

The people of God

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Date: 10 May 2015

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[0 : 00] So this is really continuing what Chris has been talking about and will be continuing. We're thinking as a church about how we go forward, not least in terms of asking people! Asking people to take responsibility as deacons and looking for somebody, at least somebody else to come on board in word ministry as assistant pastor.

And that's something that is important for all of us. It's important because the church is important. You may think, or people may think, that the spiritual life can be fulfilled in perhaps, let's say, if you were a commuter going to London on the train and you have somebody who's a Christian that you know who's also on that train and you sit together in that journey and read the Bible and have a prayer together, you might say, well that fulfills my spiritual needs. I've got somebody that I can share with in that way.

Or you might say, I don't have anybody like that, but I know Jesus Christ and I have a relationship with Jesus Christ and that's sufficient. But what the Bible says is neither of those two is actually what God's plan is.

God's plan is to have communities, churches, and that's where his plan lies in building up these communities.

So how important is church? Well, very important as I hope we'll see. How does the church grow and progress? And I hope to be able to answer that question as we go through in terms of gifts and in terms of building up the body.

[1 : 53] Why should I personally get involved with church? I can live, that should be live, the Christian life quite well on my own. Now actually quite a number of people say this.

They might not say it out loud, but that's how they're actually functioning. I don't get involved with church. I can live the Christian life quite well on my own.

This is not what the Bible says. And if that's what you're thinking, you're not in line with what God is thinking. And what is the way forward for Calvary Church as the years go by?

Well, the answer lies in the subject that we're looking at this morning. The church of Jesus Christ is the body of Jesus Christ. And everyone who belongs to him is part of his body.

Everyone has gifts, functions, service to offer. And the body is built up as these gifts function. So that's what I'm going to talk about this morning.

[2 : 54] So I'm going to do some introductory thoughts. I hope I don't strain your patience in doing a bit of introduction. But I think it's worthwhile. Let's think about different sorts of gifts.

Some gifts are like chocolate and they are as pleasurable. Some gifts are creative, like the calligraphy set that you might have got when you were a child.

Some gifts are functional and productive, like a saw or a sewing machine. Some gifts are like a saw or a sewing machine. And the gifts that God gives his church, well, there's a range of them.

But the particular emphasis that I'd like to look at is the functionality of gifts. The productivity of gifts. They add into the community.

And so that's just a thought on that. Gifts can be, if you think just about gifts, exactly deserved. So if you've paid too much for something in a shop, you wait for them to give you the change.

[3 : 59] And you expect them to give exactly the right change, don't you? Do you? I would. You don't want to be short-changed.

And they give it to you. So that's the verb, give. So what you give is a gift. But it's exactly deserved. If you give a tip, you know, a tip to a waiter, a restaurant.

I never used to do this until when my son worked in a restaurant. I thought, he gets so poorly paid and so appreciates tips. So I've become somebody who leaves tips now.

So that is partly deserved, isn't it? If you receive good service, you would give a tip. If you received rubbish service, you probably wouldn't say, well, I'll give them a tip anyway.

Although I suppose you might do if you were extremely generous. One of my dad's friends was walking along the beach, so we're told.

[5 : 01] And minding his own business, somebody came on and punched him on the jaw. And broke one of his teeth. That was a gift, not a very nice gift. But that was a completely undeserved gift.

So I've got a little spectrum there moving down from gifts that are deserved to gifts that have a bit of generosity in them to something that's completely undeserved.

Obviously, the last one is in a bad way, but you get the point. It's completely undeserved. What did I do to deserve that? Nothing. And in the Bible, the language of gift is certainly well down on that spectrum.

When the Bible talks about gifts, we're talking the area of gifts that have not been earned. Gifts that are not deserved. Gifts that are gracious gifts. Gifts that are freely given.

Undeserved gifts. So you won't mind if I tell you something about the words that are used. I always find this interesting. There's this word *dona*, which is used four times.

