

Gift - get involved

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[0:00] 1 Peter 4. 1 Peter 4. And we'll go. 1 Peter 4, verse 10.

! Let's stand, shall we, for the reading of God's Word. 1 Peter 4, verse 10. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Amen. Please be seated. It says, as every man hath received the gift. Notice here it says that every believer, every believer has a gift.

Everyone has a part to play. Everyone has a part to play, is called to the ministry. This is talking about spiritual gifts.

Every believer. God's given every believer his God-given capacities to serve, to be used of God. God gives to believers gifts to equip them, to empower, to enable them to minister, to serve one another.

[1:09] And here's how someone has summed it up. Spiritual gifts. And there's a lot of S words here. Notice this. Spiritual gifts are supernatural abilities, sovereignly given to strengthen his saints, who are to serve, minister one to another, being good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

So notice that. I might just say that again. Spiritual gifts are supernaturally given, sovereignly given, to strengthen his saints, God's people, to serve, minister one another, being good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

It's wonderful, isn't it, that we are called and equipped to serve as stewards of God's grace. He's graciously given you his gift.

And it's manifold. There's various, there's varying kinds of graces he's given us, gifts. He's graciously given you his gift.

If you don't deserve it, he's kindly, graciously, in his mercy, given it. And every believer, every member of the body of Christ is indispensable. We need one another.

[2:32] There's a mutual, there's an interplay, there's this kind of codependency that we have.

We're dependent. We're dependent on one another. As God's people, we've all got some ministry. We've all got something to do, to be, to give. And every member's involvement maximizes spiritual growth.

As we see in Ephesians 2, verse 10. And the context there, of course, is it says, For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. And then it goes on to say, For we, who are saved, not by our works, but by his grace through faith, we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

The works don't save us, but as believers we do work. The work follows on from the saving, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in there. Now, God's gifts to us are meant for us to give to others.

[3:42] Notice, as we saw in that first verse, to minister the same one to another. He has given us gifts, so, even so, minister the same one to another.

But, every man has received the gift, you've got it, so, minister it, use it, play your part.

Like we're in a big symphony, and everyone's got their, might be just the little flute player, or the, you know, the violinist, or the trombone, or the, you know, what's that one called?

All the different parts, all the different ministries, all the different players in that symphony, they're all needed to make that perfect sound that the conductor brings out of that sheet of paper.

It's just amazing, isn't it? And we are a symphony like that, all playing together in harmony, in having our different giftings and capacities. And there's a challenge for us, every believer.

[4:47] That means me and you, doesn't it? Every man, every believer, to find that outlet for your faith. Find that giving out of your faith that God has given you to give out.

To find your way to serve Him. And ultimately to build His kingdom. The purpose of God's gifts for you are to minister by His power. For the work of God, His church, to grow, to be effective.

Where do we use our gift? With one another. Notice it says, minister the same. What God's given you to give, minister it, serve it to one another.

To one another. So, it's not that we're given to kind of hold our little gift. Like, you know, you might, when you see kids at gift giving times, they, oh, that's mine.

You know, and they want theirs as well. You know, they grab for it and they want to unwrap it and then they hold it and don't want to share it. But our gifts are given to share. It's contrary, isn't it, to the traditional kind of gifts that people get to keep for themselves.

[5:58] Our gifts are for us to receive but then to give away. To use, to employ. So, so that we can minister to one another. So, it's so we can serve.

We're given gifts. It's so we can minister that He gives us His gifts. And really, we ought to view ministry not so much as something that is done to us and blesses us, which it can be.

But more so, it's ministry is something we do to others. Each one to one another. Each one, one another to one another.

That blesses others. That's ministry. And that's what we call to. God gives us His abilities and callings and gifts and capacities so we can give to others around us.

So we can bless the church, the body. And if we love Christ, we'll love what He loves. What is that? It's His church. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.

[7:03] Christ loved the church. He gave Himself for it. Christ died for the church, His people. He asked us to live for it. Christ died for the church.

He asked us to live for it. And every believer has a gift. He's blessed each one of us. Everyone, every man, every believer has been blessed.

His people are blessed with His giftings and with different abilities and callings. And so it's our job to minister to each other. We're gifted to give.

