

071319

- I. My Notes... WWC message 7/14
- II. Series: Gifted to Serve
  - a. Title: Just Live!!!
  - b. Text: Eph. 4:20-24 NLT2; 4:32 CSB
  - c. Quote: "The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." — Ralph Waldo Emerson
- III. Introduction
  - a. What a week! Weather changes, emotional challenges, family struggles, and in the midst of it all – God is there... Loving, caring, supporting. Trusting an unseen Lord can present certain difficulties for many. But think about it... When Jesus walked the Earth there were difficulties in trusting and believing who Jesus was and what He was teaching His Disciples. Remember what was taking place while Jesus and His "inner circle" (Peter, James, John) were up on the Mount of Transfiguration? **Mark 9:14 (CSB):** *When they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and scribes disputing with them.* There was an argument because the Disciples were unable to use their Spiritual Gifts to help someone in need. Just a short time earlier (see Mark 6) these Disciples had been given authority over demons. They went out telling others of the Good News, living among those looking for hope, and using their Spiritual Gifts. *"So they went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons, anointed many sick people with oil and healed them."* **(Mark 6:12-13 CSB).** And yet, they have an encounter without Jesus there which was difficult, and it turned into an argument. Not very God honoring, in my opinion. Was this the inability of the Holy Spirit to work, to reveal God to those in need? I don't think so. I see it as

a lack of understanding, a reliance on the things of the past, trusting themselves and not the Lord. (I'm being sarcastic here) I don't imagine that any of us can see ourselves in their position – confident from past events, thinking I am capable of handling this, not giving honor or credit where it is due, and then getting frustrated because the results aren't there or are not what is expected. Living by faith is living authentic, it's real, it's understanding that you alone may not be enough. Yet, there is help. Because of God's grace and compassion

- b. We have all that we need to live by faith, to honor the Lord by our actions and attitudes. God has promised that we will have what we need to be an example, a reflection of love and grace. **2 Peter 1:4 (CEB):** *Through his honor and glory he has given us his precious and wonderful promises, that you may share the divine nature and escape from the world's immorality that sinful craving produces.* We don't come into this relationship with everything that we need. We learn, we grow, we live and make mistakes. That doesn't change the Lord God's intention for our lives. He has a plan and will make sure that it is accomplished. I have been talking to many people who don't trust or don't believe that God has a plan and that He cares enough to accomplish it. God is Sovereign (Supreme, possessing ultimate power). He possesses the ability (and desire) to ensure that what He has determined will happen, does happen. **Isaiah 46:9-10 (BBE):** *Let the things which are past come to your memory: for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me; Making clear from the first what is to come, and from past times the things which have not so far come about; saying, My purpose is fixed, and I will do all my pleasure...* Have you ever met a "strong-willed" person? Their will, their focus, makes things happen. My Dad was like that. I remember, as a child, on a family vacation my Dad and my Grandpa playing chess. Now, my Dad had never played chess before that and naturally my Grandpa beat him easily the first time. That was the last time Grandpa won. Dad had a very strong will and hated losing. They played

and played, with Dad winning every time, until Grandpa became frustrated and quit. That was Dad inflicting his will on a situation. God's will for believers is to show love and compassion. This honors Him. Because of this sovereignty, God can declare the motivation behind His goodness (kindness) to all mankind. (1) He has set things in order and determines the outcome; and (2) All events, all things – even those things that have not (yet) been accomplished have their results (outcome) determined by God. That is awesome, that is comforting, that is praiseworthy! This is why living by faith, trusting God in **all** things, makes sense – it should be the only option for us to learn to live by.

- c. I've been dwelling on this point for a bit because I want to remind us that we have been equipped, given gifts and blessings, to **JUST LIVE**... Look at what it says in The Bible ... **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT2)** - *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.* Dr. Warren Wiersbe wrote, "Our Saviour in heaven wants to equip us for life on earth. Tenderly, He wants to set the "broken bones" in our lives so that we might walk straight and run our life-races successfully"

{Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) - New Testament}, in reference to this passage..." *equip you with everything good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*" (**Hebrews 13:21 CSB**). We have the abilities (gifts, talents, uniqueness) to live each day and find acceptance and share grace/compassion.

- d. We are wrapping up this series today. I hope that you have been impacted, I hope that you have come to understand the Gifts of the Spirit are there for us to love and serve others. And to honor the Lord God in the way we live and love. My challenge to you is to search, to try, to begin stepping out and

using the gifts you have been given to serve, to be compassionate, and reveal the Lord that you know, to others.

#### IV. Text

##### a. Ephesians 4:20-24 (NLT2)

But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

b. This isn't just about changing one's mind, about doing things another way. There is a new life, something fresh

c. We are a "new creation" (ref. 2 Cor. 5:17)

d. And we have been given Gifts to reveal that "newness" to those around us

e. Along with faith, our personal knowledge of Christ grows as we spend time investing in the relationship, we have with Him

f. There is truth... life isn't about what fits for the moment.

g. Now, that doesn't mean we shouldn't be aware and focused on what's before us.

h. But the principles and precepts we have learned from the Lord can guide us each step of the way.

