

PENTECOST SUNDAY

Text: Romans 12.1 - 8 (in pew Bible p. 1123 / in large print Bible p. 1747)

Intro: **-illust.** Olivers's Gift Of A Racing Bicycle

-today's text outline's Paul's exhortation for Christians to:

- devote themselves entirely to God (v. v. 1, 2).
- avoid conformity to the world (v. v. 1, 2).
- think soberly and humbly of themselves within Christ's body (v. v. 3 – 5).
- exercise faithfully their different gifts for the common benefit (v. v. 6 – 8).
 - these gifts were given to the Early Church on the Day of Pentecost.

-Pentecost Sunday celebrates the "birthday" of the church, as recorded in Acts chapter 2.

- outpouring of the Holy Spirit opened the way for Gentiles as well as Jews.
 - energized the Early Church to spread the Gospel.
- dispensed gifts for work of ministry – Rms. ch. 12, Eph. ch. 4, 1 Cor. ch. 12 & 14.

-in our text, the root word for "gifts" is CHARIS:

- CHARISTOS / grace to minister (v. 3; ch. 15.15).
- CHARISMATA / gifts + CHARIN / grace (v. 6).

-basic point = if you have the gift use it, don't lose it, or neglect it.

- we all have different gifts.

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well (Romans 12.6).

Take Home Point:

-our task is to ensure that all members and adherents discover their spiritual gifts and get involved in a ministry that fits their giftedness.

GIFTS ARE MINISTRY TOOLS

-spiritual gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with.

- God wants the church to grow in a balanced way.
 - tragic when one gift is emphasized above all other gifts.
- not referring to natural realm but to functions made possible by the Holy Spirit.
 - could be built upon a natural gifting.

Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! (1 Corinthians 12.29, 30).

- should not minimize the gifts of others.
 - gifts are given to benefit the whole Body of Christ.

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other (1 Corinthians 12.7).

-Group One = acts of sharing God's Word.

- prophecy / declaring the Word / will of God.
 - forth telling vs. fore telling *mix in O.T.*
 - done in proportion of your faith – cf. v. 3 “measure” = different degrees of ability but all needed.
 - in line with God's Word (Deuteronomy chs. 13 & 18 + 1 Corinthians 14.29).
 - strengthen, encourage & comfort (1 Corinthians 14.3).
- servicing / supporting role of ministry (facilitate & coach).
 - also enables elders to attend to the Word (Acts 6.1 – 6).
- teaching / discipline of study & systematic presentation of truth.
 - could be more regimented than “*prophecy*” (above).

-Group Two = acts of practical concern:

- exhorting / encourage (v. 8)
 - PARACLESIS = Holy Spirit / L.A.C.C.'s encourage team.
- giving / simplicity - generously (v. 8)
 - giving personal resources for the good of others.
 - no motive for personal gain or return.

If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person? Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions (1 John 3.17, 18).

- leading / diligently (v. 8)
 - guardianship or responsibility for those placed under one's care.
 - must meet the needs of the congregation & develop a vision.
 - must give an account.

Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit (Hebrews 13.17).

- showing mercy / cheerfulness (v. 8).
 - without grudging - uplift recipient - put empathy into concrete action.
 - extending forgiveness & sparing judgment.

Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5.7).

GIFTS REQUIRE FAITH & FAITHFULNESS

-each Christian must exercise his or her gift by faith.

- result = Body of Christ grows in a balanced way.
 - may not always see result of our ministry *but God does and he blesses it.*
 - dedicate it to God and use it for the good of the whole church.

-each Christian must exercise his or her gift faithfully.

- result = Body of Christ grows in a consistent, steady way.
 - do not wrap your talent / gift in a napkin.

There are different kinds of gifting ... but God works all of them ... for the common good (1 Corinthians 12.4 – 6).

- variety of gifts blended together produces a full-orbed ministry that helps us.
 - gifts in the process of development – *proportion of faith given us.*
 - we can grow – broadening our ministry base.

... maturity ... by constant use have trained themselves (Hebrews 5.14).

-using our spiritual gifts will produce inspiring worship.

- provides a strong sense that we have been in God's presence.
- magnifies Jesus Christ.
- encourages the work of the Holy Spirit.

-using our spiritual gifts will produces passionate spirituality.

- helps us live out our faith with commitment, fire and enthusiasm.
- enables growth in prayer life and personal use of Bible in our congregation.
- once this quality takes hold, our Church Family will come to gatherings:
 - curious to learn something new from God.
 - have a strong expectancy that God will "show up."
 - experience a personal increase in faith and joy.

Conclusion:

1. Know what God wants.

-basic point = if you have the gift use it, don't lose it, or neglect it.

- we all have different gifts.

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well (Romans 12.6).

-our task is to ensure that all members and adherents discover their spiritual gifts and get involved in a ministry that fits their giftedness.

2. Know how to do what God wants.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4.30).

So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts. But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love. Let love be your highest goal! **But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives ...** (1 Corinthians 12.31; 13.13; 14.1).

-do you desire special abilities from God *in order to see his Kingdom grow?*

- if not, why not?
 - Solomon's choice – 1 Kings ch. 3. / *wisdom to lead rather than fame riches, & long life.*
 - Pearl of great price – Matthew 13.45. / *sell all & buy it.*

-do you look to God to bless and multiply your use *of His Spiritual Gifts?*

- fresh, up-to-date infilling of God's Spirit.
 - Not so much – how much of the Spirit you have.
 - Rather - how much of you does the Spirit have?

-you can serve God – don't be like the Tim Horton's commercial *where one in three kids can't play hockey.*

- there are gifts ready for all of us to use.
- they will make such a difference:
 - others will be touched and built up.
 - we will be encouraged and energized in our life with Christ.
 - no longer the same-old-same-old!

3. Know that you will do it.

-Final Hymn: Greater Is He That Is In Me.

Benediction:

And now, brothers and sisters,
Encourage one another.
Live in harmony and peace,
and the God of love and peace will be with you.

May the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the friendship of the Holy Spirit be with us all!

Amen.