

Which Jesus Would You Choose

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Preacher: Pastor Steve Hersey

[0 : 0 0] Julie are gone this weekend, and so I'll be doing Sunday school this morning. For those of you with me on Sunday afternoon, this is a continuation.

For those of you who are not with me on Sunday afternoon, I'll try to do a quick review and then continue on. If you would like a sheet, normally I have sheets for people to fill out. Angela has some back there. Raise your hand, and she'll give you one if you'd like one.

So, alright. Take your Bible and go to Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. Did you guys get one?

Angela? Ashmore's. And your mother. We should have one.

Alright. For those of you who haven't been with us on Sunday afternoons, we've been talking about living in the real. By that we mean that God is the reality of this world.

[1 : 1 1] All the stuff that goes on in this world, people think it's the real. It's not. God is the reality of this world. And so we've been talking about how we deal with this world in light of God and what He wants us to do.

And this particular one we're working on talks about God's sins. We've talked about the fact that God saves and God does everything. The Holy Spirit does things in our life. God sends us.

And He sends us to church and then out from the church. And so, first thing we had was God's reasons for our service. This has to do with God sends us out to do service.

And He does that, first of all, to fulfill our purpose. Ephesians 2, 8, and 9, you all know. For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, that is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

God saves us by His grace. It's nothing that we do. And then the very next verse, verse 10, says this, For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

[2 : 2 1] And we talked about the fact that God created us to be saved and then to go out and do good works. We don't do good works in order to be saved. Because we are saved, we go out and do good works.

And we talked about the fact that, you know, there's a lot of believers who think that's kind of optional. I'm saved, I'm on my way to heaven. Remember we've been talking lately, saved, going to heaven.

What about here? What about the in-between? God has saved us to do good works while we're here. And has a plan for each one of us. Also, He gave His life for us.

And we go out to do good works because we want to glorify God. Second thing is to glorify God. In 1 Peter chapter 4, verses 10 and 11, it says this, He says, He says,

He says, He empowers us. We use Acts 1.8 and Acts 2 to show about the Holy Spirit coming on the disciples. And when He empowered them, they were going to go out and be witnesses.

[4 : 24] Jerusalem, Judea, all the areas of the world. And the Spirit came upon them. And that's when Peter got up and preached a message. And 3,000 people were saved that day. So the Holy Spirit empowers us to do the work that He's called us to do.

Let it be, He endows us for service. Endows us for service. We get gifts. When we get saved, God gives us gifts to be used to do His work.

And in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4, He gives us partial listings of those gifts.

And we started looking at those gifts. The first ones were descriptions of speaking gifts. Descriptions of speaking gifts. He said in Romans 12, verse 7, where you are right there.

He says, Of ministry, let us wait on our ministering. For he that teacheth on teaching. Teaching. One of the speaking gifts is teaching.

[5 : 27] What is teaching? Simply communicating truth from God's Word in an understandable and applicable way. When we get up here to teach, when Randy comes up, when I come up, when whoever comes up, our job is to help you understand God's Word and give it to you in an understandable way.

And then so that you can take that and put it to practice. You know, I can get up and I can give you deep theological discussions about things. But my job is to make it understandable for you so that you can apply it to your life.

That's what I'm trying to do even right now. How do I take teaching? Teaching is doing this. Maybe you have the gift of teaching. Teaching. God wants us to be able to teach others. How about the gift of exhortation?

Look at verse 8. It says, Or he that exhorteth on exhortation. The ability to encourage someone going through a difficult circumstance.

Some people are given that gift. They have the ability to help people. They're going through difficult times. They're facing some hardships. Somebody can come alongside them and encourage them. And uplift them and help them.

[6 : 36] They motivate people to participate in the ministry of the church. There's a lot of different things that people do that can encourage people.

Maybe God has given that gift to you. Over in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11, he talks about he gave some apostles, some prophets, some pastor teachers, some evangelists.

Pastor teacher. That's a position that's both a spiritual gift and a position in the church. God has called people to be pastors of churches, pastors and teachers.

Pastoring refers to caring for people. And then teaching we've just talked about. To be able to take the word of God and give it simply to people to help them understand and apply. Then Ephesians 4, verse 11 also mentions evangelism.

That's the gift to be able to communicate the gospel clearly and effectively. There are some people who seem to have a gift for evangelism. Now, we can't say, well, I don't have that gift.

[7 : 39] The Bible tells us we're supposed to go out and tell everybody. All of us are supposed to go out and tell everybody. But there are some people who seem to have a natural gift for doing that. Mike's going to come in next week.

He has a gift for going out and trying to encourage people and encourage churches and give them evangelism, lead people to the Lord. Number two, I don't think we started yet.

Descriptions of serving gifts. Description of serving gifts. He mentions there in verse 7, Of ministry, let us wait on our ministering.

What is ministering? The gift of meeting needs. There are some people who just know how to come along and meet needs for people. You know, people are going to be deacons. That should be a gift that they have.

Needing needs. Remember the first deacons? What happened? There was a contention in the church there in Jerusalem. The Grecian widows weren't being taken care of like some thought they should be.