[6 : 06] For example, give good gifts to your children. There's the word *dona*, which is used 11 times. Mostly gifts and sacrifices. There's the word *dona*, used 17 times.

For example, gift of the Holy Spirit. The word *dona* is the correct word for a punch that you didn't deserve. A gratuitous gift.

And it says that we are justified *dona* by his grace. We are put right with God freely. It comes to us as much deserved as the punch on the jaw did.

Completely undeserved. That's how God justifies us. The word for grace is *charis*. And from this we get a word *charisma*, which is translated gift.

The wages of sin is death, but the *charisma*, the gracious gift of God, is eternal life. So just a little thing on words there.

[7 : 10] I say it because you might think *charisma*, you think, oh, that's to do with being, you know, somebody has a personal *charisma*.

You mean sort of magnetism, sort of magic to their character. But that's actually not the right thing to be thinking. *Charisma* is linked with *charis*, grace.

It's a freely given gift. That's the way to think of *charisma*. The plural is *charismata*. Okay. All of these words are in the same ballpark.

And they're all to do with gifts. Mostly meaning freely given gifts. Not deserved gifts. So I've got two foundation points.

And then I've got four principles. So here's a foundation point number one. And you can tell me, is my writing too small? Am I making it too small? Because I've tried to cram a lot onto this.

[8 : 11] And perhaps you can tell me if I need to do this on two screens in future. Please turn to John 4 verse 10. Because my first foundation point is that Christianity is fundamentally shaped as a giving religion.

Where God gives what we don't deserve. And that is not just a little icing on the edges. That's a fundamental insight into what Christianity is about.

And here's a verse that encapsulates it. Here's a sentence from the Bible. John 4 verse 10. Where Jesus meets a Samaritan woman. So she's a foreigner.

And he as a Jew would normally have nothing to do with her. But they have a conversation. And Jesus says, If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him.

And he would have given you living water. That's a very insight giving verse. What does Jesus say to this woman?

[9 : 27] He says, If you had just realized that God gives gifts. The word there is *Dona*. But don't worry too much about that.

God gives gifts. You would have asked him and he would have given you a gift. He would have given you this gift. And what is this gift? Living water. And it goes on to explain this would be eternal life given by the Holy Spirit.

Isn't that a fantastic verse? He says to this woman, Sort of almost apropos of nothing. You should have realized, If you had only realized what God is in the business of doing.

He's in the business of giving. And he's open to being requested. If you had just realized you would have asked him.

And he would have given you living water. Isn't that a fantastic thing? God doesn't say, If you had only realized how much I'm telling you to turn over a new leaf.

[10:29] And I'm telling you to get your life together. And I'm telling you to do this and do that. That's not what God is saying. The God of the Bible doesn't come to us as a God who commands us to do lots and lots of things.

To have spiritual life. This God is a God who says, Just drop everything. Realize your need. Ask me. And I give it to you. A little bit more technically, In Romans chapter 5, There's a comparison between Adam, Our first parent, And his effect on the rest of his offspring.

Compared with Jesus, And his effect on the people who belong to him. And in Romans 5 verse 15, He's comparing the act that Adam did.

He sinned. He ate the apple that he ate. He ate the fruit that he wasn't supposed to eat. Caused huge, terrible effects on the rest of his offspring.

Compared with Jesus, Who, As one act, Died on the cross. And has enormous effects himself. And in verse 15 it says, The gift, Is not like the trespass.

[12:02] For the many died by the trespass of the one man. How much more did God's grace, And the gift, That came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, Overflow to the many.

The gift, The charisma, Is not like the trespass. How much more did God's grace, That's charis, And the gift, Dorian, That came by the grace, Charis, Of the one man, Overflow to many.

Notice that the gift words, Are sort of a bit interchangeable there. But notice the point of it, He's saying, This is what, Fundamentally what Jesus Christ, Has achieved, And bought, He has brought the gift.

