

Glorifying God

Glorifying God by Ministry

1 Peter 4:10-11

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Scripture

The day you became a Christian God deposited a treasure in you. For some of you this treasure has some layers on it and it is a bit rusty. But with the help of God's Word and his Spirit we will pull back the layers and blow off the dust and discover this hidden treasure. This discovery can revolutionize your spiritual life.

I am of course referring to the discovery of your spiritual gifts. Before we get into our Biblical text for today, let me give you a working definition of a spiritual gift. I would like to define a spiritual gift as "a significant ability given to each believer by the Holy Spirit, who thus equips and moves members of the church to serve in special ways for Christ and his kingdom."

This definition is worth looking at in detail. *First, a spiritual gift is "a significant ability."* By this I mean an ability in a certain area of service used specifically for a biblically defined purpose.

Second, a spiritual gift is a significant ability "given to each believer." A spiritual gift is given not just to some believers, but to every child of God who is born again by the Spirit of God. *Every* Christian has a significant ability to do something well for Christ.

Third, a spiritual gift is given "by the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit not gives every Christian new life, but he also deposits a treasure of significant ability into the life of each believer.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit "thus equips and moves members of the church to serve." The reason the Holy Spirit gives a significant ability is for the sake of service or ministry. Not only does he equip every Christian for ministry with a significant ability, but he also motivates every Christian and gives him a new desire to serve.

Fifth, a spiritual gift is given to serve "in special ways." Each gift relates to specific needs in the body of Christ. Every spiritual gift to carry on the ministry that God is calling our church to do is already resident in this church—now!

And finally, a spiritual gift is given “for Christ and his kingdom.” You are a servant of Jesus Christ. Everything that Jesus does is to build up his church and to advance his kingdom. Through the exercise of your spiritual gift, Jesus enables his Church to carry out the task he has assigned it on earth.

Today is the fourth Sunday in our series on “Glorifying God.” Our ultimate goal in life is to glorify God. We glorify God in a number of different ways. One way in which we glorify God is by serving others with our spiritual gifts.

As we turn in our Bibles now to 1 Peter 4:10-11, we will discover that every Christian has a spiritual gift and is commanded to employ it in ministry. Let’s read 1 Peter 4:1-11, although our text is found in 1 Peter 4:10-11:

¹ Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. ² As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. ³ For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴ They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. ⁵ But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶ For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ **Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.** ¹¹ **If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.** (1 Peter 4:10-11)

Review

Our ultimate goal in life is to glorify God.

The first question in the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* asks, “What is the chief end [or goal] of man?” The answer given is, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

The reason we exist is to bring glory to God. God created us and all things for his own glory.

The mission of our church is “to bring people to Jesus Christ and *membership* in his church family, develop them to Christlike *maturity*, equip them for their *ministry* in the church and life *mission* in the world, in order to *magnify* God.”

Our mission as a church is to glorify God in each of five key areas: *membership*, *maturity*, *ministry*, *mission*, and *magnification*.

Interestingly, each of these five key areas corresponds to how we glorify God in our personal lives too.

First, we bring glory to God by worshiping him. We studied this key area three weeks ago. This key area corresponds to *magnification*.

Second, we bring glory to God by loving other believers. This is what we looked at two weeks ago. This key area corresponds to *membership*, which brings us into fellowship with one another.

Third, we bring glory to God by becoming like Christ. This key area corresponds to *maturity*. We looked at this last week.

Fourth, we bring glory to God by serving others with our gifts. This key area corresponds to *ministry*. We will examine this today.

And fifth, we bring glory to God by telling others about him. This key area corresponds to *mission*.

Introduction

Over the course of almost nineteen years of ministry I have interviewed scores of people for church membership. Invariably,

one of the questions that arises during the interview is, “What is your spiritual gift?” Remarkably, I would say that in my experience approximately three out of four believers do not know what their spiritual gift is. Frankly, that is rather surprising to me.

I remember when I was a new Christian at the University of Cape Town and I first heard about “spiritual gifts.” I was immediately curious, and I wanted to know what my spiritual gift was.

Let me ask you: do you know what your spiritual gift is? If you don’t know what your spiritual gift is, wouldn’t you like to know what it is?

Let me encourage you to attend our Class 301 where you will discover what your spiritual gift is and how you can use it in ministry.

