

## A Call to Act – For God’s Glory

I Peter 4:10-11

Gary Chapman has written a book that has sold over 11 million copies helping millions of couples learn what really touches the heart of their spouse. The book is *The 5 Love Languages*. It helps you learn how to communicate love to your spouse in a way that will speak heartfully to them. I give this book to couples I am counseling who want to get married. If you aren’t familiar with the book you may be wondering what those five love languages are. For those unfamiliar with the book they are:

- Words of affirmation
- Acts of service
- Receiving gifts
- Quality time
- Physical touch

Robyn and I read this and took the quiz at the end to discover our own love language in an effort to know how to demonstrate meaningful love to each other. Robyn has two primary love languages. They are acts of service and quality time. In the years of being married I have saved myself a whole lot of frustration and money because she isn’t moved by my giving her gifts. Now from time to time I do and she does like them, but what really rocks her world and demonstrates my love for her is when I do something for her (without being asked). It could be a back rub when she’s had a stressful day, rototilling the gardens, changing the oil in her car, finishing the greenhouse, or doing the dishes. Acts of service knocks her socks off. Now if I spend time with her doing an act of service that an out of the ball park home run.

I on the other hand like receiving gifts and physical touch. Robyn could get something as simple as a donut or something else. The gift the thought behind the gift means a lot to me. Some of you at Halloween bring me candy corn. At Christmas or Easter it’s marshmallow peeps. I love it that you think of me. Gifts along with hugs are affirming.

God has given to us gifts that affirm our love to each other and are a testimony to a watching world that we are His disciples.

In our passage last week Peter mentioned that we are to love others deeply and be hospitable to other believers especially in times of persecution. In the passage we are considering this morning he gives us another way to show love for one another. These actions are a demonstration of a love language to them that not only helps them during times of crisis but also brings glory to God.

We discover in I Peter 4:10-11 two important points that should guide us in our relationships.

We see the work we are called to do

We see the worship we are called to give

#### I. THE WORK WE ARE CALLED TO DO – vs. 10-11a

We are going to talk generally about spiritual gifts and will intentionally not discuss the individual spiritual gifts. That’s for another time. Let me give you an overview. There are some Greek words that can be helpful in understanding what Scripture has to say about spiritual gifts. There are two primary passages dealing with spiritual gifts but we will be focusing on just one.

Romans 12:3-8

I Corinthians 12:1ff

Let’s go to I Corinthians 12:1 to start. Notice the opening words: “Now about spiritual gifts”.

In the Greek it is the word *pneumatikon* and emphasizes the control of the Holy Spirit in the use of these gifts in the believer. It also emphasizes the character of these gifts that they are spiritual.

Second, in Ephesians 4:7 we read “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” See also Ephesians 2:8-9.

The Greek word there is *dorea* and emphasizes the freeness of the gift. The motive behind the gift that

has been given us is the grace of God. Let me again emphasize that grace is something that is freely bestowed by no merit of our own.

So when we come to our passage the Greek word used is *xarisma*. Its root word is *xaris*, which is translated grace. It's unearned and unmerited.

Now I want to be as straight as I can here. We are talking about spiritual gifts and if we are talking about these gifts being spiritual then there is only one source where those gifts can come from, they are from God.

I Corinthians 12:1-8, 11

God through the Holy Spirit distributes these gifts. He is the source and He provides the strength.

We sometimes hear about a musician being gifted in the way they compose music or sing.

Someone may speak of an orator being gifted in their ability to speak with poise and charisma.

For those who still watch Sunday afternoon football or who watch ESPN and listen to the talking heads you will sometimes hear a commentator talk about an athlete being gifted. They have some special athleticism that is beyond great. They may refer to the person as being a natural.