[8 : 39] And so there was some contention there. So they assigned seven men to make sure everything was carried out the way it should be. They were the first deacons. And so ministering to the needs of those around us.

They're good at understanding needs and finding ways to meet them. There are some people who are just really good at that. You know, some people just seem to be able to say, Oh, you got a problem with this? Here, let me help you with that.

We can do this. We can do this. We can do this. Or I know this person who might be able to help you. They're just good at it. Gift of giving. Verse 8, again. He talks about, He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.

He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity. That's referring to those who give of themselves to the Lord. Now, they may give money. Or they may give of their time and their talents.

We can give to the Lord in so many different ways. And there are some people who just seem to be really gifted at giving. Some people, like I said, it may be money.

[9 : 44] But it doesn't have to be. Remember when Jesus was in the temple. And they were giving their offerings. And there were people coming along. And they were making a big production about what they were giving. And everything.

Then came this little widow lady. Gave two mites. And what was Jesus' comment on her? She gave all she had.

And he pointed her out. Because she had an attitude of giving. It wasn't that she had a lot. But she had an attitude of giving.

Ruling. Verse 8. It mentions ruling. He that ruleth with diligence. The gift of ruling is the gift to be able to help a church understand and fulfill its purpose.

Why are we here? What is it we're trying to do? And he says, look. A person with ruling helps a church be able to understand why they're here.

[10 : 46] What their purpose is in doing things. They help to kind of put things all together in perspective for people. They'll help a pastor with vision for the ministry.

And communicating that vision. So they're there to help the pastor bring the church where it needs to be. Mercy. The gift of mercy. Says those that can comfort and strengthen the hurting.

So those that have the gift of mercy. They can help those that are hurting. When I go visit people who are going through different situations.

I like to take Bonnie with me. Bonnie can help with that. I'm a type person. Just boom, boom, boom.

She is much better at sympathizing and empathizing and doing all those things. I'm like, you're not feeling good? Good. Get well and get up. Let's go back to work and let's do whatever.

[11 : 44] You know, she's more empathetic, sympathetic toward them. The gift of helps. Over in 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

1 Corinthians chapter 12. Go over there for a minute. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 28. It says, And God set some in the church.

First apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers. After that, miracles. Then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversity of tongues. The gift of helps.

We've talked about some of the other ones. The gift of helps. The gift of helps is a gift of assisting in ministry. They're the ones who work behind the scenes.

The ones that you don't see out front and everything. But they're there. And a church would have a hard time functioning without them. We have some ladies who come in every week and clean.

[12 : 46] You come in, you don't see stuff all over the place and everything. Because we have some ladies come in and clean. The gift of helps. Kathy and Angela, now, we have communion.

Communion table's all set when you come in. It's there. It's ready to go. It didn't just happen on its own. It didn't just appear. There's people who take care of that behind the scenes. People you don't usually know about.

Bathrooms. Yep, that's part of the cleaning. Yep, there's some ladies that take care of that. So, see, there's lots of different things that happen around here that you don't know. You don't see, necessarily. But these people have the gift of helps, and they come in and help.

Then he says, hmm? Sound room. Sound room. Yep. Eh. No. Nope, they're help. Sometimes. No. Yeah.

Then he mentions governments in that verse. Governments. Administration. The administration of work. That's the work with the pastor. Those work with the pastor. And those that have the gift of ruling, they help organize and run ministries and do things.

[14 : 00] They help to put things together so that, you know, people can come in and they can volunteer and there's a plan. They help with the plan and getting everything set up where it should be.

Now, you look through the list of speaking and serving helps, serving gifts. Where would you put your name? Okay. Where would you put somebody else's name?

Somebody else, you think, has that gift. Are you exercising the gift that God has given to you? You say, well, I don't really know what my gift is. I'm glad you said that.

Number three, determination of gifts. We're going to look at determination of gifts. Number three there. Number three there. I'm going to read to you again from 1 Peter 4, verse 10.

And it says, As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

[15 : 08] So he says, you've all received gifts. Now use them to help one another. So how do I determine if I have a gift I want to serve God with?

First of all, I have on your sheet there and up there. What do you like to do? See, some people say, oh, I can't serve God because I'm sure.

I used to tell this to my school kids. I'm sure if I say, yes, God, I want to serve you. I'm going to do whatever you want me to do. And I know for sure he's going to call me to Saudi Arabia to go out in the middle of the desert and hand out tracks to passing camel caravans.

Why would he do that? First of all, there are no camel caravans out there anymore, is there? So why would he do that? He says, no, think of what you like to do. What's enjoyable for you?

Sometimes God's going to use something that you're natural at, something that you're good at, something that you like. Some people are very hospitable. So maybe you have a gift of helps, a gift of ministering.

[16 : 20] Those are yours. Some people like to help other people. Some people are good with finances. So maybe with a good giving part, you know, and again, ministration and things like that.

What do you like to do? Second, what types of service do people say you do well? You do things around the church. Okay, let me stop right there.

