

“Diversity in Gifts – Part 1”
Romans 12:7-8
(Preached at Trinity, December 26, 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. For one thing, this list isn’t the same as we find in **1 Cor. 12** or **1 Peter 4**. The gifts God gives His people in service to His church are many and varied. We need to see this list as only an example of some of the gifts to be used in the church. Paul’s main point is to describe the diversity of gifts.
5. Last week we examined the important question, do all of these gifts still exist today? I pointed out that some of the gifts were distinct from the others and were particular to the early church alone. They were gifts given for the apostolic period alone. With the end of the apostles came the end of these gifts.
6. The gifts can be divided into two different categories –
Ordinary Gifts and Extraordinary Gifts
 - A. Extraordinary gifts –
 1. These gifts were given as "signs" to authenticate the Gospel message **1 Corinthians 14:22** – “So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy *is for a sign*, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe.”
 2. Many of these were revelatory in nature and were no longer needed with the completion of the fullness of Scripture.
 3. These miraculous gifts would include prophesy, tongues, healing and other signs and wonders.
 4. It doesn’t deny that God can perform miracles today. It denies that God gives miraculously gifted people to the church today.

- B. Ordinary gifts
1. These gifts are given to believers for the ongoing edification and administration of the church as long as it shall exist upon the earth.
 2. Each and every believer is equipped for service.
 3. These gifts are sovereignly administered by grace and according to the will of God.
7. In **Verses 6-8** Paul lists for us some of the gifts God grants unto His people for the edification of His Church. Let me remind you of some truths concerning the spiritual gifts.
1. Every believer has at least one gift to be used for the building up of the church.
 - a. 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.”
 - b. Each of us are stewards of our gifts. We must be faithful to use them to the glory of our Master.
 - c. The purpose of your gift is not self-aggrandizement or self-promotion or self-satisfaction but for service to the body of Christ.
 2. God is sovereign over the distribution of the gifts. There is no place for pride on our part or jealousy. It is all of God’s doing.
8. In these verses Paul gives us a list of seven gifts. This morning I want to examine these gifts. Remember, this is not an exhaustive list. Paul is merely illustrating the diversity of gifts to be used in the church of Christ.
9. Last week we looked at the first one – prophesy. This gift is to be seen as one of the extraordinary gifts and thus it is no longer given to the church today. Each of the other six gifts are “ordinary” gifts and are in use in the church today. Perhaps one or more of these are your gifts.
- I. The gift of Service – “if service, in his serving”
- A. The Greek word (διακονία) has been used in various ways
1. Sometimes it is used in an official sense – translated “ministry” referring specifically to the teaching of the Word of God.
NAS **Acts 6:4** - "But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."
NAS **Romans 11:13** – “But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,”
KJV **Romans 11:13** “I magnify mine office.”
 Since Paul also lists “teaching” as one of the gifts in this passage we should probably interpret it more broadly here.
 2. The word is also has the root of the word translated deacon.
 - a. The word refers to service
 - b. Every deacon has this gift. His office demonstrates this gift. Not every person with the gift of service becomes a deacon but every deacon has the gift of service.
 - c. This gift spoken of here certainly refers to their gift
 3. Pastors and deacons are both granted gifts of service
 One in the spiritual sense of the ministry of the Word and the other of a more practical sense.