The gift, That came by him. And in verse 17, I didn't put the reference, If by the trespass of the one man, Death reigned through that one man, How much more will those who receive, God's abundant provision of grace, And of the gift of righteousness, Reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. The gift, That's Dorian that time, The gift of righteousness. And I don't want to confuse everybody, There's a lot going on in those sentences, I'd just like to emphasize, What it's saying is, That fundamentally, What the Christian faith is about, Is about a gift.

[13:24] We receive from God, A gracious gift, Of eternal life, The gift of righteousness, And isn't that fantastic?

If we were, I think we should be saying thank you, For such a great gift. It's not earned, It's not deserved, As there in our Christmas stocking, As it were, Eternal life.

And, So, I think that's the fun, That you know, We have to say that first of all, When talking about gifts. Our, Our, Our salvation, Is a charisma, Is a Dorian, Is a gift.

From many points of view, It's a wonderful, Undeserved gift. We should be grateful for it, And if you're sitting there thinking, I'd love to be a Christian, It's a gift, You can ask for it, And God, Says, That he, Gives, Such a good gift, To people who ask.

Now, Fundamental point B, There's another, Realm of gifts, That God, Gives, And these, Are in terms of, Action, And function, And service, For the good of others.

[14:46] So, Not only the gift, Of eternal life, But the gift, Of being able to, Make a difference, Contribute something, Be of use, To the Lord. And so, This is, Will you turn to, Romans chapter 12, From verse 6.

So, We're still using, The language of gifts, But we're in a different, Area of thought now. And I will, Point out to you, In this, Classic passage, On gifts, We have, Different gifts, According to the grace, Given us.

And, We have different gifts, We have different charismata, According to the grace, Charis, Given to us. And then he, He gives a list, And says, If a man's gift, Is prophesying, Let him use it, In proportion to his faith.

If it is serving, The word is, Diakonia, From which we get deacon, Let them serve. If it is teaching, Let him teach. Whether it is encouraging, Let him encourage.

Whether it is, Contributing to the needs of others, Let it be done in generosity. If it is leadership, Or presiding, Let it be done, In an earnest, Diligent way.

[16:10] If it is showing mercy, Let it be done, Cheerfully. And I put a clunky translation, Up on the screen, Because, It's a rather compressed statement. So there, You see, He's not talking about,

The gift of eternal life, He's talking about, The gift to be able to, Serve, Teach, Encourage, Give, Preside, Etc, Etc.

So, That's fundamental, Point B. We've got the gift of eternal life, And we've got the gift of, Being able to, Function in certain ways. And, In all the passages, That we look at, There's a connection, With the body, Which I shall repeat, It's there in verse 5.

And there is also, A connection with love, Which goes on in verse 9, Love must be sincere. Now, The classic texts, To be looking at, Are, 1 Corinthians 12 to 14, Which is what we had, Read to us, Which we'll look at in a moment.

That one is, Applying basic principles, To the situation in Corinth. Corinth was a bit of a chaotic church, A wobbly church, Some of the things that went on there, Were shameful, It was a very promising church, And Paul loved them.

So there are all sorts of things, We shouldn't emulate them, In everything, Because some of the things, They did were awful. Ephesians 4, 1 to 17, Is another classic, Passage, In which his aim, Is to say, That gifts work, To present, A unified, Functioning church.

[17:45] In Romans 12, That we just looked at, He's looking to produce, A humble, Unified church, For the gospel. And there's another classic passage, In 1 Peter chapter 4, Which sums up everything, Including, Service, And word ministry.

So that's more for reference, But we're going to look at, Some principles. So here are some principles, Coming up. Principle number one, The working of gifts, Links to, The triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Himself.

Please turn back, To 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Verses 4 to 6. So what I'm trying to do here, Is to say, Okay, Suppose, Your functioning, Turns out to be, Let's say, Counting the number of toilet rolls, That goes in the loo.

