He guides them wheresoe'er they rove.
To God all praise and glory!

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