But I'm here to tell you that when it comes to spiritual gifts, there isn't anything natural about it. It is supernatural given to us by God through the Holy Spirit. He has purposefully gifted you. Exodus 31:1-11 (35:30-36:2)

God had given Moses instructions to build a tabernacle. It was a place where Israel would gather to worship the Lord. It was a place where God would reside in their midst. He gave Moses specific instructions for how it was to be built. This wasn't going to be any ordinary pre-fab construction job that could be built in an hour or a day. This was to be the best because the Holy God, the only God would be there. So God empowered Bezalel and

Oholiab with the Holy Spirit, endowing them with the ability to do the work along with other Holy Spirit gifted men. Each one of them may have been skilled tradesmen in their particular craft of carpentry or metal work or sewing, but this was no ordinary work they were called to do, this was not a natural endowment, this was supernatural.

Notice back in our passage that these gifts were "received" meaning that they had to come from some place other than the individual. Come Christmas time I will not go out and buy myself a gift and stick it under the tree. That's not a gift. A gift is given by one and received by another and in the case of spiritual gifts, it comes only from the Lord.

I want you to notice seven things about gifts this morning from this and other passages.

#### A. It Is Universal

Peter begins by saying "each one". I like the KJV which says "every man". That's all inclusive and because Peter is talking to Christians he is saying that every Christian has received a spiritual gift.

When I taught a series on Spiritual gifts for a Wednesday Bible study one woman adamantly insisted that she had no spiritual gift. She refused to accept that Scripture teaches everyone has a gift. I Corinthians 12:7 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man."

Now, let me ask you a question to which there are only three possible answers.

Do you know what your spiritual gift is?

You may answer yes.

You may answer I don't know.

You may answer no.

To the first answer there is a follow up question. If you know what your spiritual gift is are you using it? You can either yes or no. If it's no, why not?

There is no retirement from spiritual gifts.

Now if you don't know what your spiritual gift is, then there are some possible reasons.

You may not know because you didn't know you had one. You never heard you had a spiritual gift.

You may not know because you aren't listening to God who wants you to know what your gift is.

The simple fact is every Christian has been given a spiritual gift. I believe you are given a gift when you trust Christ as Savior.

You don't have to wait till you are an older believer, there isn't a probationary period.

There aren't certain spiritual milestones you have to reach. It doesn't happen after you attend church 100 times.

It doesn't happen after you read through the Bible for the first time.

It doesn't happen after you memorize the Romans Road or can quote 50 verses.

It doesn't happen after you give \$1,000 to the church in the offering plate.

Quite frankly, if there was some kind of test you had to pass in order to get your spiritual gift some Christians would never get one. But the fact of the matter is that every Christian has one. They are given universally.

To those who may not know what their spiritual gift is, I would suggest two simple ways to find out: ask and act.

Ask God to reveal it because He wants you to know what it is. What's the fun in getting a gift only to leave it wrapped up? At Christmas there will be gifts under the tree for me and I'm not going to ignore them or leave them. I want to find out what they are. Ask God to reveal what your gift is.

The second thing is act. Both Corinthians and Romans list a number of spiritual gifts. If you think you have the gift of teaching then begin doing some teaching. If you don't find any joy in it or if you really struggle with preparing or delivering a lesson, then teaching may not be your gift. You may find

greater joy and fulfillment in serving.

Just know that you have a spiritual gift that God wants you to exercise and He's not going to leave you wondering.

So that leads to the next thought and the second part of the answer I didn't touch on a moment ago. If I ask what your spiritual gift is and you answer that you don't know there are a couple thoughts to consider.

It is unique.

## B. It Is Unique

I Corinthians 12:11-27

I was in a conversation a number of years ago. One person claimed to have the gift of service but was complaining about someone else who also claimed to have the gift of service. The first person said that if this other person really had the gift of service they would do it this way instead of the way they were doing it.

Spiritual gifts aren't made by cookie cutters where all the people with the spiritual gift of giving give to this cause or all those with the gift of teaching do it the same way or all those with the gift of service show up at the Jones' to do yard work. Your spiritual gift is unique to you.