That's very helpful, Very helpful thing to do. You're thinking, Well that's basically what I do, I count out the number of loo rolls, To go in the toilet. I want to say, Please don't just think of it, In that connection, Because what you are doing, Is connected, To the triune, The trinity, Of God Himself. So, I'm coming in at verse 4, Where it says, There are different, Kinds of gifts, Kinds of gifts, But the same spirit, He uses the word charisma to there, The plural of charisma, There are different kinds of gifts, But the same spirit.

[19:22] And then he says, There are different kinds of service, But the same Lord, There are varieties of diakonia, Service, But the same Lord.

And then he says, The varieties of working, But the same God, Works all of them in all.

The original is sort of like energizings, Which reminds me of Star Trek, Energize, Like that, But you don't have to, Think that at all.

But do you notice what he said, He said three sentences, And he said the same thing three times. The first time he said it, In connection with the spirit.

The second time he said it, In connection with the Lord, Jesus Christ. The third time he said it, He said it in connection with God, God the Father. That's a Trinitarian statement.

[20:22] He's linked it with the triune God. The first time he said it, He used the idea of gifts, Charisma, Charismata. The second time he said it, He put it in terms of service, Diakonia.

And the third time he said it, He said it in terms of the work of God, To energize, To make things happen, Sort of really on an unseen level.

So, The workings of the gifts, I think, If you were changing the roles, Lulol's in the toilet, It would be a good thing to think, What I'm doing, Is one of the gifts of the spirit, Is one of the services of the Lord Jesus, Is one of the energizings of God.

That's how the church operates. And he goes on to say, It is for the common good. Something like for co-burden carrying, Something like that.

So, What I have here in this, In this observation, Is the fact of the Trinity, The spirit, The Lord, The Father. The Trinity, Is fundamentally, To do with unity, And diversity.

[21:40] See, We're not Buddhists. Buddhists believe, That the fundamental thing, Is everything is one. And everything comes back, To being one. We're Trinitarian, Which means everything comes back, To being one in three.

That the basic truth, Behind the universe, Is not oneness, By itself. Just unity. But unity and diversity. Difference, And sameness together.

Which is, It's a big thing, To get our heads around, But that's what I'd like us, To link it to. There's the fact of variety, Because he keeps on saying, Different gifts, Varieties of service, Varieties of working, All different.

All different. And the fact of unity, There is the same God, The same Lord, The same spirit. So we have a wonderful picture, Really a very beautiful picture, Of a oneness, With a multi-coloured variety, And that's the way, The church operates.

I can't help but compare, With our political system. Politicians, Would love to be able, To come up with a system, Which managed to combine, Unity and diversity.

[22 : 54] So you have diverse people, But they all work together, For the common good. And political systems, Would love to have that, But they can't manage it. You just end up, With either, Diversity that pulls unity apart, Or you end up, With such a tight control, That there's no diversity allowed.

And, Well that's politics. The church, Ought to do better than that. The church, Ought to be able to produce, A unity and diversity, Which should be the envy, Of politicians.

Politicians, Ought to come into a church, And say, Wow, If we could just run the country, The way they run the church, That would be fantastic. Well, There we are. So we've got, Three sides of the same coin.

Ha ha. Gift, Service, Working. All different, All unified, All for the common good. Second basic principle. Gift language, Is interchangeable, With, Part of the body language.

So would you, Please come back with me, To Romans chapter 12. Looking at verses 3 to 6. So, I'm sorry, We're darting about a bit, But I'm trying to cover, This in a theme, In fairly limited time, So, This is the way, I've opted to do it.

[24 : 21] Please will you notice, In Romans chapter 12, The, The, Steps of thought, That he takes, He talks about, He's talked about, God's mercies, In chapter 12, Verse 1.

He, He, Talks about, Assessing ourselves, In verse 3, Do not think of yourself, More highly than you ought, But think of yourself, With sober judgment, In accordance with the measure of faith, God has given you.