We see 1 Corinthians 12, verse 12 through 25. We'll just talk through some of these verses. 1 Corinthians 12. You might want to turn there, but God willing, we'll have it for you to see as well. 1 Corinthians 12 from verse 12. It's a body. The church is pictured as a body, the body of Christ.

[8:02] And for as the body is one and as many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ. And for by one spirit we're all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit.

We that are different and diverse and Gentiles and Jews, bond or free, from whatever backgrounds and cultures and history we come from, we've been made one together, united.

So drink into one spirit. In verse 14 it says, for the body is not one member but many. If the foot shall say, because I'm not the hand, I'm not the body, is it therefore not of the body?

Of course not. The hand is not the foot, the foot is not the hand, but they belong together. Then it goes on, verse 16. And if the ear shall say, because I'm not the eye, I'm not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?

The ear and the eye are different, but they work together, don't they? They work in coordination. They work because they're both of the body, they're both essential.

[9:20] Verse 17, it says, if the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling? The nose, the hearing, the seeing, the smelling, it's all different yet works together.

Likewise, the body of Christ, we're all different. You know, I'd hate to imagine a church where you're all like Andrew Craig. It'd be so boring. You know, it'd be just, you're all different, you're all very special.

And we all need to be different, don't we? We don't want to be clones of one another. We want to be different and used of God in whatever God's gifted us to do. And then we see verse 18.

But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? If it were all just one, if it was just one, then we'd be missing out.

But it's manifold, it's diverse, we're different, we're many, yet one. Verse 20, it says, but now are they many members, yet one body?

[10:27] Verse 21, and the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. We need one another. We need each other. You know, some people are sandpaper Christians that they're a bit rough on us, but they help us.

Don't they? I've had that experience, haven't you? And sometimes we can help one another, and we all learn together. Iron sharpens iron, doesn't it? Clash, clash, but there's a blessing, there's a benefit.

And then we see from verse 22. Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary. Even those members that are more feeble.

Now those inner parts, those inner organs that never see the light of day, yet you'd be in big trouble if they weren't working, wouldn't you? You hear some stories of certain systems, the digestive system and things, if they weren't working, you'd be in big trouble, wouldn't you?

And yet, so they're all very important. Even those parts of our body that seem, as it were, more feeble. Or as it goes on to say, those that are less honourable.

[11:37] Verse 23, and those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. So again, like we know, our brother had a heart attack.

You know, people don't see your heart, but you have to hope it's in good shape, because bang, if it's not. And, you know, those parts that might seem less honourable, they've got a more abundant honour, because without them we'd be in strife.

Those uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. So those parts that don't see the light of day, they're very essential for our body to function. And likewise in the church, it's sometimes those ones behind the scenes, those ones that are scurrying here and there, doing things, making the projector work, or whatever it be, those things behind the scenes in the kitchen.

I know we've got a feast waiting for us after church today. So we need you to help play your part here and eat that food. You know, there's very different parts, isn't there? Without them we'd be missing something that's special, that's important.

The people that drive the bus, the people that prepare the studies and bring them, and the people that organise the prayer meeting and make it happen, and bless one another. The people that prepare the ladies' meeting coming through the week.

[12:57] The people that organise when we have the men's breakfast, for example. When we have a bite to eat and a time to share, and encourage one another as men. All of these things are very special and important.

The youth ministry, when it recommences, it's very important. The people labouring away in the back room here, in the children's program, it's very special, it's very important. It plays a vital role. Even those that might help in the creche, if we might have little babies present. The English language classes. What a ministry! It's a total outreach program.

To bring people in, to communicate with people, help them benefit in a practical way by learning English as a second language. And yet, what an opportunity to share the gospel with them.

And we don't hold back. I commend our workers on the Thursday program with the English language outreach. They don't hold back. It's Bible-centred. There's Bible verses and salvation messages that are imparted to those students who come.

[14:01] What an outreach. It's an amazing blessing. They're the kind of things that, well, they're sort of out of the way. They're not seen on a Sunday, on a Sunday morning. If Sunday morning is that which we can

commit and we can't get to some of the other things, it's not to say those other things are not important.

It all benefits the life of the church. It makes our church vibrant and purposeful and reaching out. The ones who make those phone calls to people or send a letter of encouragement.