- B. Rather than thinking of this gift in terms of the offices of the church we need to see it here in a more general sense of service
1. There is a sense in which every Christian has this gift
 - a. We are all saved to serve Christ – He is our Lord and Master
NAS **Matthew 16:24** – “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”
 - b. As followers of Christ we are to do all things “as to the Lord.”
 - c. Paul says, Exercise the gift of service by serving. Set yourself to it! How are you serving? Are you dying more and more to self.
 2. On the other hand, there are some who are endowed with large measures of this gift.
 3. It is a gift that gives the believer the heart of a servant. He loves giving himself in service to Christ and others. It is a selfless heart, a giving heart. It is a heart that finds great pleasure in doing.
 4. Jesus takes great notice of our acts of service – to the church of Thyatira
NAS **Revelation 2:19** – “I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.”
- II. The gift of Teaching – “or he who teaches, in his teaching”
- A. In important question is who is to do the teaching in the church?
1. It is true that teaching is at the heart of the pastoral office
 - a. It is part of their qualification
NAS **1 Timothy 3:2** – “An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,”
 - b. They are to herald the message of Christ to the nations - κήρυγμα
NAS **Romans 16:25** – “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,”
 - c. An important aspect of their work is teaching
NAS **2 Timothy 4:2** – “preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.” - διδαχή
 KJV – “Doctrine” ESV – “teaching”
 - d. Much of the pastoral ministry involves the work of preaching and teaching – both kerugma and didache – they are God’s heralds
 - e. This doesn’t mean the teaching of the pastors is limited to the pulpit or to public teaching
Acts 20:20 – “I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,”
 2. But is all teaching limited to the pastoral office?
- B. There is a sense in which every believer is to be a teacher
1. This is true of many of the spiritual gifts. They describe the activities of believers as we dwell together in the community of faith

What characterizes the spiritual gifts is specific endowments being given in large measure to particular individuals.

2. So all of us should see teaching as a part of our Christian service. All of us should be able to instruct those less mature than ourselves
Hebrews 5:12 – “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”
3. As you grow in your knowledge of Christ and your understanding of the Scriptures you should be able to teach those who are less mature, not formally in a classroom setting but individually, one by one.
4. There are some who are gifted with large measures of the gift of teaching
 - a. They are particularly gifted in interpreting and applying the Word of God in a clear and understandable way. They are wonderful blessings to the church. They are essential to the church.
 - b. These are the ones that should be involved in the public teaching of the church. There is great accountability that comes with teaching others.
NAS **James 3:1** – “Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.”
 - c. It is demanded upon those involved in public teaching that they labor much in the Word. This is particularly true of those charged with the weekly preaching of God’s Word. It usually demands full-time attention to study.
 Erroll Hulse – “It may well be that today the preaching ministry is more demanding than ever before, because ministers are now required to be highly skilled as apologists as well as dogmaticians. A minister who cannot maintain an authoritative, systematic, expository, and attractive preaching ministry in an increasingly secularistic and pluralistic society represent a lost cause. Such work requires dedication and full-time attention. Very few men are talented enough to sustain two occupations.”

III. The gift of Exhortation – “or he who exhorts, in his exhortation”

- A. This is the wonderful trait of providing encouragement and comfort to the brethren
 1. The word here is παρακαλέω – “to call beside”
 Picture a parent calling their child to their side to comfort and console
 2. The New Testament translates the word in powerful ways:
“beseech, comfort, desire, pray, entreat, and console”
 The noun form of the word is used in reference to the Holy Spirit as our Paraclete – Comforter in KJV but “Helper” in the NAS – the idea of an Intercessor to help us in our prayers and understanding. The Latin translation of the word is *advocatus* – Advocate.
 3. The idea is that of one person coming alongside another as a helper, an advocate, a defender – someone on your side

4. Again, this should be the heart of all of us – It is at the heart of Christianity. We are united with one another to comfort, console, and encourage one another.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 – “Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”

Hebrews 3:12-13 – “Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

- B. There are some with large measures of this gift.

1. This is the person who is able to enter into the life of other people – to care for them and comfort them in their circumstances. A loyal friend who defends.
2. This gift leads a person to speak words that bring a savor of comfort to others that causes them to take heart to press on
3. Barnabas was such a man
Acts 4:36 – “And Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means, Son of Encouragement)”
4. This gift may be used in many ways. It may be that one of you is able to encourage the church to press on in a difficult work.
Numbers 13:30 – “And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.”
5. It may be that one of you is always there to speak a word of comfort at the right time.
2 Tim. 1:16 – “The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:”

Conclusion:

1. As we can see, many of the spiritual gifts are the fruits of regeneration. Our hearts are transformed and we are united together in love.
Galatians 5:22-23 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.’
5. And remember, our motive is not self-glorification and self-recognition but the edification of the body and the glory of God.
1 Peter 4:10-11 – “As every man hath received the gift, *even* so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹ If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”