Then he talks about the body, He says, Just as each of us, Has one body, With many members, And these members, Do not all have the same function, So in Christ, We who are many, Form one body.

And then he goes on, To talk about gifts, As if they are, Seamlessly united, You can talk about, The same thing, From the point of view, Of being parts of the body, As gifts, So he goes to verse 6, Different parts of the body, Verse 5, Different gifts, According to the grace given us, Gift language, Is interchangeable, With parts of the body language, Please turn to, Ephesians chapter 4, Now I have to confess, A terrible thing, Which is that, My Bible has been so well used, That one corner, Of Ephesians 4, Has actually fallen off, It fell on the floor, And I don't know where it is, So I'm missing, Half a dozen words, Which is, Terrible really, I ought to do something about it, But I, I don't want to buy a new Bible, Because I've put so many markings, In this old one, Anyway, Ephesians 4, Verse 8, Is the language of gifts, When Christ, Ascended on high, He led captives in his train, And gave gifts to men, It's the language of gifts, And he gives a little list, Of some gifts that there are, But please notice, That before too long, He's moved into verse 15, And he's talking about the body, And he says, Speaking the truth in love, We will in all things, Grow up into him, Who is the head, That is Christ, From him, The whole body, Joined and held together, By every supporting ligament, Grows and builds itself up, In love, As each part, Does its work, Do you notice, He's gone from gifts, To body, And saying, This is how the body, Grows as each, Part of the body, Functions, Contributes, Does its work, 1 Corinthians 12, 1 Corinthians 12,

[27 : 12] Verses 7 to 11, Which we had read to us, There was a list of gifts there, And notice, That he seamlessly, Moved over, 1 Corinthians 12, Like 1 to 11, Is gifts, And then, By way of explanation, In verses 12 and onwards, He says, Parts of the body, The way to think of it, Is parts of the body, And then he comes back again, Verses 27 to 31, To gifts, So, I'm only making one point here, That gift language, Is interchangeable, With part of the body language, And the cash value of this, Is as follows, If you only think of gifts, You might say, Well I've been a Christian, For years and years, And I don't have any gifts, Not conscious of having any gifts, Maybe one day I'll have a gift, And gifts becomes, Something, Rather, Distant, Part of the body, Is how we can think,

If I'm a Christian, I am part of the body of Jesus Christ, By definition, Now then, If I'm part of the body, I automatically, Have some usefulness, Some contribution, Some place in the body, And we

shouldn't have to think, Of a gift as being something, Only one or two gifted people have, Everybody has, Do you see what I'm trying to say?

No, Yes, Every believer, Is part of the body, Every believer, Has some function, And contribution, Every believer, Has or is, A gift, Okay, And the way, That he takes it on, In 1 Corinthians 12, I'm drawing out some more, Cash value of this, 15, 16, 17, Is the person, Who says, Sorry, If the foot should say, Because I'm not a hand, I don't belong to the body, Or if the ear should say, Because I'm not an eye, I don't belong to the body, Etc, Etc, Somebody might say, Well I'm not like those other people, In the church, I'm not, I've been to university, Don't know all the long words, That they know, Therefore I'm not really, A proper member, I can't contribute anything, I'm not part of this, And Paul's saying, That is completely wrong,

That is completely wrong, Because everybody, Who is a Christian, Has a part, Even if they're different, To other people, Even, Well you know, Because I'm not a hand, Because I'm not an eye, I don't belong to the body, He says, No, Everybody, Everybody is important, Everybody has got something, Everybody matters, Being different, Does not exclude you, And I think that's something, We need to say loud and clear, You know, Somebody might say, Well I'm a single parent mum, I can't join in, The way everybody else joins in, That does not exclude you, Somebody might say, Well I'm, I'm older than everybody else, I can't jump around, Like those young people, I don't feel part of things, That shouldn't be thought, Everybody matters, Everybody, Everybody is important, Everybody is valuable, And then he also,