It's all important ministry. The people that visit sick people. You know, there's some people in hospital. I heard some folk in our number just rolled up.

And they weren't even here on Sunday and heard about Brother Bobby. Some of these folk, and they just turned up and showed love to Brother Bobby by visiting him in hospital.

I mean, I do my bit, my best, but if it all depended on me, that's how to kill a pastor, isn't it? Kill a pastor, let him do it all.

[15:07] Let him be the one who does this and does that and does it all from A to Z. That's how you kill your pastor because he just gets overburdened and overloaded.

You burn them out. And so I thank God for men and women in this church who lend their energies and labor for the gospel and put their strength and heart into that which counts, reaching out to souls and ministering to people in need.

That's a blessing, and I praise God for you. Thank you for each one in your humble and quite achiever kind of ways that you do minister. Those that are praying, you might not get to the meeting, but you're praying.

You're praying when you get the prayer email. You get information about missionaries. You're contributing to that. There's many ways we can all minister for God's blessing and for the mutual benefit.

And so we go on, verse 24, So what it's saying here is that every part has a quality, has a necessity of function, and it has such that God has brought us together.

[16:24] He's knitted us together in love. He's made us to be one people who came from all over the place, from nations far and wide. He's brought us together to be here today as his people, as his blood-bought body of people.

And then we see, verse 25, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. Not that we should have some dividing, but a uniting. We should be the uniting church. Amen? That's what we should be. Uniting. Not just uniting in any old fashion such that it's just a mishmash and a fuzzy kind of doctrine, and it's all airy-fairy kind of uniting.

But we're uniting in grace and truth. We're uniting in our strong testimony. We're uniting in sound doctrine.

We're uniting in godliness and love and grace. That's how we should be uniting together, as God's uniting church, as it were.

[17:30] Uniting in the harmony of the Spirit, in the godliness of faith, of those who know true salvation. By God's redeeming power, we're uniting in that fashion.

And so we've been gifted with and by the Spirit. That every part has a function and needs to function. God doesn't want his body to be dysfunctional.

You know, you hear about when our body gets dysfunctional, we go to the hospital. But we don't want to be such a body. We want to be a body that's fruitful, that's functional, that's efficient, and that's got a quality to it that's precious and good.

So minister your gift, says Peter, and it says there, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Peter says everyone's got a gift.

He says minister the gift. And he says do it as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. It's saying here that we're entrusted with something we need to take care of and use wisely.

[18:33] Many are unengaged in the work of the ministry. But we're all called to some ministry. Everyone is called to some ministry. We're called to be stewards. Now a steward is something you give to someone to take charge of.

God has given something into our hand that he wants us to make use of. And each one, you, you, you, you have been given a gift.

God says you have been given a gift. He says, as every man has received. God's gift. Exercise it. Use it. As a steward. As one entrusted to manage the property of another. Every good thing we have comes from our Father. Everything we have that is ours is by God's grace. And it's intended to be used for his purpose. The totality of our existence is not just us. It's not been given for us to keep to ourselves, but for us to help others. And it's been said that really when you help others, you help yourself.

[19:38] And this is true. As we know, sometimes when we might have a burden, we might be having a hard time in life. Sometimes that's just the time we should be giving out.

Instead of having a pity party and no one else is invited. Woe is me. You know, I have those. Now and again. But not very often, really.

But, you know, we can all have those moments, can't we? Where we think, oh, I'm having so hard done, boy. But sometimes we can, it's getting, stepping outside of that sort of selfishness, isn't it? Stepping outside of that self-preoccupation with our self and our own little microcosm that is the kind of extent of our skin.

And think of others. The totality of our existence is not just us. We're here for a reason. We're here to bless others. To be a blessing. We're blessed to be a blessing.

[20:42] And it's been said, when you help others, you help yourself. And this was found during the bombing of London in World War II. There was some research done as to the people that went through the bombing of London in World War II.

It was found that people suffering from nervous disorders found unexpected health by forgetting their own troubles and ministering to the terrible needs of victims of the air raids.

That's a blessing, isn't it? They had their own woes and worries. Their house got bombed just like others. They had their injuries and trauma of the bombing.

