

Sunday Sermon: February 18, 2018

Sermon Text: Romans 12: 3-8

Sermon Theme: The Body Needs Your Gifts

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴ Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

The toy maker had worked very hard to shape the toy in just the right way. He had made sure that it looked like a truck with a cab and a trailer. He had made sure that the wheels rolled around the dowels so that the truck could be pushed around the house. He had even made sure that the doors of the truck opened and the trailer could have things put in it. The toy maker looked at his truck and thought that his truck was just about right.

But the truck wasn't happy. The truck did not want a cab and a trailer, it did not want wheels or opening doors. The truck wanted to be a boat. As the toy maker was finishing up the final sanding the truck looked up at him and said, "I think you may have made a mistake. I am going to be a boat. I am going to float on the water and ride the waves."

The toy maker put the truck down and said to him, "But look at how I made you. I gave you a cab and a trailer, I gave you wheels that spin and doors that open. You are not made to float on the water or ride the waves."

The truck looked at the man and said, "I don't care, I am a boat, that is what I want to be."

Even though the truck wants to be a boat, it doesn't have what is necessary to be on the water. The first time that truck was put into water it might float for a little while, but sooner or later water would get through the doors and it would begin to sink. It would end up at the bottom of the pond or the lake and be worthless to anyone.

It seems foolish for the truck to want to be a boat, but, in a way, this is what we do with the blessings that God gives to us all the time. We tell God, "I don't have those gifts and abilities, I'm not a truck, I'm a boat,"

This morning, as we look at the God-pleasing use of the gifts that God gives to us, we will look at another picture that God uses to show us how he wants us to use those gifts. Through the Apostle Paul, God uses the picture of a body to show us that he wants us to use the talents and abilities to thank and praise him. God wants us to know that the body of believers needs our gifts to be used.

Paul dealt with the same congregational problems and sins that we deal with today. He dealt with lack of volunteering, no one to lead, everyone wanting to be served and no one to serve. He dealt with those who thought too much of themselves and their gifts and he dealt with people who thought that their gifts could not be used in the church. In short, there were as many people that Paul ministered to that didn't want to get their hands dirty with the Lord's work as there are now.

Paul uses the picture of the body in a number of different ways to teach people what the correct use of our God-given abilities really is.

To the Colossians, Paul says, **Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴ Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.**

Paul doesn't say, find out your gifts. He doesn't say take a survey or fill in a time and talents form. He simply says, **"We all have gifts according to the grace God has given to us"**. But he cautions us that as we look at the gifts that God gives to not think too highly of them. They are God's gift to us. Since they are God's

gifts, we are not think we should be praised our gifts fit into a very public role in the church. On the other hand, if your gifts lie in a private, behind the scenes role, don't undervalue that.

Instead, we are to think about our gifts, like we think about the way a body works. The body has hundreds, if not thousands, of parts that all have their purpose and place in the body. Some of the parts we use every day like our hands, feet, eyes and ears. Other parts, we don't even really think about until something is wrong with them like our sinuses, our sweat glands, or our skin.

Yet, even though each part is different, and we use them in different ways. Each part is important because it has a specific use and function that the body needs. Our body needs all of these parts to function properly so that it works the way it should.

You might have thought that the introduction to our sermon about the truck and the boat was a little foolish. Why would a truck want to be a boat? However, when Paul speaks to the Corinthians, he teaches them much the same lesson as our sermon introduction did.

¹⁴Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

Paul reminds us that we cannot choose the gifts that he have, he gives them. Paul also reminds us that we cannot disregard the ones that we have. We are to use the gifts that we have to God's glory. If we have the talents of a hand, be a hand. If we are the talents of a foot, be a foot. If we have the talents of an eye, be an eye. If we have the talents of a toenail, be a toenail.

The body needs all of the different parts working together. What would the body be if we had feet instead of ears and hands? What would the body be if we had ears where our feet and eyes should be?

Just like there are many parts of the body working together, there are also many different talents needed in the church to spread the Gospel. These are gifts that God gives you and the body needs these gifts. We need people with financial gifts, with maintenance gifts, with gifts of coordination, gifts of friendliness, gifts of cleaning. If we had all financial people, who would do the maintenance? If we had all coordinators, who would put our plan into action?

Just as God has given us the gift of time as a tool to use to do his work, God has also given us the gift of talents and abilities so that we can perform the job he gives to us. Jesus gave us that job when he said. **"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."**

No matter what our job is out there in the world, whether we are a janitor, teacher, laborer, cashier, office manager, CEO, work IT, or in a factory, these are all our second jobs. Our primary job is the one that God graciously gives to us when the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts. That job is to tell others of their Savior.

All the gifts that God has given to you and me are useful and necessary for this work of the spreading the Gospel to people who need to hear about their Savior. Your gifts are needed for this body to work.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Paul says that if we are not using those gifts we are hurting the body of God. We are sinning against God by our own thoughtless actions, we are also sinning against the rest of the body who now has to carry our load as well as theirs.

Whatever gifts and talents God gives, we are to use them to spread the Gospel. If we do not use them, the body suffers and it does not work as well. Think about what happens if we do not have the use of an eye, and ear, a foot. The body can still work, but it is not nearly as efficient.

When our body is not efficient we go to the doctor and try to have it fixed. When our spiritual body is broken, when we are not using our gifts to spread the Gospel in any manner, when we think the job is too big, or our gifts too small what do we do to fix that. Paul said in our second lesson, Christ love compels us. When we fall into the sin of not using our gifts we must return to our Savior to see what the love of our Savior has done

for us. We return often to see that we have been given spiritual gifts that we do not deserve. We return to see the price that was paid for our sins. We return asking our Savior to forgive us and asking the Holy Spirit to strengthen our faith.

And when the Holy Spirit fills us with faith and thanks, we can do as the writer of the hymn suggests: We can take the task God gives us gladly, his work becomes our pleasure. Then when his work is our pleasure we will answer quickly when he calls us Here am I send me send me. Amen