Draws this out, Like he does in verse 21, The eye cannot say to the hand, I don't need you, And the head cannot say to the feet, I don't need you, On the contrary, Those parts of the body, That seem to be weaker, Are indispensable, Parts that we think, Are less honourable, We treat with special honour, This also implies, That no one can say, Well I can manage without you, And of course, If we try and live, The Christian life, In a sort of lone ranger, Way, That's what we're saying, I can live the Christian life, I don't need you guys, And I don't need you guys, And I don't need you guys, But, Paul say, That's not, The way the Christian life runs, We need each other, As a community, We need each other, As a community, That's why it is so important, To be embedded in a church, Have you noticed, How difficult it is, To keep up the spiritual life,

[31 : 41] If you try and do it, All on your own, Just you and your Bible, And prayer, I mean sometimes, That's all you have, But have you noticed, How much more vital it is, If you are, Part of the body, And what other people, Can bring to you, In conversation, Perhaps in prayer for you, In words of encouragement, In just their being there sometimes, Do you notice, How much you need that, And how silly it is to say, Well I don't need that, I don't need you, I don't need you, We need one another, No one can say, I can manage without you, And the teaching of the body, Says, Well there may be, Less presentable parts, There may, But these parts, In a sense, Now, Come to a position, Of special honour, The aged, The vulnerable, The less abled, Let me tell you, A story about, A friend of mine,

This is Deeside Church, To mention before, A gentleman there, Who I, I would call, Down syndrome, I don't know, Whether there's a proper, Way of expressing that, Believing man, He, He, Obviously, Doesn't have, Capacities to do things, That many other people have, But what this, Young man brings, To the church, Is invaluable, In his, Responses to things, In what he draws, Out of other people, In, In what you see, In him, That, Others of us, Would sort of, Camouflage, And cover up, So it wasn't so obvious, A part, Deserving of special honour, I hope you can see, What I'm trying to say, With that particular, Illustration, There may be, As Paul says here, This is his language, The parts that are, Unpresentable,

Are treated with, Special modesty, And, Them, God has combined, The members of the body, And has given greater, Honour, To the parts, That lacked it, So that there should, Be no division in the body, But that its parts, Should have equal concern, For one another, Gift language, So I'm just saying, Gift language is part of the body, Gift language, Is interchangeable, With part of the body language, And your gift, Boiling it right down, Is, What way you are a blessing, To other people, That's what your gift is, It's what way you are a blessing, To other people, Third, Third, Principle here, Which is, What, 1 Corinthians 12 says, The use of gifts, Is validated, Or invalidated, By the attitude, And motive, Of the gifted one, Which is why, Paul doesn't go, From 1 Corinthians 12, Straight to 1 Corinthians 14, Although he could do, But he puts in 1 Corinthians 13, In the middle, Which is all about love, And you see the significance, Of the point about love, He says, I might have amazing gifts, Amazing giftedness, I might, He says, Speak in the tongues, Of men and angels,

But, You, You bring into the equation, Love, And you bring it in, By means of, Multiplication, Not addition, So you take your, Your gift, Let's say the gift is, Three and a half million, And you take your love, And you multiply it, And if your love is zero, What's three and a half million, Times zero? Zero, You don't add it, You multiply it, Yeah? And he says that, Whatever the size of the gift, If there's no love in it, It's invalidated, It comes to nothing, So that's very important, You know, Somebody comes along to the church, They say, I'm very gifted in this, You say, Okay, Well let's see you doing it, But if they're doing it, Without love, If it's all done selfishly, Proudly, Arrogantly, Inconsiderately, Well actually, It comes up to nothing, The use of gifts, Is validated, Or invalidated, By the attitude, And motive, Of the gifted one, Love is absolutely important, Do you notice it, In Romans 12, At the end, Went through the list of gifts, And he said, Let love be sincere, And the body, Builds itself up in love, And of the three things, That he mentions, The greatest of them, Faith and hope, The greatest of them, Is love, That might sound a bit soppy, It's not meant to be soppy, What it's saying is, A community, With genuine,