And, you know, every little noise you thought it was another bomber going over can imagine. They forgot their own troubles by ministering to the terrible needs of victims of the air raids.

And likewise, when you minister your gift as a good steward of the grace of God, you bless people and you bless yourself. You know, I know some have said, as I've experienced, when you prepare something to give, even if there might be only a small number, that just the opportunity to prepare something helps you to learn and grow and be blessed and encouraged.

[22:03] And when you step outside of your comfort zone, and those that are going the door knocking, you know, they get so many knockbacks, but it's that one that listens, isn't it? That makes all the difference.

And it's worth wearing out the shoe leather. It's worth putting the energy in, knowing that you're being used of God. And even when you're rejected, you're being used of God.

Because they'll remember that message that you gave them. They'll remember those words. There will be condemnation to them while they reject it, yet it might still be a conviction for them that God works on and brings to fruition.

And when you bless others, you bless yourself. And what's more, you bless God. You please God when you do something for Him. And you have a gift.

You have a gift. Use it for the glory of God and for the fulfilment of mission. And we're told it brings further blessing in that the body will grow.

[23:04] The body will extend and be edified. Edified, it will be built up in love. When every part is working effectually, the body is strong and healthy. And it leads to the godly growth of the church.

Now, we may never be a mega church here in our setting here. One day maybe.

Not likely, is it, really? But we know that God helping us, there'll be a godly edifying of the church.

There'll be a building up of the saints. There'll be a building up, brick upon brick upon brick.

There'll be an extension, an extending, a maturing, a strengthening of faith, a strengthening of godliness, of resolution, of fervour for Christ, for zeal for His kingdom.

And it says, from whom? From the head, our Lord, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplier. You know, the knee bone connected to the foot bone and the foot bone, you know, connected to the toe bone or whatever it says.

[24:12] We're all connected, aren't we? There's an interplay. There's an interconnection. We fitly joined together, compacted together. We made such that every joint supplies something. You know, the nerves and tissues and tendons, the bloodstream, we're all interconnected and made to function as a connected people.

For the effectual working in the measure of every part, every part maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. We're building up one another in love.

Praise God. When you exercise your gift and serve faithfully, there'll also be a future reward. Not that we work for a reward, but wow, won't it be good to get a little bit of something extra when the time comes?

Not that we're working for our salvation, but wow, there's crowns ahead. There's blessings, there's rewards, there's commendation. There's our master's well done ahead. There's that future reward for faithful service.

So find a place of service and serve well. Faithfulness will be rewarded. You know, it's hard yakka. Day by day, Sunday by Sunday, week by week, it can be easy to be weary in well-doing.

[25:28] But we've got to press through the weariness barrier, don't we? Press through the pain barrier. Get your second wind, as it were. Faithfulness will be rewarded. It's been told how when Queen Elizabeth has her official birthday, you know, she has the birthday honours.

And some years back, she conferred honours on a number of her subjects. And one was a 60-year-old postman in northern Wales. A postman, a postie.

And this fellow had the unroyal name of Jones. You know, he was honoured, Mr Jones. Wow. Just a postie. I know my uncle, Tony, was a postie in England.

And imagine posting letters in the dreary, miserable weather of England most of the time. You know, the miserable, what's it called? The drizzle all the time.

And then winter, you get the sludge and the sloshy snow and the ice and the mucky, horrible place, England, as much as I hark from there.

[26:36] But, you know, thank God I'm not living there anymore. But, you know, here was this 60-year-old postie called Jones. And Jones was honoured as this postman in Wales, which would have been like England, because Jones had done one thing well.

Jones came from a family delivering Welsh mail for 150 years. He had a heritage there as a postie of many generations. And it says that the one thing that Queen Elizabeth honoured Jones for was this reason.

He had not missed a day's service in 43 years. 43 years! Not missed a day! And he got the mail through despite snow and storms and floods.

And the Queen bestowed the British Empire Medal upon him, expressing the gratitude of the nation. Now, wow, it's pretty amazing, isn't it? Just a humble postie. But if an earthly majesty would bestow such a superlative honour on a man for faithfulness in such a simple task as delivering the mail, how much more?

How much more will the majesty of heaven? How much more will the king of the ages? How much more will the king of glory? Will be more diligent to make certain each of his subjects is awarded some gracious and proper commendation for faithful service.

