

“Diversity in Gifts – Part 2”
Romans 12:7-8
(Preached at Trinity, January 2, 2010)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verse 4** Paul used the human body to describe the great diversity in the body of Christ. **Romans 12:4** – “For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,”
2. One of the areas of our diversity is in the area of giftedness. There are many members of the Body of Christ, each with a different function, just as there are many parts to our physical body – each are different but necessary
3. Each of us have been gifted and equipped to serve in our particular local church. **1 Peter 4:10** – “As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” Your gifts are distinct and the exercise of your gifts is essential for the health of our church.
NAS **1 Corinthians 12:7** – “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”
4. As we come to **Verses 6-8** Paul gives us a list of several gifts. This list isn’t exhaustive but serves as an example to us of the diverse ways God has gifted us to serve one another within the body of Christ. There are vast numbers of gifts that God grants to individuals in service to the church.
 - A. Natural gifts are not the same thing as spiritual gifts. Just because a man is a skilled orator doesn’t mean he is called to preach. Just because a person may be a wonderful teacher at the university doesn’t mean he is gifted to teach in the church.
 - B. But sometimes God enhances natural gifts to be used in the church. A man may be skilled at various levels of maintenance that God uses in his gift of service. A person skilled in a musical instrument may be used of God to enhance his worship.

A gifted artist may be used richly of God in the church to adorn the buildings to declare His glory. God raised up such people in the OT.

Exodus 31:1-5 – “Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³ “I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *kinds of* craftsmanship, ⁴ to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, ⁵ and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all *kinds of* craftsmanship.”

5. In these verses we find seven examples of gifts given to the local church.
- A. The first, prophecy, is an example of an Extraordinary gift – one of the gifts God gave the early church during the apostolic age and before the completion of the NT Canon. These would include miraculous gifts like the gift of healing but also included the revelatory gifts. With the completion of Scripture these gifts are no longer given to the church.
- B. The other gifts in this passage are examples of the ordinary gifts: Service, Teaching, Exhortation or Encouragement, Giving, Leadership, and Mercy.
6. Last week we looked at the first three of these, Service, Teaching, and Exhortation. This morning I want to set the other three before you: Giving, Leadership, and Mercy.
7. Remember, every believer has some measure of many gifts. Such is the case with the gifts listed here. But each of us have been endued with a special measure of one or more gifts to be used for the building up of the church. Your gift is special and unique to your work in this body.
- ^{NAS} **1 Corinthians 12:7** – “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”
- A. God is sovereign over the distribution of the gifts. There is no place for pride on your part or jealousy. It is all of God’s doing.
- B. You must be a good steward of all that God has blessed you with.
- ^{NAS} **Matthew 25:21** – “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’”
8. Let’s look at these other gifts.
- I. The gift of giving – “he who gives, with liberality”
- A. As we’ve seen with some of the previous gifts, this gift is given in some measure to every believer.
1. We recognize that Christ is Lord of all – everything belongs to Him
 2. We return joyously to Him
- 2 Corinthians 9:7-8** – “Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;”
3. It is certainly true that your view of money will say much about your heart.
- Luke 12:34** – “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
- B. We also have to remember that the Bible gives us basic guidelines on the use of our money that apply to every believer.
1. We are to first focus upon God and His Kingdom – in other words, we maintain a focus on Christ in all things.
- Matthew 6:33** – “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

2. We are to pay our tithe – this is required of all
Malachi 3:10 – “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.”
 3. We are to provide for the needs of our family.
1 Timothy 5:8 – “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”
 4. We are to labor and wisely put away for the future.
Proverbs 21:20 – “There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man swallows it up.”
Proverbs 30:25 – “The ants are not a strong people, But they prepare their food in the summer;”
Proverbs 6:6-8 – “Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, ⁷ Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, ⁸ Prepares her food in the summer *And* gathers her provision in the harvest.”
 5. Having met these obligations we are to give money for kingdom work and the needs of our brothers in need.
Galatians 6:10 – “So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”
- C. There are some who are blessed with the gift of giving in abundance.
1. Calvin thought this gift referred to an official office within the church – someone particularly entrusted with the task of managing money.
 2. There is no need to apply this to a particular office of managing the funds of others. Rather we should see it as a great measure of generosity given to some in the body of Christ who give abundantly out of their own funds.
 3. There have been many in history who have given abundantly.
 - a. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ won the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion in 1996. He used the \$1.1 million to promote the importance of fasting. Although the 2001 budget of Campus Crusade was \$437 million the combined salaries of he and his wife were \$50,570.
 - b. William Colgate, founder of the corporation bearing his name tithed on the first dollar he ever made. As his business grew he soon gave 20% and the 30% and then 50% to his church.
 - c. Henry P. Crowell, founder of the Quaker Oats company gave 70% of his earnings to his church and various charities.
 - d. Jack Eckerd, a devout Christian founded Eckerd’s Drugs in 1952. He took his fortune and invested it various charities.
 - e. Robert LeTourneau received Christ in 1904 at age 16. In time he became an internationally known industrialist worth millions. He always gave God the glory for his success – “I’m just a mechanic that God has blessed.” He lived on 10% and gave God 90% of his income. He said, “The question is not how much money I give to God but rather how much of God’s money I keep for myself.”