Lesson

Today, I want to draw your attention to a number of points about spiritual gifts that we find in 1 Peter 4:10-11:

1. We receive spiritual gifts,
2. We are to use spiritual gifts,
3. We are to use spiritual gifts to serve others,
4. We are to use spiritual gifts as stewards of grace,
5. We are to use speaking gifts as those who speak the very words of God,
6. We are to use service gifts by the power of God, and
7. We are to use spiritual gifts for the glory of God.

I. We Receive Spiritual Gifts (4:10b)

First, we receive spiritual gifts.

The apostle Peter writes, “Each one should use whatever gift **he has received**” (4:10b).

Received from whom? Spiritual gifts are given by God. Specifically, they are given by the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, “To one there is given *through the Spirit* the

message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge *by means of the same Spirit*, to another faith *by the same Spirit*, to another gifts of healing *by that one Spirit*. . .” (1 Corinthians 12:8-9).

Furthermore, spiritual gifts are given by God to *every* Christian. The apostle Peter implies this when he says, “*Each one* should use whatever gift **he has received**.”

The apostle Paul says the same thing to Corinthians, “Now to *each one* the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (12:7).

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts only to believers, and every believer has at least one spiritual gift.

Usually, the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts that are in line with the heart, abilities, personality and experiences of a believer. The Holy Spirit uses all of these things for spiritual purposes.

By the way, since every Christian has a spiritual gift, Peter is not talking about the supernatural sign gifts such as tongues, interpretation, healing and prophecy. He is talking about spiritual gifts that are given to each child of God when he or she is born again.

II. We Are to Use Spiritual Gifts (4:10a)

Second, we are to use spiritual gifts.

The apostle Peter writes, “**Each one should use** whatever gift he has received” (4:10a).

The Bible is quite clear that **each** believer **should use** whatever gift he or she has received. However, although all believers have spiritual gifts, it is clear that not every believer knows his or her spiritual gift.

Why do most believers not think about and identify their spiritual gift? One reason may be that believers tend to think of spiritual gifts almost exclusively in terms of the Church Officers. They realize and understand that Elders and Deacons need to be spiritually gifted for the Office. Certain activities in the church seem so mundane that believers hesitate to think of them as Spirit-empowered.

Another reason may be that believers tend to think of spiritual gifts only in terms of activities that take place within the four walls of the church building. You enter the building and you're spiritually gifted. Then you leave the building and you are no longer spiritually gifted.

Whatever the reason for not thinking about and identifying your spiritual gift, it is time for you to discover them. The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:1, "Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant."

That is why we are offering Class 301, which is designed to help you discover your spiritual gift.

III. We Are to Use Spiritual Gifts to Serve Others (4:10c)

Third, we are to use spiritual gifts to serve others.

The apostle Peter says, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received **to serve others**" (4:10c).

Spiritual gifts are not meant to be used on ourselves. God doesn't give you a spiritual gift so that you can bask in its use.

No. Spiritual gifts are given in order **to serve others**.

You can always tell a person's level of spiritual maturity when you listen to how they talk about their spiritual gift. If they talk about what great teachers they are, or how much money they give, or their excellence in leadership, you probably have people who don't really understand the purpose of spiritual gifts.

Spiritual gifts are intended to be used **to serve others**.

IV. We Are to Use Spiritual Gifts as Stewards of Grace (4:10d)

Fourth, we are to use spiritual gifts as stewards of grace.

The apostle Peter says, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, **faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms**" (4:10d).

The phrase **faithfully administering** in the Greek text is actually “good stewards.” The *New King James Version* of 1 Peter 4:10 renders it well: “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as *good stewards* of the manifold grace of God.”

In Bible times a steward was the slave who was responsible for managing a rich man’s property or household. He had control over the man’s treasure and distributed food and clothing and so on to the rest of the household.

Peter is saying that the Holy Spirit has made each believer a steward of God’s treasure store of grace. You and I have a responsibility, if we are to be good stewards, to use and distribute the treasure of grace that God has deposited in us.

As we turn to verse 11, you will notice that the apostle Peter talks about two gifts in particular. It seems to me that the apostle Peter is dividing the work of serving others and administering God’s grace into two broad categories: *speaking* and *servicing*.

In other words, the Bible uses two basic categories for ministry in the church: *speaking* and *service*, or *teaching* and *practical ministry*. Let’s look at it in closer detail.

V. We Are to Use Speaking Gifts as Those Who Speak the Very Words of God (4:11a)

Fifth, we are to use speaking gifts as those who speak the very words of God.

The apostle Peter says, “**If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God**” (4:11a).