[28:08] Of course he will. Of course he will, the king of heaven. He awaits our entrance into his presence. And when our Lord reviews our works, as we look back on a life lived, it won't be so much the quantity, but the quality.

Not so much how much, but what kind of works have we done? Of course we know the scriptures tell us of the testing of works of some have just a pile of ashes in their hands.

Word pays double. Some will have gold, silver, precious stones. Look further in Romans 12, just another passage on the spiritual gifts. And I know I'm pushing time here, actually.

I'm being a bit too ad-libbing here. But Romans 12, verse 4, we see through verse 13. It tells us more of this members of body, of the one body.

For we as members in one body, all members have not the same office. All members have not the same office. So we being many are one body in Christ and everyone members one of another.

[29:21] We're interlinked, interconnected. We need one another. Verse 6. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, where the prophecy let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith. Gifts are differing. God's given grace. He's given us each something, something different. Prophecy according to the proportion of faith. Then ministry. Let us wait on our ministering. He that teacheth on teaching. Wait on that service he's given to you. Wait on God. Ask God to help you strengthen that ministry. Ask God to enable you. Wait upon the Lord. Seek to extend and increase your capacity. He that teacheth on teaching. Or he that exhorteth on exhortation. He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity. Whether it's ministry, teaching, exhorting, which is encouraging one another. Or giving. He says wait on that ministry.

[30:22] He says work on that. Let it grow. Let it blossom. Let it be increasing. And then it says, he that ruleth with diligence.

There's administrative work. He that showeth mercy. Showing kindness and grace to people. Meeting needs. With cheerfulness. Let it be with cheerfulness. Not because you're feeling constrained. Not because you're feeling like you're under some yoke or some bondage. But let it be cheerfully that you give. And that you show mercy. And then it says, verse 9. It says, let love be without dissimulation. Without hypocrisy. Let's love honestly. Let's love as Christ has called us to love. To love as his church. To love as he would love. To love as he has loved. Let us love one another. Let it be not put on but real. Genuine love. And abhor that which is evil.

[31:18] Cleave to that which is good. So hate that which is evil. And cling to that which is good. Then it says, I might have missed some of the verses here. But be kindly affection one to another.

With brotherly love. In honour preferring one another. One another. One another. One another. Love. Love. Love. Honour. Honour. Honour. Prefer. Prefer. Prefer. Verse 11. Not slothful in business. Fervent in spirit. Serving the Lord. Don't be slothful. Be diligent. Rejoicing in hope. Patient in tribulation. Continuing instant in prayer. Distributing to the necessity of saints. Given to hospitality. What a smorgasbord there. Romans 12. Take that home for homework today. Be kindly affection. Preferring. Honouring. Loving. Not slothful. But rather the opposite.

[32:12] Which is diligent. Being committed. Be fervent in spirit. Serving the Lord. Rejoicing. Our service is glad service. Serve the Lord with gladness.

Amen. And continuing in prayer. Be prayerful. Seek God's face. And have that heart to give. I issue a call today. To believers. To find and exercise your gift. Find out how God has gifted you. And deploy your gifts for God's glory. We have got a little kind of questionnaire that I can issue later. To those that are interested. I know Pastor Adam and I worked on that. And Adam developed it. And it was distributed before. If you've not seen one. You might want to take it. And you know. There's various ones you can look on the internet. Excuse me. Spiritual gifts inventories. Excuse me a moment. Somebody put that there. Yeah. That's a gift isn't it?

[33:21] Serving. Ministry of helps. Deploy your gifts to God's glory. It's a call to action today. I don't want you to miss out.

On what God has gifted you for. I want to provoke you to love and to good works. To use your gifts. To participate as God has gifted you. And that we have a culture of service amongst us. And that we won't just stop. But we'll keep on keeping on. We'll keep extending. We'll be exceeding abundant. Above. We'll have that taking it to another level. And that in the power of the Spirit. You can say I'm going to minister in this church. Through and in and beyond this church. Find your gift. Make yourself available. Really the message today is about gifts.

[34:20] But it's also about getting involved. It's twofold. No matter what your situation. There's something you can do. You might think. Oh look.

