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- I. My Notes... WWC message 7/7
- II. Series: Gifted to Serve
 - a. Title: The Gifts – Part III
 - b. Text: Ephesians 4: 11-13; 1 Cor. 12:1
 - c. Quote: “Don't get older; get better: Live realistically. Give generously. Adapt willingly. Trust fearlessly. Rejoice daily.” Charles R. Swindoll (Pastor, Author)
- III. Introduction
 - a. It's exciting to see how we grow. Learning to live by faith and trust the Lord. There are times that learning helps. To find out that you have a calling and discovering the ways, those things given to you to help, is both encouraging and (it can be) daunting at the same time. Before we jump into the bulk of the message today, I want to encourage you... Keep stepping, find ways to make a difference, show love. Remember, it's not perfection that the Lord God is looking for. It is being willing – His message will always go out. We get to choose to be that source of grace, that demonstration of compassion. I think we are doing well. I see growth and a willingness to continue to learn and explore. Being a believer is about making a difference. God's love makes a difference in us personally. Transformation is started in your life, your personality. “God began doing a good work in you, and I am sure he will continue it until it is finished when Jesus Christ comes again.” (Philippians 1:6 NCV). The Lord is interested and invested in every aspect of your life. And the real basis of our peace, wholeness, and hope is knowing (and seeing) that God is at work in our life. God's goal for each believer is to be Christlike, to make choices that reflect the love of God and that bring Him glory. That's what Jesus did, and we are to follow that example.

- b. Looking at the gifts we have already covered, there are many ways that we are able to help God reveal His character, His love, to this World. Remember, the goal for us in these lessons is to become aware, to gain wisdom and understanding. Just another reminder... “Now concerning spiritual gifts: brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware.” (1 Corinthians 12:1 CSB). Information, knowledge (familiarity, understanding) gives us power. And the truth is, that the best use of this power becomes trusting the Lord God. Doing this is more than just the right thing. It is our path to peace and growth; it is the way we begin to serve others and meet their needs. It is the right thing to do. I hope that you have begun to take inventory. To take what you have learned about the gifts and see how/where they fit into your daily life and how you can use these gifts to serve others.
- c. I know people who don't use their gifts – they have all kinds of excuses. Instead of trying to better understand how they can help and serve others all that happens is complaining and dissatisfaction with the way things are in life. I knew a pastor who was an amazing teacher, one of the best I have ever heard. He was caught up in the idea of title... Truth be told he wasn't a great pastor, he had trouble relationally and trusting others. He operated out of fear, always thinking someone was trying to take “his church” and that was never the truth. Today, he is no longer in ministry at all. I know and have met people that have been given incredible gifts – both spiritually and physically. They either refuse to use (or acknowledge) them or are scared to take a chance and try something. Fearing failure, choosing inactivity, not only robs others of the blessings they need to point them towards God's love, but it also prevents joy and satisfaction from dwelling inside them. Don't you think that God might be bigger than any mistake made?
- d. Some time ago, there was a young man who was searching to find out what gift he might have. He wanted to serve the Lord by serving at the local church. People were telling him help was needed in the kitchen and he was miserable. They pointed him toward the cleanup and maintenance staff

and he was unhappy. There was plenty of advice, yet Mike (or Matt, I don't really remember his name) remained on a quest to discover how to serve. Interesting thing, whenever there was any kind of gathering or event this young man could be found with the children playing, reading, having all kinds of fun. It took very little effort or ability to turn him into a children's teacher. I remember hearing a few years later he was the children's pastor at a church in the area.

