

061519

- I. My Notes... WWC message 6/16 (Father's Day)
- II. Series: Gifted to Serve
 - a. Title: Diversity in Oneness
 - b. Text: 1 Cor. 12:4-7
 - c. Quote: My duty, as a Father, is to make family, those closest to me, know they are loved. When I fall sort of that, I depend on grace and forgiveness to communicate that love. Pastor Rick
- III. Introduction
 - a. Happy Father's Day... Being a Dad, I know the privileges of Fatherhood. It is a path that is littered with mistakes and failures. But it is one that can take you to the highest places and fill you with incredible joy and satisfaction. Former President Ronald Regan said, "All great change in America begins at the dinner table". Today, I would say that we need to get back to those family moments around the table. Where after a meal, you can push the dishes away and just talk. There are moments today that men are driven toward success, toward accomplishment, to building or doing something that leaves a mark. Dad's - continue to find ways to love you family. Then when the challenges hit (and they will) there will be a place of acceptance and understanding that your loved ones can turn to... And in that they will find peace and joy.
 - b. I have been walking a little more lately – you know, that trying to work on my health a bit, and maybe drop a couple of pounds – and I was thinking about how to start this message. It's always a challenge to get past the introduction and (almost) obligatory remarks to grab your attention and bring what the Lord has put on my heart to share. I think that part of my

struggle, as a writer and communicator, because there are so many times that getting beyond the "Hi, how are you?" or "It's good to see you" seems to be a challenge. In my relationships, I long for depth, for authenticity, and that comes at a risk. Because so many people have been hurt or carry hurts and because of that there are walls that are built for protection, for self-preservation. It's a reasonable response to hurt. Pain, whether physical or emotional, is the way we know that something is wrong. Healing needs to take place. That comes with risk, there is a cost. If you are physically sick or hurt, you go to the doctor. The cost associated with that is both monetary and the following the doctors' orders – taking the steps necessary to get well. If the pain is emotional, the cost will be learning to trust (and that is hard) again. Taking the chance to find someone you can share the pain with. Emotional pain festers, it aggravates and embitters, until it blows up in unexpected and often inappropriate ways. My goal with all of us is to help us have real relationships. To have openness with the Lord and genuineness with one another.

- c. I'm sure you have seen or experienced this. How does a dog act when it is behind a closed door and there is someone on the other side? Whining and scratching and doing anything they can to get on the other side... believing there will be belly rubs and praises. It happens just about every time. They don't know what's on the other side of the door but trust it will be good. Perhaps, we need to learn a lesson here. Sometimes opening doors can be scary. But we need to learn to trust a bit more, to believe in love, and grow in a bit of wisdom (and experience). This creates the probability of healthy relationships – both with the Lord and with others. We are tasked (instructed, exhorted) to - ... "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind;" and "your neighbor as yourself." "You've answered correctly," he told him. "Do this and you will live." (Luke 10:27-28 CSB). Our life, our path here, is about learning to love. It starts with me, but it doesn't end there. Love is

best, it is fruitful, when it is shared. Understand that love is an action, we often equate it with an emotion – with a feeling. While feelings are good, they can lead toward distraction if that is what we are seeking. Love is a choice and the best way to love those around us is to develop and use the gifts we have been given.

- d. God told the Israelites, “My joy will lie in them and in doing them good, and I shall plant them firmly in this country, with all my heart and soul.” (Jeremiah 32:41 NJB). God's not going to stop loving His people, He isn't turning His back on anyone. He's got our back – He loves with all of who He is. The Apostle Paul encourages us (believers) to do the same, “Love each other like brothers and sisters. Give each other more honor than you want for yourselves.” (Romans 12:10 NCV). Treat each other like family – have that bond with others where you are invested, where you care, and are willing to help each other find what is best... be encouraging, be supportive, be devoted. There is a challenge for us here. Others, those closest to us, can hurt us from time to time. Whether intentionally or not the pain, the mistrust is there. The only way to heal is to face the pain, to be honest and look for help. Be willing to take the chance to love genuinely once again. Peter echoes a similar thought, “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart” (1 Peter 1:22 NASB). This kind of love comes from a transformed person, from someone who has experience genuine love. It changes you, that is for sure. God uses His gifts (His talents, if you will) to show us what AGAPE is. We need to use the gifts (talents) He has given us to invest in and encourage others.

IV. Text

- a. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (Phillips NT)

Men have different gifts, but it is the same Spirit who gives them. There are different ways of serving God, but it is the same Lord who is served. God works through different men in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves his purposes through them all. Each man is given his gift by the Spirit that he may make the most of it.