The speaking gift that the apostle Peter is referring to is not speaking in tongues. Nor does it refer to conversation or discussion generally. The Greek word for **speaks** is *laleo*, and in the New Testament it generally refers to preaching and teaching.

Now, the person with a speaking gift does it **as one speaking the very words of God**. The Christian who has a speaking gift, if he is faithful, pronounces and proclaims God’s Word. God in fact speaks through the human voice to proclaim his truth.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Thessalonica and said to them, “And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

So, if you have a teaching gift, and if you teach a Sunday School class or Pioneer Clubs or a Small Group Bible Study, and if you are faithful, you pronounce God’s Word when you teach. You do not simply repeat the divine message, but as you speak, God speaks through you.

Isn’t that amazing? Everyone who teaches God’s Word ought to take his or her responsibility extremely seriously. And I believe that those who do teach here at the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church do take this responsibility seriously.

VI. We Are to Use Service Gifts by the Power of God (4:11b)

Sixth, we are to use service gifts by the power of God.

The apostle Peter says, **“If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides”** (4:11b).

Service is a key word in the New Testament. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12:5ff that there are different kinds of service. Service includes gifts such as giving money, exercising leadership, helping those in need, administration, and so on.

Now, **if anyone serves**, the apostle Peter says that **he should do it with the strength God provides**. The Greek word for **provides** in Bible times referred to a man who provided a choir for public festivals at his own expense. He provided finances generously and lavishly and without holding back a thing.

So, Peter is saying that God is willing to provide strength for service generously and lavishly and without holding a thing back. The person who exercises a spiritual gift of service should do so in humble reliance upon God’s great generosity.

VII. We Are to Use Spiritual Gifts for the Glory of God (4:11c)

And seventh, we are to use spiritual gifts for the glory of God.

The apostle Peter concludes, **“So that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen”** (4:11c).

God is glorified when you exercise your spiritual gift. Our chief goal in life is to glorify God. So many Christians wonder how they can glorify God. One way in which we bring glory to God is by using the gifts he has given to us.

Conclusion

Every Christian has a spiritual gift and is commanded by God to employ it in a ministry of speaking or of service. Let me close with a few points of practical application.

First, if you do not use your spiritual gift, you will be an uninvolved member. And frankly, that is a contradiction. Church membership connotes involvement in the ministries necessary to the life of the church. In fact, when you became a member here at the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church you made a vow in which you promised to support the work and worship of the church. That means that you promised that you would be active in ministry. If you are not active in some ministry in the church, you are simply not fulfilling the vow that made before God and the Session.

Second, if you do not use your spiritual gift, you are contributing to an overworked minority. Have you noticed that it is generally the same people who volunteer and are active in the core ministries of the church? Some perhaps think of church like they do when they go on vacation on a cruise ship. Some members in the church are the crew, and therefore they do all the work. The rest of the church are the passengers, and they are going along for the ride! The New Testament model, however, is more like a merchant

ship, in which everyone is a crew member and everyone has a job to do.

Third, if you do use your spiritual gift, you will experience the joy of genuine community. One of the great ways in which spiritual gifts are used is in service to “one another.” There are several dozen “one another” passages in the New Testament such as, “Love one another,” “Bear one another’s burdens,” “Forgive one another,” and so on. Can you imagine what it would be like to be part of a church family in which there is genuine and true community? Well, it happens when *all the members* are using their spiritual gifts to serve one another.

And fourth, if you do use your spiritual gift, you will contribute to the expansion of God’s kingdom. God is growing his kingdom. You can contribute to what God is doing by using your spiritual gift. And one day when you get to heaven, you will have the joy of seeing brothers and sisters in Christ who are there because of the part that you played in their lives.

Do you know what your spiritual gift is? Let me encourage you to discover what your spiritual gift is. Right now you can attend Class 301 on Wednesday evenings. I will help you discover your spiritual gift.

But more important than *knowing* your spiritual gift is *using* your spiritual gift. If you are a member of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church, you ought to be involved in some ministry in this church. You could be an usher, greeter, Connection Partner, choir member, teacher, or involved in one of about eighteen ministries we have. Some of those ministries presently do not have ministry members. Let me encourage you, if you are not involved in some ministry, to volunteer and get involved in a ministry.

And if you do, God will be glorified, his church encouraged, and you will be blessed. Amen.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and **membership** in his church family,
develop them to Christlike **maturity**,
equip them for their **ministry** in the church
and life **mission** in the world,
in order to **magnify** God's name.*

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