- e. Finding your gift or gifts certainly helps your daily walk. I told my kids while they were growing up, "Find something you love to do and someone silly enough to pay you for it and you'll never work a day in your life." It's that way with our spiritual gifts. Discovering what you are gifted with and doing that makes your daily walk full of excitement and anticipation. It's why we are looking at the Apostle Paul's explanation of the blessings the Lord has for His kids.
- f. To put an exclamation point on this, Peter wrote, "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another." (1 Peter 4:10 NLT2). It's a choice Family... use the gifts that God has given us to help others and glorify Him or live unexamined – discontented. Let's look at the last list left for us

IV. Review

- a. In 1 Corinthians 12 we talked about the gifts of Wisdom - Knowledge – Faith - Healing – Miracles – Prophecy - Discernment – Tongues – Interpretation of Tongues
- b. This list of gifts is often referred to as the "manifestation gifts"
- c. The Lord is willing to "open the windows of Heaven" and pour out blessings on believers. He never intended for the Church to be powerless. So, he provided a way...

- d. In Romans 12 we learned about Prophecy – Serving – Teaching – Encouragement – Giving – Leadership – Mercy
- e. These are called the “motivational gifts”
- f. These are given to bring focus or help in serving others.
- g. All these gifts bring honor and glory to the Lord
- h. Here's an added bonus. Discovering and using your gifts unites the church and breaks down walls. We are so much better together
- i. Also, it brings believers and non-believers together and shows compassion and kindness in tangible ways

V. Text

a. Ephesians 4:11-14 (CSB)

And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit.

- b. God places some people into full-time ministry. Every Christian has a ministry, but not every Christian is a full-time minister. At least, not in the idea of it being a job. First, these occupational ministers exist "for the perfecting of the saints", they are to build up the body of Christ
- c. Second, this is about maturity.
- d. You have been called; you have a ministry – it just may not be a paid job at the church (many pastors don't get paid).

- e. Your calling is about loving others and serving them in practical ways
- f. Helping others find compassion and kindness will bring them to a place of choice. A place where transformation is possible
- g. The Lord God enables His people to be able to minister – to show kindness and grace

VI. The List

- a. Apostles – apostolic (commissioned, sent out) ministry takes place by leaders who take the Gospel message to places where it may not be. It's about planting (starting) churches and building up the community by showing them mercy and compassion.
- b. Apostles define the basic truths of the Gospel: who Christ is, how a person is saved, what the Gospel is, etc. for those who are not familiar with the idea of grace.
- c. People from all over need that encounter with grace, they need to know that God's love is available for them
- d. Prophets – the Prophet takes what God has revealed to him and brings it to others. This may be about the future or about present circumstances. But it is always testable by God's Word
- e. 1 Corinthians 14:3 (ESV)

On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.
- f. Prophecy builds up the church. Encouragement and consolation is something that everyone needs
- g. Evangelists – these people carry the “Good News” around so that others might come into a relationship with the Lord God.

- h. All ministers do the work of an evangelist but not all are “evangelists”
- i. Our duty, as believers, is to point people to Jesus – whether in word or deed. The Evangelist has the gift of being able to do that through God’s Word
- j. Pastors/Teachers – Pastors are shepherds. They are caretakers of their church family and their spiritual lives
- k. A Pastor teaches from God’s Word and helps others understand and learn how to apply doctrinal principles to their lives
- l. It is a position of relationship, a position of responsibility
- m. Apostles and Prophets were foundational to the church. Evangelists come and go. Pastors are there day in and day out. Living, encouraging, celebrating, crying with those God has put into their care.
- n. God is calling us, He is calling you to be ready to serve others. And He has given you gifts to ensure that can happen
- o. Are you ready?

VII. Last Words

- a. A glove is a great tool. It helps in getting things done and can provide protection
- b. Think about it, can a glove be used by itself?
- c. Try to pick something up without putting your hand in the glove, it cannot happen
- d. The glove is a tool, it is a gift, to accomplish a greater purpose. But you have to be willing to put it on and use it
- e. It’s much less complicated than we make it
- f. Matthew 20:26-28 (CSB)

It must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

- g. Let's Pray
- h. As you take the chance to use your gift, may you find encouragement and strength. May you realize that by choosing to be a servant, others will find the love and peace they long for. And may grace encourage you today
- i. Grace first...grace always
- j. Live simple, live practical, love eternally