[36 : 40] Deep, Costly, Precious, Consistent, Love, Is what, Jesus is interested in building, And he gives the examples, Doesn't he, Of tongues, And prophecy, And faith, And financial giving, And he says, It needs love, No matter how impressive I am, Or learned, Or powerful, Or successful, So we might have such and such, A person who's, Got a so and so, Ministries incorporated, So and so, Chain of churches, That he's founded, He stands up here, And if he has no love, If he has no love, He's zero, Without humble, Caring, Selfless, Kind, Love, I am just, A clanging gong, Or a chocolate teapot, Think of a chocolate teapot, Is actually no use at all, Because gifts, Are predominantly,

About, What use I can be, What I can impart, To other people, Okay, Fourth thing, And, I can't remember, Whether there's four or five, I think this is, Getting towards the end, Don't worry Tim, We're okay, So the lists of gifts, The lists of gifts, There are lists of gifts, But I want to say, They're not flat lists, Now what do I mean, By a flat list, So think of a shopping list, And you've just got, All the things down on there, And you just get them all, Get all those things, And you don't have any sense, Of that being more important, Than that, Or that being, Something that I used to need, But I don't need any more, You don't know anything, Of that at all, It's just a flat list, The lists of gifts, Are not flat lists, They are not flat, In historical development, So, You might like to check, My logic on here, But I noticed, In 1 Corinthians 12, Verse 28, He says,

He puts order there, He says, In the church, God has appointed, First, Apostles, Second, Prophets, Third, Teachers, Now why does it say, One, Two, Three, That's a good question, Isn't it, There seems to be, Some sort of order there, If we turn to, Ephesians 2, 20, There's a slightly, Different way, Of, Putting this, Into this, Context, Ephesians 2, 20, Says, Talks about, The church, Being built, On the foundation, Of the apostles, And prophets, With Christ Jesus, Himself, As the chief cornerstone, In him, The whole building, Joined together, And rises to become, A holy temple, So he does put, An order there, In terms of, A foundation, And a cornerstone, So you don't have, Lots of cornerstones, You have one, And that's Jesus Christ, And you have a foundation,

Of the apostles, And prophets, And you don't have, Lots of foundations, You don't go on, To the second story, And build another foundation, And the third story, Build another, You just have, A foundation once, That's the theory, Isn't it David, You just lay the foundation, Once, That's correct architecture, So I want to say, That the lists, When they talk about, Apostles and prophets, They're not saying, Every successive generation, You should be able, To look down the list, And go and shop for those, Because there's something, Foundational, About the apostles, And prophets, So if there are, Foundational gifts, At least some of the gifts, You don't keep shopping for, So the foundational gifts, Are not continually repeated, So the ability to write, The bible, Which is what, An apostle, Basically has, That can't be, Endlessly repeated, Oh sorry, I pressed the wrong button, And I,

Rather suspect, That the same is true, Of prophecy, In that, I don't, I don't, Think I understand, I don't, Think I understand, All of this, It would be silly, To claim that I did, But it seems to me, That the role of the prophets, Is in terms of revealing, Bible truth, Before the bible, Had been completed, And I think, There must be, A historical implication, That now we have a bible, That the role of the prophets, Is different, If I put it, In that very cautious way, And let me, Perhaps more controversially, Say in terms of tongues, It seems to me, There is a historical development here, In that on the day of Pentecost, Each heard a tongue, In his own language, So it crossed, The communication barrier, But when we get to Corinth, Later, Tongues, Are clearly behind, A communication barrier, You need an interpretation, To cross it, So it seems to me, There is some sort of, Historical movement there,