- b. Let me just say this here. There are a variety of gifts that the Lord God has for us. Yet, they all come from the same source – God
- c. In every step, unity is the key – it is the blessing
- d. The Lord may have different ways of revealing gifts but there is one goal... to love and serve
- e. The gifts come to us through the Holy Spirit
- f. These gifts aren't for personal enrichment, they are for building up one another
- g. Gifts are for serving (helping, assisting, supporting)
- h. Gifts are for showing love, for developing intimacy

V. Talents

- a. Too often we seek the gift, thinking that this is what is important
- b. Doing things, actions are good. But it is the results that have significance – and those are the Lord's
- c. We must learn to seek the Giver of all good things – gifts are the benefit of a real relationship
- d. What are you good at? Cooking? Sports? Building things?
- e. Can those talents be used to point people to Jesus?
- f. Colossians 3:23-24 (ESV)

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

- g. While the things we do, using the talents we have, benefit others... these actions are a service to the Lord God.
- h. You have heard the statement, "You may be the only Jesus that someone else sees"
- i. When we act in love, when we serve with compassion and kindness, these are actions that reflect grace
- j. Former President Calvin Coolidge once said, "“No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.”"
- k. I think the point here is that giving is noticed, it's an act of love – a choice.
- l. Culture today says, "it's all about me". Most think life is spinning out of control... the truth is God is in control
- m. I don't know many today that are willing to go all in with their abilities like Isaiah... "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8 ESV)
- n. This wasn't about God knowing who would go, it was about a willingness to serve. A choice to do what God asked, no matter what
- o. Have the gift to cook? Know someone in need or who is hungry? It doesn't take far to look... Cook your best dish for them
- p. One of my favorite scenes in the movie Leap Of Faith (1992) is when Jonas Nightengale (Steve Martin) is working to deceive the congregation at the tent meeting and he calls out a lady that is having problems with her neighbor and he tells her to cook her fried chicken because "hers is the best friend chicken in the county, right?"

- q. It changed the atmosphere of the meeting
- r. That is what serving others does... it is disarming, it opens the door for a relationship
- s. It is why the Lord has given you a gift, a talent

VI. Unique

- a. The Apostle Paul wrote, "God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us." (vs.6, NLT2)
- b. Inside you are some unique gifts and abilities that make you who you are
- c. Our uniqueness brings a fresh perspective to our family, to church
- d. God values diversity. It's because it can take a different viewpoint for others to see, to come to know, what real love is – that God values them
- e. All of us together make up the Kingdom of God – we are the "Bride of Christ" (see Rev. 19:7) with all our individuality
- f. I'll try to explain it this way... our uniqueness, our gifts and talents, aren't earned they are given
- g. There are certain talents we can develop. When I was playing baseball I really wanted to pitch. I worked and practiced and actually got to pitch in a few games. But I was never "a pitcher", I was just a ball player who had learned how to pitch. It was never my gift and being honest, it rarely (if ever) helped my team
- h. God has a specific plan in line for each of us. He knows and what is best for each of us
- i. Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NLT2)

For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days

when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

j. God wants you to use your unique role in the body of Christ to glorify Him. If He blessed you with the gift of singings, sing for Him. Maybe you are good at making sure things are cleaned and organized, do it for Him. Use your God-given abilities to reach those who don't know Him—and give Him the credit for the gifts and talents He has poured out on you.

k. We are called to serve, we should honor the Lord God

l. Psalm 100:2 (CSB)

Serve the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

VII. Last Thought

a. Rick Warren notes the mark of spiritual maturity occurs when a believer "takes off the bib and puts on an apron." Immature children wear bibs and expect others to meet their needs. Those who don aprons have learned the joy of serving others. Which attire are you wearing?

b. Most are unwilling to serve others; they only think about what they can do for themselves. The truth is that we all serve something or someone. Some serve the idols of money, work, power. Some are caught up in the cycle of addiction and low self-esteem. Often people are seeking the next thrill or exciting time to entertain them. Some serve gods made in their own image. We are called to remind people of the love God has for them. He created us to serve Him. We are to follow Jesus in serving others by pouring into life rather taking from it.

c. Let's Pray

d. May you find comfort and encouragement in the fact that God values you just as you are. May your choice to serve others reflect unconditional love

and grace and point others to our Loving God. And may you find hope in learning that your unique gifts have been given so that you can be a blessing to others.

e. Grace first... grace always

f. Live simple, live practical, love eternally