Two people may have the same general spiritual gift but will exercise it in different ways. I think that's part of Paul's point when he likens the body of Christ to the human body, which also has a variety of parts. We're not all an eye or an ear or a hand, although there was "Thing" on the Addam's family.

From time to time we have missionaries who visit and share their work. One person with the gift of giving may be moved to support them or a need they are presenting while another person with the gift of giving may be moved by something entirely

different in the body of Christ. Neither is wrong in not exercising their gift for the need they didn't support. The time they are wrong is if God speaks to them to give to a need and they don't. In James 4:17 we read that the one who knows to do good and doesn't do it, he is sinning.

Your spiritual gift is as unique to you as your fingerprint. It is yours alone. No one else in the world past, present or future will have your fingerprint. The same is true with your spiritual gift. It is unique to you. While others may have the same general gift, how you and they use that gift is unique as you individually listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit as to how you use it.

I Corinthians 12:11 "But all these worketh that one and the very same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."

That word "severally" is also translated "each one" in the NIV and "separately" in the NAS. In the Greek it is the word *idios* and means idiot. Now we have taken that word and spun it in a negative way and use it to speak of someone who is slow to learn, someone who is foolish or stupid. It originally meant someone who was peculiar, that there is no one else like him, hence unique. That's you and your spiritual gift. Again from Ephesians 4:7, God measures it out in different ways or in unique ways to each person.

#### C. It Is Unearned

I mentioned this earlier, but let me remind you that your spiritual gift is not earned. There is nothing you can do to merit it. It is given as a gift by God's grace, otherwise it wouldn't be a gift.

I Corinthians 12:11 "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines."

We can't say we don't like the gift we were given. We can't go searching after some other gift that we would prefer.

We can't be like Simon in Acts 8 who wanted to buy it.

And in I Corinthians 12 we can't say other gifts aren't needed, unwanted or unimportant.

The Holy Spirit has determined how we will best help the body of Christ through our spiritual gift. In verse 11 it is determined by the will of the Holy Spirit and in verse 18 it is by God desires.

Spiritual gifts can't be sought after. They are unearned. They are given by God.

#### D. It Is Unconditional

We spoke of this a moment ago, but it bears repeating. Regardless of your spiritual status, you could be a new or long time believer, you could just be skating by in the Christian life or sincerely pursuing godly character, your age, gender, socio-economic status, cultural background or the region of the world in which you live, none of that matters in determining whether or not you receive a spiritual gift. As Peter says in our text "Each one should use whatever gift he has received."

The word "whatever" does not mean if you have a gift but rather whatever the gift is should be used.

Our passage then says that our gift is useful.

#### E. It Is Useful

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others."

I Corinthians 12:7 "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

Your spiritual gift isn't about you. Your spiritual gift wasn't given to put you in the spotlight. It is for others. To encourage, strengthen or build up the body of Christ. It is to benefit them. Gifts are not to be used for selfish gain, but to mature the body. Ephesians 4:11-16

My role is to build you up in a way that guides you in discovering, developing and deploying your own gifts for the benefit of the church so that you all grow up in your spiritual walk, and so bring unity to the body of Christ.

Let me be candid with you. If you aren't using your spiritual gift for the purpose of benefitting the body of Christ then the body of Christ is weakened and can't be effective. Someone in the body is missing out because you aren't exercising your gift and if you aren't using your spiritual gift to benefit and support the body of Christ, then I believe you are disobeying God and disobeying is another word for sinning. You're just like the guy in Jesus's parable who was given a gift and went and hid it in the ground, refusing to use it.

Referring back to I Corinthians 12 never conclude that your gift is unnecessary or insignificant. Paul says that every gift is important just like every part of the body is important. Some parts may not be seen but they are of equal value and in fact may be more important than some gift that is more visible.

In verse 11 Peter has lumped spiritual gifts into two primary categories, those that are speaking and those that are serving.

