

062919

- I. My Notes... WWC message 6/30
- II. Series: Gifted to serve
 - a. Title: The Gifts – Part II
 - b. Text: Romans 12: 3-8; 1 Cor. 12:1, 15:10
 - c. Quote: Your spiritual gifts were not given for your own benefit but for the benefit of others, just as other people were given gifts for your benefit. Rick Warren (Pastor, Author)
- III. Introduction
 - a. I have learned that many people struggle with doing “the right thing”. The battle comes from many different approaches. Some are unsure of what the right thing is, some just look to be contrary – to not “be defined” by conventional standards, and others may just be controlled by fear. Again, philosophical thoughts? Perhaps. Have you ever felt like you were doing the right thing, but the timing was all wrong? Good intentions are always honorable, even if the timing is off. I have learned (because life experience is a great teacher) that looking beyond the results and seeking to understand creates a better opening for acceptance and compassion. We are learning about certain abilities that the Lord has poured out on man so that they can build unit and assist in making the Church (the Bride of Christ) what God has intended it to be. We are conduits of love and grace to this world. There is a search, every day, for love and acceptance. Most get easily distracted – see, human beings have the attention span of a hummingbird. Jumping from one bright thing to another, chasing the next big thing or success, all the while feeling unfulfilled and wondering why. There is a God-sized void inside of each of us. We are seeking a connection

to our Creator, to the One who loves us without condition or expectation. It is the journey of a lifetime.

- b. You are called, you have a duty (obligation, responsibility). For some, that doesn't make sense with the understanding of the free Gift of God's Love and Grace. Free means no cost, right? God's love and grace are available for everyone – without condition or qualification. Here is the thing... when you have experienced this love and grace, as you come to understand it, the result becomes finding a manner to share it. God's love is based in action (choice, responsibility). And accepting it means that you will – to the best of your ability – share it. This idea doesn't work for many believers. In the Church, in the Body of Christ, the concept of free grace translates into doing what one wants to do. With that comes expectation and criticism. This is not the calling of the Church. We are tasked to love and encourage, to bring change by the way we live. And all this will have a God-honoring impact on those around us. The Apostle Paul told those at Corinth (it is a message and example for us today), “But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace.” (1 Corinthians 15:10 NLT2). Think about it... a marvelous transformation took place. A judgmental, critical, murderer was changed to a loving, caring, encouraging, leader and builder of the Church of the Lord God. This was done by grace – by the realization that the need in life could be met, despite all (it doesn't matter – there isn't judgment) that has happened, and it was freely given (shared). From time to time, I get a fresh reminder of God's love and grace for me. I don't live on feelings (and we shouldn't), even though they are nice and uplifting. This reminder, this refresher course, gets me going again – wanting to find ways to share the love and acceptance I have come to know. It makes me want to make a difference and point just one person to Jesus. That is where it starts. Helping

others, loving and understanding, putting aside those “comfortable” things and stepping out – in confidence, in faith.

- c. This is where the gifts – those things that God has brought to us and works through the Holy Spirit to help others and glorify God. It's all about Him and helping others see the difference is an amazing way to glorify the Lord. Charles Stanley (Pastor, Author) stated, “As God's children, we are not to be observers; we're to participate actively in the Lord's work. Spectators sit and watch, but we are called to use our spiritual gifts and serve continually.” There is effort required, this isn't work to prove worth or improve standing, it is a demonstration of love, an act of grace and kindness. It is rare to come to know God's love on your own. Most often it is seen, it is shown, acts and attitudes of kindness and compassion tell others of the truth of Grace. A fan sits in the stadium and goes “yah team!”. A follower is more invested. They know details and want to share them....
- d. You are gifted. This came to you when you accepted Jesus as Lord. It has to grow, to develop. And the only way for that to happen is to use it. If you don't use your muscles, eventually taking a walk, lifting something becomes very difficult. And that creates pessimism – a poor outlook and attitude. Use your spiritual muscles. Step out. It isn't about doing it “right” or being perfect. Love and compassion are seen in the effort. Some time ago, when I was coaching a Little League team of 13-14 y/o boys we had a challenging season. They were learning the game and rules at a new level and it was difficult for many. There were struggles, we lost a lot at first. But in every moment, even with the mistakes and errors, I was able to encourage – to teach simple things, and to find reasons to celebrate. In our losses, we looked for the good. All the boys stayed positive. When they began to win, there wasn't arrogance, just teamwork. By season's end, all the parents were behind us. It wasn't about winning; it was about being there and finding the victory in the moment. As believers, we can help others find truth, see love, and experience compassion – in the moment of their struggle and

desperation, when there is hurt or confusion. We don't have to be perfect; we must be willing. This begins with understanding the gifts we have and discovering ways to use them.