I'm not an upfront person. I'm just a quiet Christian. You can pray. You can pray. You might say. Oh look. I've never really opened my mouth.

And witnessed to somebody. You can get a tract. And put it in a letter box. Can't you? There's things we can do. Every one of us. Every believer. There's opportunities.

There's people with needs all around us. I can only spread myself so thin. And we need one another. We need to help one another. I'd like to do more. Myself. But.

We've all got limitations. But. God helping you. He'll help you to do what you can do. And it won't become a burden. That you can't realize. He'll give you the grace to make it happen. And he'll help you to exercise your gift.

[35:16] Or your ministry. Towards one another. The gifts God gives to us. Again. Are not our own. But are meant to use to minister to others. We're created for community.

Now really we are. A community of God's people. Aren't we? That's what. In Acts 2. And 4. They were together. They ministered. They were together.

We need to be that family of God. And we're dependent on each other. So let's. Have that. Heart. For one another. To engage. In the church.

God helping us. To equip us. And you might say. Again. Look. I'm. I don't feel ready. I don't feel able. I want to help you.

I'm here to help you. And. Let me know. How. How you'd like more help. As an individual believer. You might think. Look. I feel God. God's leading me here.

[36:17] But I'm not ready. You know. There's opportunities for learning. There's studies. There's. Places we can. Guide you. To help you. To strengthen you. To help you to learn.

To grow. And you know. God helping us. We want to have. You know. More of a. A discipleship. Focus. In some. Fashion. We want to help. People to strengthen their faith. And to get.

A stronger standing. To get. An unleashing. I know. Years ago. I read a book called. Unleashing the church. And it was about.

People finding their gifts. And callings. And it really did speak to me. That. Church is much. Much more. Than just Sunday morning. Or Sunday night. Or any other meeting.

We can go to. It's much. Much more. Than the meetings. It's about. Understanding the plan. Of God. For your life. And finding. How you can serve. Using your gifts. As part of a body.

[37:12] And the church. Is God's design. Get involved. In your church. God has made. The church. He's. He's. Christ died. For the church. He loved it. So much. And God has.

Made us. To. To be such a people. It matters. It matters. To the heart. Of God. A people. Belonging to God. Building relationships. Together. Exercising grace.

And truth. Together. Empowered. As a people. Together. With spiritual gifts. Called to minister. As good stewards. Again.

May I remind you. Of Peter's charge. Of Peter's charge. It says. I don't have that one. Just here. But. As good stewards.

Of the manifold. Grace of God. Minister your gift. God. So. When it talks about stewardship. There's a sense where. There's an accountability here. One day. We'll be called.

[38:06] To give an account. Of our stewardship. Now. I. It. It. Brings it. Right home. To us. When we think. That one of our number. Bang.

Was dead. Thank God. He was resuscitated. God. But. Bobby. Could be gone now. He could be receiving. His rewards. He's probably feeling like. He's missed out.

Because he's got brought back. But. You know. There's a sense where. Time is. Finite. Isn't it? We've only got so much of it. And. Some of you might think. I'm a fair bit younger than this preacher.

But. We've got. There's no telling. How much time we have got. Is there? There's an accountability ahead. One day. We'll be called. To give an account. Of our stewardship. So. May we use our spiritual gifts wisely.

In the service for our master. May our lives bring glory to God. Every believer has received his gifts. They're given by God. For us to use for God.

[39:00] Be a channel. For God's grace. Sometimes that channel. Can get blocked. Can't it? It's a bit like the. The gutters at home. You've got to get your hand in.

And scrape out all the sludge. And leaves. So that the channel works. The gutter flows. It's like that with us. Isn't it? I know for myself. That I can get clogged.

And. Choked up. And. Not flowing. Like I ought to. Be a channel. For God's grace. Ask God to help. Remove the blockages. Don't bury a talent.

And hear God's voice. God's call. Like Samuel ultimately did. I think I might have missed. Putting that one there. But. I've got a bit mixed up. With my slides there.

I think. But. 1 Samuel 3. Verse 10. It says. And the Lord stood. And called us at other times.

Samuel. Samuel. Then Samuel answered. Speak. For thy servant hearer.

[39:56] Speak. For thy servant hearer. He said. Speak Lord. It took a few times for. Samuel. To. For God to get his attention. But ultimately.

