

# The Gifts of His Servants

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[ 0 : 00 ] First, let me thank the ladies for doing that little part that goes along.! How many of you like that? I just absolutely love it.

! I mean, I get cold chills on a lot of different things. That's one of them. It's just like, wow! That's a blessing. Open your Bibles this morning to Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11.

Let me read the passage, and then you join me in prayer. And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.

Father God, this morning as we take your word and we hold it in our hands and we put our eyes upon this text, we're reminded of what it says in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, that we need the enabling of the Spirit of God to understand these truths, to revel in them, to rejoice in your goodness, in the wisdom and plan that you ordained, not only in saving us, but in putting us together into a body that we, as a body under the headship of Christ, should bring glory to the Son.

and we're thankful that not only did you put that plan in place, but Lord, you also have chosen to reveal it to us in your word that we, your children, being well informed by the Scriptures and enabled by the Spirit, may know the joy that comes with being part of your body and part of your plan, actively engaged for your glory and looking forward to every opportunity where the name and testimony of Christ might be lifted up.

[ 2 : 11 ] Father, we ask that as we study the Scriptures this morning, that you would be pleased with the attention of our heart and then the outcome of we, who are your children growing in grace, and those who are here that do not know Christ, we ask, Lord, that they would be drawn to the cross.

And that's our prayer together. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Let me begin by giving you a little bit of an overview this morning of what our text is going to address.

We find that Ephesians chapter 4 is an extended passage. Actually, Ephesians chapter 4, verse 1 through 16 is an extended passage in which the apostle wants us to understand how important unity is in the body of Christ.

You'll remember that Ephesians chapter 1 through 3 explains what Christ has done in saving us and then Ephesians chapter 4 through 6 explain what we are to do as a result of our salvation. He saves us. He draws us together for His glory and He then expects us to walk in such a fashion that He is the one that is exalted and glorified in that.

[ 3 : 29 ] And it's very interesting that at the very beginning when Paul then launches into this explanation of, all right, since you've been saved, how are you to live?

The first thing that he comes up with is not, well, here's what your haircut's supposed to be like or here's how you're supposed to wear a tie. He starts out by saying, you who are part of the family of God are to be united.

And when we stop and really think about it, that issue of unity has legs to it. And what I mean by that is that it has a long history because from the very beginning, when sin entered the garden, division and separation and distance from one another was the first outcome of sin, at least publicly. And so we can understand why, in keeping with that pattern that we find there in Genesis, that the first interest of the Spirit of God is that we who are His people understand the priority and the significance of the matter of unity.

And so as we looked here at our lesson, we find out earlier as we've studied that He puts us together and He puts us under His headship and then He gifts us.

[ 4 : 43 ] And we're going to take a couple minutes here and talk about the overview of gifts and then we're going to deal in greater detail with verse 11 that touches on servant gifts.

My primary objective this morning in talking about the issue of gifts is not to go deeply into it because that would take me into the 12s and the 4s. How many of you remember what I said last week?

I'm sure you do. That it's easy to track down where spiritual gifts are because they're stuck with the 12s and 4s. We find it in Romans chapter 12. We find it in 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

We find it in Ephesians chapter 4. And we find it in 1 Peter chapter 4. And so as you look at the broad picture of spiritual gifts, we're not going to take the details together, but we do want to pay attention to the broader look.

And we find that there are actually three different categories of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. There are temporary sign gifts, such as miracles, prophetic utterances, and tongues.

[ 5 : 42 ] And I'm fully persuaded that the purpose of those sign gifts was undeniably so that the ministry of the Word or the message could undeniably articulate it and clearly understood by people.

I'm in the process of reading through the book of John over and over again by way of preparation for eventually, Lord willing, teaching it here. And one of the things that I've been struck by is how many times after Jesus performed a miracle, He said, hey, this miracle is there as a testimony of who I am.

And in the Scriptures, as you look at the subject of temporary sign gifts, you recognize that they came along at particular times when the message was something that needed to be articulated in a very clear and persuasive way in a particular setting, and it happened.

During the time of Moses, during the time of two of the main prophets, and then during the New Testament time, during the time of Jesus and the apostles. We understand, secondly, that there are permanent service gifts, and those are the ones that we note in Romans chapter 12 and 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

There are gifts that are given to individuals in the body, and I recognize the Scriptures make it clear that when a person comes to Christ, they are given specific gifts for service.

[ 7 : 00 ] They're things that are given to you so that you can be, you have a place, you have a part, you have a role in the body of Christ, and there's no such thing, theologically speaking anyway.