[41 : 48] And that is perhaps, A little bit more, Of a controversial thing to say, Not flat lists, In terms of desirability, And usefulness, And in 1 Corinthians 14, It does seem to me, That Paul is at pains to say, Some gifts, Are much more useful, Than others, So, The burden of what he seems to be saying, In 1 Corinthians 14, He speaks to a church, Where they are big on tongues, But he doesn't say, Well, Don't do tongues at all, But he does say, I do want you to understand, The nuance of this, The subtlety of it, That, There are better things, Than tongues, Than tongues, Follow the way of love, And eagerly desire, Spiritual gifts, Especially, Verse 1, Especially, The gift of prophecy, And then verse 4, He says, He who speaks in a tongue, Edifies himself, But he who prophesies,

Edifies the church, That's better, And he says it in verse 5, I would like every one of you, To speak in tongues, But I would rather, Have you prophesy, He who prophesies, Is greater, Than one who speaks in tongues, And this is an interpretation, And the point being, That the church, Needs to be built up, And you find, A repetition of that, Exact thought, In verse 18, I thank God, I speak in tongues, More than all of you, But in the church, I would rather speak, Five intelligible words, To instruct others, Than 10,000 words in a tongue, He's putting a, A hierarchy, If you like, It would be more, Useful to say to somebody, I've been praying for you, I've been praying for you, That's five words, More important, To say something like that, Or Jesus died for you, Don't forget it, Six words, Be more, Useful, For the building up of the body, To say that, Than to speak 10,000 words in a tongue,

And the thing that he's judging it by, Is does it build up, The church, Build up the church notice, Doesn't say build up individuals, He says build up the church, And he keeps repeating, That phrase, We don't, I think we find that very difficult, To get the idea of, Because we so think, Individualistically, We think me and the Lord, Me and my life, But Paul is thinking, Group wise, He's saying, What makes this, A strong, Loving group, What builds up the community, That is of value, And the more, There is of that, The better it is, And that, He repeats, In all those verses, For example, In verse 20, Where he says, Where he says, Why did I put 20?

No idea, I think that was probably, Verse 19, And, Did I put down verse 31 correctly? You can all prophesy, In turn, So that everyone, May be instructed, And encouraged, It's the instruction, And encouragement, That is the, Thing that he's looking for, The group, Matters, Being built up, Matters, The gifts, God gives, Are all important, But all are meant, To contribute, To that purpose, And therefore, He says, You should be seeking, The greater gifts, And, Not flat lists, In terms of flexibility, In terms of personal growth, Personal development, Interchange of roles, And movement of people, So for example, The elder who was here, Before Chris, Was Rod Thomas, In his previous church, He was a deacon, Same guy,

When he comes here, He fits in as an elder, And in the church, That he's gone to, I'm not sure, There's a deacon, Is he a deacon in D's side, We don't know, But the same person, Can fit in, To a different situation, In a different way, So there's a flexibility there, I'll move on, We're getting competition, Aren't we, From next door, How does the church, Grow and progress, It grows and progresses, As each part, Does its work, Why should I personally, Get involved with church, I can live the Christian life, Quite well on my own, You can't say to others, I don't need you, What is the way forward, For Calvary church, As the years go by, It is the growth, Of all gifts, Serving, And especially speaking, God's truth lovingly, That is the way, The spirit is shown, And the word is ministered, And my, Closing, Text,

[46 : 46] Was 1 Peter chapter 4, Which says, Verses 7 to 11, The end of all things is near, Therefore be clear minded, And self controlled, So that you can pray, Above all, Love each other deeply, Because love covers over, A multitude of sins, Offer hospitality to one another, Without grumbling, Each one should use, Whatever gift he has received, To serve others, Faithfully administering God's grace, In its various forms, If anyone speaks, He should do it as speaking, The very words of God, If anyone serves, He should do it with the strength, That God provides, So that in all things, God may be praised, Through Jesus Christ, To him be the glory, And the power, Forever and ever, Amen.