He did. Are we sensitive to God's leading. Sometimes. God's got to say your name. Repeatedly.

Hey. I'm getting your attention here. I'm talking to you here.

I'm talking to you. What. Is God. Wanting to do. How is he leading us. What is he calling us to do.

To be. Will we respond like Samuel did.

Speak Lord. God. I'm listening. I'm ready to hear your voice. I'm your servant. And to be. Such that will serve others. As active. Participators. In the mission of God.

And we know that he will enable you. When God's people serve in their area of gifting. They.

Function much less in their own strength. And much more in the power of his spirit.

[40:51] May God grant us such a burden. May we step up for God. And. This is not to. Condemn anyone. This is to encourage.

This is to uplift you. This is for you to say. Actually. I have got a gift. And I know what I can do. I just need to. Kind of dust it off a bit. And get it into action again.

You might have that thinking. Even now. Think. Wow. It has been on the shelf a little bit. But I want to get it out. And use it again. And God's church can then function well. Under his headship.

As we see. Ephesians 4.16. It says. From whom. Christ. The whole body. Fitly joined together. And compacted by that which every joint. Supplier.

According to the effectual working and the measure. Of every part. Make an increase of the body.

Unto the edifying of itself in love. What a picture. A functioning body. A functioning body.

[41:47] Not a body that's in. On the. On the deathbed. But a body that's. Ready to move. And act. And be. And do. And go. A functioning body. That every part has a purpose.

And every part. Fits together with every other part. That we can be. Such a symphony. Working in tandem. In harmony. With each other. Like an effective team.

Out on the sports field. We've all got different roles to play. But as we play them. The team. Will win.

And we're called to this. To be God's people. Coming together.

And working together. And going out together. With that burning message. In the power of God's spirit. And it's God's great plan. That we be. A unified. Body.

Lifting up one another. Willing to give more of ourselves. Willing to join the fight. Willing to engage in this great mission. And as James says. Not just being a hearer only.

[42:46] Now we've heard something today. And maybe God's. Saying hey. I'm trying to get your attention. And he's saying your name. Your name. And you can say.

Yes Lord. Speak. Your servant is listening. Your servant hears. And. But yet. Not just be a hearer. But a doer. As James says. Not hearers only.

But a doer. Be a doer. Get involved. And so friends today. Just to wrap up. Let's. Take this as a personal encouragement.

A personal encouragement. That we can be. Such a people. That. As every man has received a gift. You have. You've got it. Already. You don't have to kind of conjure it up.

Or. Kind of manufacture it. Or. Make it. Force yourself into. Something that's not you. To be a square peg in a round hole.

[43:44] But you have received the gift. Each one. Every. Believer. And so minister the same. One to another. Let's have that. Sharing and caring. That giving. That.

Edifying one another. And such that. Ultimately. We'll be. Able to be. Commended. As good stewards. That he will say. Well done. For the manifold. Grace that he's given to you. You've used it well. As every man. Has received the gift. Let us pray. Lord. We bless you. You are the giver of every good. And perfect gift. And Lord. You've gifted every believer. We see that Lord. Your word tells us that. Lord. It's. That is in theory. Lord. Let it be in practice now. That we'll see. And. Seek your face. That which. You have gifted. Each one of us. To be. To do. Lord. Help us to. Seek to find that gift. That you've called. Us to.

[44:39] Extend and use. Help us Lord. To. Dust it off. As it were. If we. Let it lay dormant. That have. Let us not hide. The talent. As it were. To. To not.

Employ it. But Lord. Let us rather be. Used of you. We pray your Holy Spirit. Will quicken again. That which you've called us to be. Quicken it Lord. Make us. Enlivened. And. Alive. As that. Working. Functioning part. Of the body of Christ. Help us to find. Your gifts and callings. Lord. To be stirred up. To be used of you. We pray for each one. That one day. It will be said of us. That we. Will have been. A good and faithful steward. Of that. Which you've given us to. Use. In this lifetime. We live. Bless each one. Lord. We pray for every. Believer. Every heart. Every home. Every circumstance. We're in. Lord. Knowing that you're in charge.

[45:34] And we want to say. Lord. Speak. Your servant. Is listening. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.