IV. Let's Begin

- a. Remember, the Apostle Paul wrote (to the church), "About the gifts of the Spirit, brothers, I want you to be quite certain." (1 Corinthians 12:1 NJB)
- b. We can be confident that we have the ability to love, to help, to show grace, in any circumstance
- c. There are many ways to accomplish it but it all comes from the same source
- d. Being focused on one specific way, on a certain gift, makes it more difficult
- e. Romans 12:3-8 (NCV)

Because God has given me a special gift, I have something to say to everyone among you. Do not think you are better than you are. **You must decide what you really are by the amount of faith God has given you.** Each one of us has a body with many parts, and these parts all have different uses. In the same way, we are many, but in Christ we are all one body. Each one is a part of that body, and each part belongs to all the other parts. **We all have different gifts, each of which came because of the grace God gave us.** The person who has the gift of prophecy should use that gift in agreement with the faith. Anyone who has the gift of serving should serve. Anyone who has the gift of teaching should teach. Whoever has the gift of encouraging others should encourage. Whoever has the gift of giving to others should give freely. Anyone who has the gift of being a leader should try hard when he leads. Whoever has the gift of showing mercy to others should do so with joy.

- f. Let's see what this passage says....

V. You Have Importance

- a. God blessed you – He gave you something special so that you would belong.
- b. You are part of the team
- c. You make a difference
- d. And this will continue throughout your life, no matter what stage you are at, no matter where you are.
- e. There is always someone who needs the gift(s) that the Lord has given you
- f. I listen to people who are waiting, wanting to make a difference, looking for something to do
- g. I don't want to minimize the need to wait and to listen. But that shouldn't become the excuse for inaction
- h. There are things that can be done, gifts that can be used, while direction and answers are being sought
- i. Recently, I met a man named Paul. He has served the Lord most of his life in a variety of ways. Imagine having a personal conversation with Billy Graham for about 20 minutes and being encouraged to serve in the way that God was calling you to.
- j. Paul has served our country – he is a Navy man. He went to seminary and showed people God's love for many years. Recently, Paul wrote a children's book from the perspective of the donkey that Jesus rode. Another way to minister, to touch people with God's love and truth
- k. Oh, by the way, Paul is 91 and still finding ways to influence others toward Jesus

VI. Note

- a. We all have different gifts – for serving others. These have come by grace and continue to be integral to our everyday life as a believer
- b. These gifts give the ability for the Church (the body of believers) to be the Church that God has intended
- c. More 2/3 of the people in the world today need the church to touch them, to reach them on a real level – to make a difference in their lives
- d. Recent statistics state that there are 2.2 billion Born-Again believers in the world population of 7.7 billion. (28.6%)
- e. Love is shown in tangible (real) and practical ways. Real love brings change, it gets a reaction

VII. The Gifts

- a. I want you to see there is a real and practical aspect to the gifts. Yes, there are things that can only be explained as God. But there are many avenues to show God's love and care for us
- b. Prophecy – this is the only gift in common with the list we covered last Sunday. This gift always is in harmony and agreement with God's Word. There is a way to test, to verify, what is being said. Don't allow the misuse and abuse of this gift to minimize its influence and impact in the lives of others
- c. Serving – do it with passion, do it with joy. Make a difference by investing in the life of another. Helping, assisting, finding practical ways to make a difference shows real love. People will always remember how you make them feel. Bringing hope brings help, it opens the door to healing and wholeness

- d. Teaching – helping others understand God's Word and other life truths. Explaining things in a practical way. Teaching is about influencing. My HS Coach was also my Math teacher. He inspired me to go further, to keep learning and applying myself. I wasn't great at it but I worked hard and by the end of HS I had taken Calculus.
- e. Encouragement – Comfort, motivate, excite, build-up others. Encouragement can be a shoulder to lean on or a word to keep another going in the struggle of daily life. The encourager shows concern and understanding, all the while helping the other find truth and a reason....
- f. Giving – the default for most people here is “I give of my time”. This is the ability to share possessions, food, money, anything to help meet a need. Some people are blessed with financial abundance, it should be shared not kept. Investing in a church is investing in God's kingdom. God challenged believers by Word and by Example to give –
- i. Malachi 3:10 (NCV)
Bring to the storehouse a full tenth of what you earn so there will be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD All-Powerful. "I will open the windows of heaven for you and pour out all the blessings you need.
 - ii. John 3:16 (NASB)
"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
- g. Leadership – be eager, be devoted and pay attention to detail. Others will follow a sincere leader, even when there are mistakes and difficulties
- h. Mercy – show compassion and kindness with joy. Care for others with all that you have. Don't complain, you are serving the Lord in an incredible way

VIII. Last Things

a. 2 Corinthians 9:8 (CSB)

And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.

b. Believers can only give (share) what they have given. It should be done with joy, gladness, and excitement. After all, the ultimate fact is God is being honored

c. It doesn't matter what the circumstances. You can make a difference, you can bring a Godly influence and inspiration

d. It is a choice. How are you going to serve and love others?

e. Let's Pray

f. May the grace of the Lord direct you to help the one around you that needs it the most. May you find real joy in discovering that in service helps others find truth and acceptance. And may you find encouragement in helping others

g. Grace first... grace always

h. Live simple, live practical, love eternally