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Sunday, January 20, 2002

Your Gift and the Church

Romans 12:3-8

INTRO: Those who are saved, those who are washed by the blood of the Lamb, those who are the children of God by faith have a grace gift, a *charismaton*, a gift of grace. Grace is God's unmerited favor toward us. God saved us without any regard as to our goodness or merit; that's grace. We sometimes define grace as God's Riches At Christ's expense. These riches are far beyond anything we could have ever hoped for and include regeneration, justification, sanctification, heaven, etc. Thank God for the gift of grace in salvation.

There is another gift of grace that I want us to consider; it is the spiritual gift given to every believer at salvation. This gift is a supernatural unction given to the believer so that he can accomplish what God has purposed for him to accomplish with his life.

Each believer has a primary spiritual gift, a gift given to you by grace. Spiritual gifts are not talents because a person can have talent and not be saved. Spiritual gifts are given only to the saved.

The purpose of our spiritual gift is to serve one another and to glorify God in the *ekklesia* (Eph 3:21). The only way that we can serve one another and glorify God in the church is by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1-2). If we do not surrender to and serve God, we will not use our spiritual gift to serve others.

I. VSS 3-5, OUR ATTITUDE AND RELATIONSHIP TO OUR BRETHREN

A. Vs 3, This verse opens with the word "For." This word ties spiritual dedication to spiritual service. "When a person becomes a Christian, he enters into a new relationship with God and into a new relationship to God's people" (Phillips 190). God's purpose for the new convert is to follow the Lord in baptism and then to find his place of service in the body. All of us have a specific place, a place to serve, a place to exercise our spiritual gift. We do not all have the same gift, so we do not all have the same function (I Cor 12:14-18).

1. We are not to think too highly of ourselves.

a. We are not to overestimate our importance, nor or we to degrade ourselves to the point of false humility (I Cor 12:19-28).

b. Self has to be set aside if we are to be able to use our spiritual gifts as God intends.

c. You may see yourself as a spiritual giant, a scholar, a

- theologian; but if you do not surrender to God and set self aside, the church will not benefit from your gift like it could.
- d. Some who think themselves to be superior to others become snobs. They put on airs and often become unteachable (Gal 6:3).
2. Christians are to think soberly: “to think with a sound mind.”
 - a. Those who think soberly realize that without Christ we are nothing.
 - b. When we think soberly, we know that Christ is everything and that we are to serve Him in the church (Eph 3:21).
 3. God has “dealt to every man the measure of faith.”
 - a. This refers to your spiritual gift.
 - b. God has allotted to each believer a measure of faith.
 - c. God has given to you what you need to function in the local body. Think of it, you get the exact gift and all that you need to go with it to fulfill your role in the body so that all profit (I Cor 12:7).
- B. Vs 4, We do not all have the same office, the same function in the body.
1. If all had the same function, the body would not function (I Cor 12:17-20).
 2. It is important that we find our gift and function in it. To find our gift, we must present ourselves a living sacrifice. We are not to be conformed to this world, but transformed.
- C. Vs 5, We are one body, the local church. Note that we are also “members one of another.”
1. Here we have unity without uniformity.
 2. The eyes have their function; the ears theirs, etc. John has his function, and you have yours. It is very important that folks find and function within their gift. If not, the body suffers.

II. VSS 6-8, OUR SPECIFIC GIFT AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

- A. Vs 6, “having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.” We can have diversity as well as unity. Our gifts differ in function and in the measure of faith God gives to each of us to carry out our gift.
- B. Vs 6b- 8, Discovering your spiritual gift. Vs 6b, PROPHECY
- a. Definition- proclaiming spiritual truth clearly, forth telling, preaching the Gospel to the lost as well as feeding the saved.
 - b. Qualities- God given ability to be persuasive in speech, to bring to

light things concealed or not understood. Ability to rightly divide the Word of Truth through diligent study (II Tim 2:15).

- c. Misuses- Becoming proud of eloquence and power to persuade. Being more dependent on speaking ability than on the Holy Spirit. Seeing people as groups rather than as individuals with personal needs.

2. Vs 7a, MINISTRY- serving

- a. Definition- Demonstrates love by meeting practical needs of others.
- b. Qualities- Ability to detect personal needs. Overlooks ~personal discomfort in order to meet the needs of others. A server must have:
 - 1.) Genuine affection for others.
 - 2.) Willingness to let others get the credit for service done.
- c. Misuses- Being so busy meeting others physical needs that spiritual needs are neglected in own life.

3. Vs 7b, TEACHING

- a. Definition- Systematically researching and presenting the truths of God's Word.
- b. Qualities- ability to share biblical principles with others in an interesting and practical way. A teacher must:
 - 1.) Be willing to apply lessons to his own life before passing it on to others.
 - 2.) Be orderly and systematic in his own study and teaching.
 - 3.) Check the facts for biblical accuracy.
- c. Misuses- Boasting of the knowledge he has acquired. Concentrating on details of information rather than communicating basic life principles. More concerned about research than response of students [boring, dull].

4. Vs 8a, EXHORTING

- a. Definition- Stimulating, encouraging, nurturing the faith of others.
- b. Qualities- Ability to urge others to straighten up, to change course. Ability to provide counseling that results in spiritual growth. Enabling folks to put biblical principles into everyday practice.
- c. Misuses- Boasting of personal results in counseling others. Becoming discouraged when counseled persons growth is slow. Motivating others for selfish reasons.

5. Vs 8b, GIVING

- a. Definition- Entrusting personal assets to the church (tithe and above) as well as giving to ministry needs of others above the tithe to the

- church.
- b. Qualities- Ability to organize personal business in order to gain assets. A love to give without being s,howy. Giving is without grudging.
 - c. Misuses- Becoming proud of generosity in giving.
6. Vs 8c, RULING (administration, organization, leadership)
- a. Definition- Coordinating the activities of yourself and others for the attainment of common goals.
 - b. Qualities- Being able to preside over daily operations, to lead, to stand before others. Has ability to visualize what needs to be done now and in the future. Ability to get others to visualize with him. A ruler must:
 - 1.) Be able to bless them that curse him (He runs the church, etc).
 - 2.) Do all he can to keep unity while leading
 - c. Misuses- Being proud of power over others, using people to achieve personal goals, overlooking character faults in those who are useful to ruler in reaching goals.
7. Vs 8d, MERCY
- a. Definition- identifying with and comforting those who are upset or in distress.
 - b. Qualities- Ability to feel empathy with miseries and misfortunes of others. The one with the gift of mercy must:
 - 1.) Share happiness with those who are happy.
 - 2.) Enter into grief with those who are in sorrow.
 - c. Misuses- Being proud of ability to empathize. Resenting those who are not sensitive to personal needs of folks. Failure to be firm with people who stay in trouble because of being guided by emotions not logic.

CONCLUSION: All of the motivational gifts are needed in the church. Are you fully using your gift?