Now, what do I mean by theologically speaking? In other words, the Scripture doesn't see disconnected floaters in church. It's like, hey, you are given this gift, and His intention is that you actively employ that gift in doing something in the body of Christ.

There's no intention in Christ's heart for unemployed saints. You're gifted, and you're called to use that in the body. Permanent service gifts are part of what help us together do the work of Christ so that Christ is glorified.

And we do better together than we do alone. Do you understand that? Perfect illustration would be when I, this morning I'm sitting over here on the front and just listening to that little part where the men sing their part and then the women.

And I'm just thinking, so what if the women decided, well, I'm not doing that today? What would happen in the mind of the average guy when he's kind of waiting for that lovely, light little, and I've got an attitude today, and I'm not going to serve Christ by singing my part.

[ 8 : 15 ] And I was like, what is your problem? Would you agree with me, guys? You'd nudge your wife and say, get with it, do your thing. That's part of the role of a pastor is, you know, saying to dear saints, get with it, do your thing, right?

So permanent service gifts are there to minister to the glory of Christ in one another. Well, then there's a third little category of servant gifts, and that is actually service gifts.

There's a third category of gifts. It is the servant gift, and that is what we are looking at in Ephesians 4, verse 11. Paul, as he's writing to the body, talking about the fact that they are to be united into the body of Christ, and they are to use their gifts for God's glory, he also reminds them, I have given you individuals to help you with that.

And that's what we're going to focus on here. As we get into the lesson, one of the things that I want you to mark at the very beginning in verse 11, it says, he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.

And so what we understand is that verse 11 is about servants given to the church by his direct will and for his purposes. Just as the service gifts discussed in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 are given according to divine choice and grace for the body's sake, so those that he appoints to be servants in the body are gifts that are given directly by him.

[ 9 : 42 ] His servants, and I think it's important to remember and understand, are really tokens of his love and evidences of his care. In the larger context, when you think about the things that Christ has given to us, we recognize that those gifts are things that indicate his grace and indicate his love.

I'll never forget, one of the books that I read as a young pastor was a book called *The Christian Ministry* by Charles Bridges written by a Puritan. And in the flow of that book, he made the comment that a pastor is to be a living illustration of the love of Christ.

And when individuals ask themselves that practical question, how do I know that Jesus loves me? One of the thoughts that they should think if a pastor is doing his work is they should think, I know Jesus loves me because my pastor is an illustration of it.

I want you to look over in your Bibles just for a moment to 1 Corinthians chapter 13. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 identifies that we can be pretty brilliant, we can be pretty successful, we can be pretty significant, but without love, we are really not meeting the standard that God has set.

1 Corinthians chapter 13, If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I'm a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. How many of you do not like it when your car alarm goes off?

[ 11 : 08 ] Or try it this way, when somebody else in the neighborhood's car alarm goes off, bam, bam, bam, and you're thinking what? Get out there and fix it.

Well, here's what it says. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and I do not have love, I am an irritating car alarm. If I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and I have all faith so as to remove mountains but do not have love, I'm nothing.

I'm irrelevant. And I think it's important for us to recognize that you may be excellent at this or that or the other thing, but here's the thing that is the gold standard of ministry.

It is a genuine love for those who God has called you to care for. Is that something that happens naturally in any person's heart? What's the answer?

Not at all. It is the work of grace and the power of His Spirit working to mold and shape a person's heart that He cares and genuinely has an affection for those who God's called Him to be a shepherd to.

[ 12 : 15 ] Allow me to make one more comment about those that are called to be gifted servants of the bride. Each of the offices that we are going to look at here and go back to Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11, each of these offices have one particular thing in common and I want you to pay attention to that particular thing.

The apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, shepherds and teachers all are directly connected to the Word. Each office is directly connected to the proclamation and to the teaching of the Word.

Each office calls for a dependence upon the Word and a submission to the Word. At the heart of what God calls each individual to do in the pastoral ministry and in any of the offices that are spoken of here, it is to depend upon His Word and to speak it with clarity and with persuasion.

I am reminded of several different passages that make the matter of the significance of the Word a priority both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. I want you to think with me just for a moment of one of the illustrations that we find over in Deuteronomy chapter 17 verse 18.

Deuteronomy chapter 17 verse 18. You don't need to turn to it, make a reference and go to it later. But in Deuteronomy chapter 17, 18, Moses is speaking to the nation of Israel.

[ 13 : 38 ] He says, listen, when the day comes that you have a king, one of the things that I want the king to do is I want him to make a handwritten copy of the law and he is to keep it by him and he is to rely upon the law so that he follows the law.