#### V. Details, Details

a. There are people that are willing to acknowledge God but they don't believe He is involved in life's details

- b. There are those who claim to be believers that would say that God cares about the big things but leaves day to day life to you and I
- c. Here's what Jesus said... "Two sparrows cost only a penny, but not even one of them can die without your Father's knowing it. God even knows how many hairs are on your head. So don't be afraid. You are worth much more than many sparrows." **(Matthew 10:29-31 NCV)**
- d. God is concerned about all life's details
- e. You may be criticized for your belief... God is comfort (see 2 Cor. 1:3)
- f. You may have been hurt... God is emotional healing (see Ps. 23:3)
- g. You may have doubts... God is bigger (see Jer. 32:27)
- h. You may be depressed... God gives encouragement (see Rom. 15:5)
- i. You might be worn out... God is a God of strength (see Prov. 10:29; Is. 43:2; Rom. 8:38-39)
- j. Does that help at all?
- k. What is it that you are facing that you struggle with trusting the Lord about?
- l. We have looked at the Gifts of the Spirit and seen that there are answers to life's issues
- m. So, the choice becomes believe/trust or not

## VI. Practical life, Practical Ministry

- a. Jesus ministered to people's needs
- b. When the masses were hungry, He sat them down and fed them... Matt. 14 He fed 5,000 and in Mark 8 Jesus fed 4,000
- c. That's meeting a practical need
- d. Matthew 9:35-36 (NCV)**

Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News about the kingdom, and healing all kinds of diseases and sicknesses. When he saw the crowds, he felt sorry for them because they were hurting and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

- e. The world, your friends and neighbors, those around you are searching for kindness and compassion.
- f. Living out a life of mercy and kindness will touch people deeper than the most eloquent sermon
- g. As believers, we must understand that the way we live is our testimony.
- h. The other evening, I was walking at the local park. There was a church there having a "movie night". It was a large group of people and food stands, etc. The next morning, I went for my morning walk at the same park. The people gathering for the movie night left the park a mess... trash all over. It was a very poor testimony and not just reflected poorly on the church but on believers and our Lord in general
- i. We must be aware that the way we live is the way we minister. It was the example that Jesus left
- j. His life and His ministry to others was the same.
- k. The Gifts were evident throughout His ministry because they were evident throughout His life
- l. And the truth is that everything was done as a result of love, of a desire to bring others into a deep intimacy with God the Father

## VII. Result

- a. Practical ministry has an impact. Practical ministry yields huge benefits for all involved

- b. I'm not really sure when the concept of ministry changed from service to a job with benefits
- c. "Ministry" - *diakoneo*, meaning "to serve" or *douleuo*, meaning "to serve as a slave."
- d. Each of us are ministers of the Good News... We are serving others with the love and compassion that God has shown us. It is about helping and revealing God's grace
- e. And it is about bringing all together, about standing united in love and kindness and influencing the world to look to Jesus

**f. Ephesians 4:32 (CSB)**

And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

- g. Kindness goes a long way in building and maintaining relationships
- h. Compassion, showing concern and empathy... understanding that others are on a journey too eliminates the need to judge and criticize. It opens the door to love
- i. Forgiveness... it releases you from the bondage associated with the hurt or injustice. It isn't about forgetting, we tend not to be able to do that so well. Freedom comes from letting go – from forgiving.
- j. The Lord God has forgiven us. He doesn't hold our shortcomings and mistakes against us. We aren't judged because we have missed the mark (sin).
- k. Because we are believers, we are judged because of Jesus and for that I'm deeply grateful

VIII. Last Words

- a. I am a big fan of music – all kinds. One of those groups whose music I related to was Simon and Garfunkel. Recently, Paul Simon retired from concert tours. His music still has an impact
- b. “In their song The Sound of Silence, Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel sing the words, "The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and the tenement halls and whispered in the sounds of silence." But their friendship has come to replicate the sound of silence.

Paul Simon gave his final concert on September 22, 2018 in his native town of Queens, New York. Many of Simon and Garfunkel fans were hoping that Paul Simon would set aside his grudges against his former singing partner and ask Garfunkel to join him for some of their wonderful hits.

However, that did not happen. On the concert, one fan, Christian Hoard tweeted, "Adventurous setlist, nicely chatty, not at all sappy, well-preserved voice, hot band, and - neither here nor there, unless you give points for knowing how to hold a grudge, I guess - no mention whatsoever of Garfunkel."

Arts writer for the Dallas Morning News, Michael Granberry interviewed Art Garfunkel in October of 2017 and asked him about his partnership with Paul Simon. Garfunkel stated, "Simon and Garfunkel had some really great years where we got along beautifully and laughed .... And then we got tired of each other. How interesting is that? And we need a rest. How interesting is that? And then we take a rest. And sometimes, it's years."

Garfunkel went on to tell Granberry, "Right now, is one of the coolest - no, I would say coldest - periods in this long friendship. There's a real sense of, I may not hear from him again. And I don't know if I care."

Granberry states, "I hate the thought of two 'old friends' dying without forgiving each other." (<https://www.dallasnews.com/arts/books/2018/09/22/paul-simon-plays-final-concert-tonight-not-art-garfunkel-real-shame>)



- c. Kindness, compassion, forgiveness makes a difference in life and relationships. And using the Gifts you have been blessed with influence and impact others to look to Jesus
- d. Let's pray
- e. In learning to use the Gifts you have been blessed with may you find comfort and guidance from the Holy Spirit. May the lives you touch discover relief and peace from the circumstances before them. And may the Lord be glorified because of all you say and do.
- f. Grace first... grace always
- g. Live simple, live practical, love eternally