If your gift is in the speaking category you are to speak as one speaking the words of God. This is not referring to general conversation, although we should be careful when we talk that it's always gracious and encouraging. We aren't to let corrupt words come out of our mouths. Peter is speaking here about the exercise of those gifts that preach or teach. The bottom line is that when we speak the Word of God the person should be Spirit led in what he or she says. In exercising these types of gifts the person should remember to speak God's Word as revealed in Scripture not give personal opinion. What is said must line up with God's written Word.

Now, go back to verse 10. There is an important

truth we don't want to overlook. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

We faithfully administer God's grace when we use our gift. Grace and gift come from the same Greek word. When we use our gift we are extending to others God's grace. But notice an important distinction in how we exercise or use our gift. It is to be faithfully administered. The Greek word means to be a good steward. A steward had no property of his own but was put in charge of everything the master gave him. The steward did everything according to the master's will and desire. Genesis 39:1-4

God has entrusted a unique gift to our care. Use your gift because it is useful.

#### F. It Is Unifying

Referring back to I Corinthians 12 let me remind you that Paul speaks about the correlation between the unity of the human body functioning together for the benefit of the whole body and that of the body of Christ. In Ephesians 4:16 Paul says that the whole body is joined and held together.

There is a unifying effect in the body of Christ when all its members are working together by exercising their unique gifts to build up one another. When there is a missing link in the chain because someone isn't using their spiritual gift that is when the body can't be as effective and isn't unified.

#### G. It Is Unlimited

I mentioned that there are two general categories of gifts mentioned by Peter. Speaking and serving. Peter writes "If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides."

In essence he's saying don't try to do your spiritual



gift in your own power. It will have limited results. My strength will fail. My motives won't always be right in using my gift. I won't give my best. I will be prideful about what I did hoping others will see. I may even be critical or condescending about any perceived inconvenience. In my own strength I can become apathetic and uncaring. I will lack joy and enthusiasm. When we serve in our own strength we will become weary in the doing. I will wonder what's in it for me. I may even say look at this great thing I have done.

But when my gift is used in the strength of God there will be joy, peace, enthusiasm, humility, energy and compassion. I will rightly acknowledge where my gift came from with a proper response of praise to God. *When God asks us to use our spiritual gift and we do so in His strength, He gives us the ability and all the strength we will need. It is never tiresome.*

The work we are called to do is to use our spiritual gift.

Let's close with the worship we are called to give because that's ultimately what it's all about.

## II. THE WORSHIP WE ARE CALLED TO GIVE – v. 11b

### A. It Is Exalting

Peter ends this section with a doxology – a call to praise. When we use our spiritual gift in the strength of God, the result Peter says is that God is praised in all things. The attention is taken off us and God gets the glory, God is rightfully exalted. Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

The focus is where it should be – giving all the praise to God because it was by His grace that He gave us that gift to use in the first place. Using our spiritual gift is not only an act of worship it is a call

to worship, to praise God that the body of Christ was in some way benefitted.

Throughout Scripture there is a call to give God glory for all His blessings and to exalt Him because He is worthy of our praise because He is worthy of all praise.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise Him all creatures here below

Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

If you are the recipient of someone using God's gift in your life, are you praising God?

If you are the person exercising your spiritual gift are you ensuring that God is the one receiving all the glory?

That is our goal. That should be our ambition. Paul writes in I Corinthians 10:31 that whatever we do should be done for the glory of God.

Verse 11 is a call to worship God by exalting Him. We also see that this call to worship is eternal.

### B. It Is Eternal

“To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

Psalm 104:31 “May the glory of the Lord endure forever.”

Our exaltation of God is both personal and perpetual. It will go on and on, not just in the here and now, but for all eternity. When we keep in mind the eternal perspective of our spiritual gift we will be more likely obey God by using it and ensure that He always receives the glory.

Peter ends with an affirmation – “Amen” – so let it be. In essence Peter is saying that he wants his life to be what brings glory to God.

As we close let God speak to you. If you are not using your gift, confess that and commit to using it. If you are but God isn't getting the glory confess that and commit to giving Him the praise. If you don't know your gift, ask Him.