It is the law ultimately that reigns in a person's life and reigns in a nation otherwise we are drifting into the abyss. The other passage that I often recite to myself is over in Malachi chapter 2 verse 7 and I want you to turn there just for a moment when you stop and think about what you ought to hear from any man who ever stands behind this pulpit.

It is the word of God. Look at Malachi chapter 2 verse 7. You may want to underline it. How many of you have this underlined in your Bible? I hope you do.

I would encourage you to underline it. I'll never forget. Well, this is a story I tell on myself. I'll never forget being part of a church that was going through the process of calling a pastor and one of the candidates came up to the pulpit and brought with him a stack of about seven different books.

He had the Bible tucked in there somewhere but he kept on making reference to this book, that book, the other book and so where's the word? Where's the word? Where's the word? You look

here in Malachi chapter 2 verse 7 and it spells out what you are to hear from a pastor's mouth.  
[15:09] For the lips of the priest should guard knowledge and people should seek instruction from his mouth. Now here's the part. For he is the, what? Messenger of the Lord of hosts.

He is the one responsible for giving God's message. How many of you know what God's message is? How many of you know what God's message is? It happens to be between the covers of the Bible.

If I came to you and said, God said and I didn't give you a passage and a reference, you know what you ought to think? Where's a rock? Okay. Now you probably give me a break and say, Pastor, are you meaning to speak like that?

Give me a little chance, but here's the deal. Ultimately, those who are shepherds, those who are speaking for Christ, you can identify what they have to say from the Bible itself.

In the New Testament, we find the significance of the word in a number of different places, and you're there in Ephesians chapter 2, so I want you to look back to verse 20 and 27.

[16:11] Ephesians chapter 2, he says this, you're built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.

And we find there that the thing that is the foundation of this teaching of the word is what Jesus said and what the apostles and prophets had to say.

Look at another passage where we see this kind of spelled out, and it's in Acts chapter 27, Acts chapter 20, verse 27. Turn there if you will. I think Ephesians is going to show up on the screen. That's not what I want. Acts chapter 20, verse 27. This is Paul as he is giving his concluding speech to actually the elders of Ephesus.

And there in verse 27, he speaks of his ministry, and he says this, listen, he says, he says this, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

[17:17] In other words, my ministry to you was one that actively declared what God had, you want to know what the pastor's ministry is? It's to tell you what God says.

And then over in verse 32, he says, and now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I think also of 2 Peter, if you'll go there just for a moment, 2 Peter chapter 1, verse 12. And what we're looking at is the fact that pastoral ministry is always directly connected to the word of God and to making it clear.

2 Peter chapter 1, verse 12. It was revealed to them that they were servants not themselves but you. They were serving not themselves but you in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things unto which angels long to look.

They were speaking the word of God to God's people, and that was their ministry. I think also of the passage over in 2 Timothy chapter 4, verse 2, where the apostle is giving his final statements to Timothy who had been serving as the pastor at Ephesus, and as he is summarizing his work, his pastoral work, he says, listen, I give you this charge before Christ will judge the living and the dead.

[18:46] He said, preach the word. And that word preach is an interesting word because what it's saying is announce with earnestness and persuasion and sincerity exactly what God has to say.

Well, let's look a little more carefully at the individual offices. So turn back in your Bible, if you would, to Ephesians chapter 4 and understand that there are two different kinds of offices that are spoken of.

Let's look at them a little more carefully. For one, we understand that there are temporary roles of the apostle and prophet. Christ gave the church, apostles and prophets, both offices, which were for a period of time and were directly connected to establishing the New Testament canon.

How many of you understand what the word canon means? It doesn't mean boom. It means the 29 books that make up the New Testament. That is referred to as the canon of the New Testament. And once the New Testament canon had been established, once those 29 books had been given through apostolic writing to the church, the ministry of the apostle and the prophet then passed from the scene.

[20:03] Now, I want you to understand that what the word apostle means is a sent one. And it was used in the legal terms of the day.

It was used of someone who actually had power of attorney. I remember when Judith and I were younger and we were going to be gone for a period of time and we asked, I think, Jack McEverkin,

for one, to be power of attorney for our children.

If we both had died in a plane wreck, Jack was going to take over. He was going to take care of our children. And we had to sign a legal document that said, in our demise, he has authority to act in our behalf.

A person who was an apostle was one who acted in Christ's behalf. And more particularly, the word was used to refer to a person who was directly commissioned by Christ himself as his representative during the formation of the faith.