4. It is wonderful when churches are blessed with great measures of giftedness in the body.
1 Corinthians 1:4-7 – “I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, ⁶ even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

II. The gift of leadership – “he who leads, with diligence”

- A. Every church needs those who have this gift
 1. The word here is προΐστημι – it literally means “to stand before”
 2. Every elder must have this gift
 - a. Their office includes the element of oversight - ἐπίσκοπος
 - b. **1 Peter 5:1-3** – “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, ² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of* God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”
- B. But this gift is not confined to the elders
 1. There are others who may have this gift. Their life and character shouts “follow me.”
 2. A true leader must lead by example
 This is the nature of leadership – to lead means to have others follow
 It means to have them mimic you
 It means being able to tell your brothers and sisters in the church – follow me
 3. This should be the goal of every Christian – we are the light of the world
 We must demonstrate before all men the reality of our Christian conversion
- C. The person with the gift of leadership sets holiness as his chief pursuit
 1. He disciplines his life
 2. Such people are granted the wisdom that leadership demands
 3. This gift may also carry with it good administrative skills
 4. Like all spiritual gifts, a person may possess this natural ability and use it well in the secular world and not have the gift of leadership in the church.
 5. This gift demands a high love for God’s people and for His church. They have the high desire to lead the congregation towards greater and greater excellence.
 6. This gift also demands a high degree of humility as leaders fall into greater temptation.

III. The gift of mercy – “he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness”

- A. Again, there is a common aspect of this gift that is consistent with regeneration
1. In describing the nature of God’s people Jesus preached
Matthew 5:7 – “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”
 2. Mercy carries the connotation of pity. It demands looking beyond self.
 3. For those who have received mercy our heart must be to show mercy. This demands at time that we have a forgiving heart; a heart of patience; a heart of empathy.
 4. Mercy is the heart of love
1 John 3:14-18 – “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶ We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”
- B. But there are some who have this gift in large measure
1. These are the ones in the congregation who are truly selfless. They are always looking out for the wellbeing of others. They are the ones who are on the phone checking on you when you are sick or the ones who will always come to see you when you are in the hospital.
 2. An excellent example of this gift would be the Good Samaritan He saw the need of another and made it his own. He demonstrated compassion and concern and he gave of himself.
 3. Another example was Onesiphorus who cared for Paul while he was in prison
2 Timothy 1:16-18 – “The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; ¹⁷ but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me-- ¹⁸ the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day-- and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.”
 4. Notice the repeated prayer of Paul that Onesiphorus would receive back the mercy he gave.
Matthew 5:7 – “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

Conclusion:

1. Within the community of faith, God endues each of us with particular measure of these gifts that the whole body together might be whole – that we might be edified in love.
2. How do you know your gifts? Again, all of us have some measure of the ordinary gifts that edify the church. But there are some or at least one that you are blessed with large measure. The question is, are you behaving as an essential part of this body manifesting the fruit of your conversion? If you are your particular gifts will quickly become evident.
3. As Paul says concerning each gift, “Just do it!”
Romans 12:7-8 – “if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.’
4. With different gifts come a diversity of ministries
1 Corinthians 12:4-7 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. ⁶ There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*. ⁷ But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
Effects - ἐνέργημα – the thing wrought, the effect – we get our words energy or energized. The gifts of the Spirit result in diverse effects – all by the power of God
God energizes our gifts
5. Our duty is to labor with all our might