That's assuming that you do things around the church. Okay? You do things around the church. And people come up to you and say, you're good at that. You have a knack for that. Maybe God has given you a gift in that area.

And he's just showing it as you go about doing things. And other people are starting to see that you have that gift. Thirdly, what opportunities is God bringing your way?

What opportunities? You ever have times in your life when it just seems everything that comes in your life has to do with a particular topic, or a particular person, or a particular ministry, or it just everything seems to be there?

[17 : 28] Maybe God's trying to tell you something. Maybe he's trying to give you something, some indication of what your gift is. One note. I don't know what my gift is.

Great. Serve God anyway. And as you serve him, you'll probably find out what your gift is. As you serve, as you do this, and as you do that, and as you do that, ah, I like doing this, and I'm good at this.

And people say I'm good at it. Maybe this is what I should be doing more of. Then go for that. So the Holy Spirit is leading us. He's empowering us.

He's endowing us with certain things. Let us see there. He edifies us through our service. He edifies us through our service.

If you're still there in 1 Corinthians 12, look at verse 7. He says, But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

[18 : 32] He says the gifts that he's going to give to you, the Spirit's going to make them manifest in you. You're going to see them coming out. You're going to see them at work. You're going to be able to do what God has wanted you to do.

The exercise of our gifts, when we do them the way God wants us to, reveals his power, his presence, his character.

The Holy Spirit's going to magnify the gift that you have so that you can use it. Who's going to profit from that? The entire church.

See, God brings us here to exercise the gifts that we have. How are we going to exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit that he's given to us if we don't have anybody to minister to?

I'm going to stay home. I don't need to go to church. I don't need to be a part of church. Where are you going to exercise your gift? Where are you going to have fellowship with other Christians?

[19 : 32] Where are you going to, you know, church is so important. And yet so often people think, church, I can take it or leave it. It doesn't really matter. Think of it this way.

You fall down and you scrape your knee and hurt it and it's bleeding. What is your automatic tendency to do?

Cry. Okay, after you cry. Fix it, right? Wash it out, clean it, bandage it. However, my hand says, nope, I'm not doing it.

Your knee is on its own. I'm not taking care of that knee. He looks all bleh. I'm not getting anywhere near your knee. Who's the hand hurting?

The knee? How about the hand? I'm not touching that. No, that's disgusting. I'm not doing that. And then that knee becomes infected.

[20 : 36] And then that infection spreads. Again, what's the hand going to do if the knee is not going to take him anywhere?

What's the hand going to do if the knee has to be cut off because of the infection that's in it? What's the hand going to do? The hand is going to have more work now because he's going to rely on a crutch and things to help go.

See, when we don't work one with another, we hurt ourselves. We need to be working one with another to exercise the gifts that God has given to us.

Why do we have all these gifts and things? Again, Ephesians chapter 4. If you want to go there, we'll be there in a little bit. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11 and 12.

Why do we have the gifts that we have?

[21 : 43] See, my job is to equip you and give you things so that you can take those things and use them to perfect the saints, do the work of the ministry, edifying of the body of Christ.

Remember it said there in Ephesians 2, 8, 9, and 10, we're his workmanship. God is preparing us.

He's working in us to help us be a help to those around us, to use the gifts that we have there. Once a believer matures and begins to use his gift, he's going to help other people spiritually.

He's going to help other people to grow into what God wants them to be. Use your gift in the church to help those around you. Verse 13 there of chapter 4 says this.

Till we all come in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

[23 : 04] But speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, faintly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

What is the purpose of the gifts? Effecting of the saints, growth, all of that. And so that we as a church can function as we should.

We as a church can function bringing people together. There is a unity that comes when we work together in the things of Christ. A church is doctrinally sound.

A church is characterized by love. That's what it's all about. Love is vital for the edification of church.

Getting people to love one another, using their gifts for one another. We learn to depend on the Holy Spirit and listen to what he says, follow his instructions and what he has for us to do.

[24 : 17] You know, our job is never done. Hopefully we have people constantly coming in. People coming in to learn. People coming in to be a part. People coming in to grow.

A church is never going to be perfect. If you're looking for the perfect church, go down the road somewhere. Because this isn't it. But neither is that one.

There are no perfect churches. But there are people who are being perfected. Because they're following God and doing what he wants.

And part of our job is to take the gifts that God has given to us. And to use them to help one another to grow.

You want to live in reality? That's what this whole thing is about. We've been doing on Sunday afternoons. You want to live in reality? Reality is God saved you for all eternity.

[25 : 18] Jesus Christ came, gave his life. We're about to come up on Easter. He came and gave his life for us so that we could be saved. But once we're saved and waiting to go to heaven, in between here, he's given us gifts to use, to help one another.

We can't all do everything. But he's given you a gift and you a gift and you a gift. And he says, look, gather together at the church and use those gifts to help one another.

God sends us out. To do what he has called us to do. And right now, while we're waiting for him to return, our job is to bless one another with the gifts that God has given to us.

Let's pray. Father, thank you. Thank you.