One of the things that we bump into now is the idea that there are modern-day apostles floating around today that have apostolic power and are actually apostles of Jesus Christ. And that is not true.

[ 21 : 14 ] There are only 12 men who were appointed by Christ to be his apostles. Now, I would be one who would say that of those 12, Paul is the one who gets the nod, not Matthias.

Now, you can have it either way. We'll find out when we get to heaven. But I do want you to look in your Bible to Revelation chapter 21, verse 14. How do I know that there are only 12 apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ formally commissioned to do his work as an apostle?

Revelation chapter 21, verse 14. And the wall of the city had 12 foundations, and on them were the, what's the next word?

12 names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb. How many? 12. No more. The eternal city will only have the names of 12 men who were appointed to be the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you can recognize that those 12 men are in an exclusive category. There's another indication that the Bible has no space for the idea of apostolic succession.

[ 22 : 31 ] You know what I mean by apostolic succession? The idea that, well, the apostles handed off the responsibility to somebody else. Let me have you again.

And by the way, you are not here to hear my opinion. Do you understand that? Nod your head.

We're not interested in your opinion. We're interested in what the Bible teaches.

And so, I want you to turn in your Bible, if you would, to a passage that deals with this subject and look, if you would, at Acts 12, verse 2. We're recognizing that there's only 12 apostles of the Lord Jesus and there was no apostolic succession.

Acts, chapter 12. By the way, who was John's brother, also an apostle? They were called the sons of thunder? James.

What happened to James in chapter 12 is that he was what? Executed. About that time, Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church.

[ 23 : 34 ] He killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. Do we have any indication that the church, after the murder of James, decided, oh, oh, oh, oh, we need some apostle to replace James?

What did they do? They were down one. And as the apostles died off, the apostolic office came to a conclusion. I want you to recognize also that we find that in the New Testament, going back to that passage in Ephesians chapter 4, it says there he gave the apostles, he gave the prophets.

And in the Old Testament, the prophets were those who foretold and forthtold. And one of the things that the prophets would often say, in fact, invariably they would say, to identify their common speech from that which was divinely appointed, they would say something like this, thus saith the Lord.

And when they said that, they were making it clear that they were speaking directly according to the direction of God. They weren't just kind of freewheeling it and ad-libbing it.

This is what God wanted His people to hear. And these individuals were divinely enabled to declare God's Word. In the New Testament, prophets were individuals who were given to the church during the time prior to the completion of the 29 books of the New Testament.

[ 24 : 57 ] And these individuals were empowered in much the same way, more so to teach and proclaim the Word rather than to give prophetic utterance. Now, both the apostles and the prophets, divinely appointed by Christ, had the right and authority to say, thus saith the Lord, and be heard that way.

By the way, those who profess today that they have the same divine power ought to think very carefully about several different passages in relationship to saying, God told me, or I'm telling you this is what God wants.

How many of you bumped into people that claim to have prophetic authority and power today? Well, let's look at two different passages in relationship to that. Turn back in your Bible to Deuteronomy chapter 18.

We're looking not at the only illustration of this statement, but one that is, I think, undeniably clear. Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 20 and 22. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.

And if you say in your heart, how we may know that the word that the Lord has not spoken, how can you tell this person's not a prophet of God? Look at verse 22. When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken.

[ 26 : 20 ] So how many times does a person who professes to be a prophet of God get to get it wrong? How many? One.

Because the outcome of saying, thus saith the Lord, everybody says, all right, the clock is ticking, I'm picking up stones, and if it doesn't happen, you're toast. Hmm?

How many of you have picked up the little controller and channel surfed and had different individuals on the TV that have said they're prophets of God? If the church actually exercised the understanding of Scriptures, we'd have fewer people doing that.

Turn back in your Bible also to Revelation chapter 22, verse 19. Revelation chapter 22, verse 19. If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and the holy city which are described in this book.

Okay? So we understand you're not to add, you're not to take away, you're not to mess with the revelation of God. God has given it and it was his place to give that understanding and instruction to his apostles and to his prophets.

[ 27 : 39 ] Now let's go to Ephesians chapter 4 and understand the permanent roles of the evangelist and the pastor and teacher. Ephesians chapter 4, we're looking there at verse 11, it says that he gave the evangelists.

Now I do want you to notice that it's the apostles, it is the prophets, it is the evangelists and I want you to understand that an evangelist is one who travels from place to place sharing the gospel.

