

**SCRIPTURE TEXT:** Romans 12:3-8

**SERMON TITLE:** Gifts to God's People

Do you want to hear something amazing? Jesus Christ needs me. It's hard to believe, isn't it? Jesus Christ needs me, Monte Marshall? Why? Well, Jesus Christ needs me because I have a role to play in accomplishing God's purposes.

Now given what I know about myself, this seems like an incredibly risky proposition. If I were the sovereign of the universe, I might have made a different choice—but I'm not God and the choice wasn't mine to make.

But look, it's not just about me. It's about you as well. Repeat after me: Jesus Christ needs me. Here's the deal: If the work of Jesus Christ is to be accomplished in this world, Christ needs all of us.

Paul speaks of the church as the body of Christ. We are the flesh and blood instruments through which the Spirit of Christ works to accomplish God's purposes. Each and every one of us has a function to perform so that the body works to keep the ministry of Jesus Christ alive.

Do we all have the same function? No. The body is a diverse organism. There are many parts to the body, and yet, we are still one body because we are in Christ.

And Christ is in us—in the power of the Spirit. And the Christ within us gives gifts to each and every one of us—gifts that are to be used to keep his ministry alive. In this morning's text, Paul mentions seven gifts: prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving, leadership and compassion. But this list is not exhaustive. In fact, the gifts bestowed by God are too numerous to list.

But every one of us has at least one gift that be used to keep the ministry of Jesus Christ alive. And whatever gifts we have can be used at any time and in any place, not just in an organized activity that we call "church-work."

For example, a woman named Amy Simpson writes this about her sister: *My sister is a very busy woman. She has four kids (ranging from infancy to 10 years old), works part-time from home, maintains a spotless house, and manages to follow the Holy Spirit through an active and ongoing ministry to people around her.*

*She and her family are actively involved in their church, and she serves where she can. God has given her obvious spiritual gifts in mercy, encouragement, administration, and discernment. But most of the time, she doesn't exercise these gifts in the church building. Instead, she more often finds herself doing ministry at home, at her kids' school, at the park, and at Wal-Mart.*

*A friend is facing a tragic end to a pregnancy. A neighbor is grieving a loss and needs a meal. Another mom needs a babysitter and can't afford to pay. A teenage girl needs a listening ear and a discerning heart to help lead her through a tough decision. So my sister used her spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ. Every time I talk to her, she tells me about a way she's helping to bear someone else's burden. I don't think she even realized how much her heart for ministry pervades her speech and attitudes.*

*My sister is finding the church around her, and her ministry in the lives of the people God brings her way. And her ministry makes a difference (as it always does when we use our spiritual gifts under the Holy Spirit's direction).<sup>1</sup>*

So our gifts can be used individually at any time and in any place to keep the work of Jesus Christ alive. But it's also true that our gifts are needed to provide direct benefit to the body as in teaching our children, youth and adults—or keeping the church grounds maintained—

---

<sup>1</sup> Simpson, Amy. "Aren't We Always at Church?" [ChristianityToday.com](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/giftedforleadership/2007/02/arent_we_always_at_church.html#more). 8 Feb. 2007. Christianity Today. 4 Oct. 2000 <[http://blog.christianitytoday.com/giftedforleadership/2007/02/arent\\_we\\_always\\_at\\_church.html#more](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/giftedforleadership/2007/02/arent_we_always_at_church.html#more)>.

playing in the Praise Band or singing in the choir—or providing leadership to the church by heading a ministry area.

It's also important to combine our gifts with the gifts of others in an organized way to keep the ministry of Jesus Christ alive. After all, it's often the case that we can make a greater impact for Jesus Christ when we work together in a common effort rather than just relying on individual acts of ministry. All of the banners we see before us this morning pretty much represent these combined efforts.

Once again, repeat after me: Christ needs me. Christ needs each and every one of us using our gifts to keep the ministry of Jesus Christ alive. And I'm not talking here about 20% of the people doing 80% percent of the work. It would be pretty hard to keep a body alive and thriving if 80% of the body's functions were shut down or underutilized. The body would probably die. In the case of the church, it's the ministry of Jesus Christ that suffers.

Pastor Wayne Cordeiro puts it this way: when the church functions as the body of Christ, ***it's not one person doing a hundred things...It's a hundred people doing one thing each!***<sup>2</sup>

And by the way, don't we think that the work of Lord is worthy of 100% participation by the members of the body? The truth is, Christ needs us—each and every one of us!

Well, this morning, we have an opportunity to consider how our gifts might be used within the body.

- Areas of Service brochure in bulletin
- Time to fill it out—bring to altar—someone will contact you about your service
- If you've filled-out one of these recently—take the time to be in prayer for others who are considering how they might serve

---

<sup>2</sup> Cordiero, Wayne. *Doing Church as a Team*. Honolulu, HI: New Hope Resources, 1998, 53.