While every believer, every one of us here this morning are called to be witnesses of his grace and we are to gladly talk about his power to save us and draw us out of the darkness of our condition, nevertheless, there are those who he has gifted to be evangelists.

There are individuals who bring the gospel and make it clear and people come to Christ. Christ has used and will continue to use until he comes back appointed evangelists to win people to the gospel, to start churches, to cross oceans and share the good news.

I think one of the best examples of that in our modern day is Billy Graham. I was doing a little bit of research in terms of his ministry and this man has ministered the gospel in a formal setting for over 66 years.

[ 28 : 56 ] in that time whether he's been preaching in auditoriums or stadiums or wherever different kind of places he has had an opportunity of having over 2 billion people hear him present the gospel.

I do want to remind you that we are in prayer and we're looking forward to what will perhaps be Billy Graham's last evangelistic outreach and it's going to be different than most of the others.

In the past he would come to a city and he would go to a place like a stadium and he would rent that place and you'd have a gathering of people to that place. This time he is going to preach the gospel and he's going to present his message probably in a studio somewhere.

It's going to be recorded but then sometime during November during a series of days he is going to present the gospel and the encouragement that I want you to pray about and then think about how you can make it work is I want you to invite people who are your friends and neighbors you don't go to Cooper Stadium to hear Billy Graham you go to your house and they're on TV you can have Billy Graham present a simple gospel message and then when it's over you get to step on and say hey listen let me tell you what Jesus did for me and you get to talk as well and just share the simple truth of how Christ brought you out of the hopelessness of your estate and gave you the joy of salvation we think about evangelists we think about the fact that God has appointed some to travel around the place and share the gospel that brings us then in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11 to the last little part it says the shepherds and teachers now there have been some arguments or disputes

I wouldn't call them arguments no stone throwing here but there are those who have the idea that shepherds and teachers are two separate individuals I don't think that is supported by the text and I'll tell you why because we look at the little word the which is named how many times how many the's do you find in this passage I'm holding up your fingers my fingers so you can see there are four the's definite articles they're identifying offices the apostle the prophet the evangelist the pastor teacher and so if you're to describe what this office is that is being spoken of it is identifying the fact that there is one individual who serves in both capacities he is a shepherd and he is a teacher one of the things that I periodically have individuals say to me is okay okay how do you want to be titled I have friends that eventually occasionally call me bishop

[ 31 : 44 ] I don't like bishop now there's nothing wrong with calling me a bishop because the word prosbuteros is there in the Greek and I have to live with it but it just I like shepherd my son-in-law calls me bishop every now and then he can get away with it it's alright but the truth of the matter is if you ask me what would I prefer to be called I would prefer to be called pastor and the reason is because God made me a shepherd I do my shepherd thing and I want you to understand that when he is speaking of this servant as a shepherd the Holy Spirit is pointing to the responsibility that a pastor has of staying with those Christ has appointed him to care for and leading protecting correcting and feeding the shepherd is never the owner of the flock the shepherd is one who is a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and serves in his stead and for his good a faithful shepherd cares for the beloved of Christ and models his love to the people that Christ loves

I want you to recognize that a faithful shepherd is a divine gift from the body and is under assignment from the chief shepherd if you want to know why I'm here I am here because Christ sent me here we are praying asking God to bring us a family youth pastor and one of the things that I pray for is Lord you send us your man I was talking with a dear pastor I'm getting hot so bear with me I was talking with a dear pastor that they have been looking for a family youth pastor much the same way as we have for 18 months 18 months and the congregation there has begun to become a little bit impatient and that dear pastor has said to them on more than one occasion listen we can fill this position very quickly but if we are precipitous and we do not wait on the Lord we will not have God's man and we will be sorry

I want to tell you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you that you have not been impatient we are looking for a man who is sent from God we don't know who he is yet but every now and then when Tim Kenoyer gets a little frustrated and I so appreciate the parents and our youth leaders they're doing a great job I remind myself that Jesus loves this body more than I do and he has somebody out there and he will provide in his time I think about what it says in 1 Peter chapter 5 where the apostle Peter writes to those who would be shepherds!

He says feed the flock of God and I'm reminded that my responsibility is to care for you by that I actually heard Boy I'm trying to think of who it is Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington D.C. Sam tell me who the pastor is Mark Dever Mark Dever that's it here's how Mark Dever summarizes pastoral ministry he says love he says teach and pray you got that teach and pray love and stay teach and pray love and stay I like that description one of the things that has been stunning and sobering as your search committee has been pursuing men to serve as pastors here or a pastor here we have been discouraged by the transients pastors who are staying two years two and a half years and thinking that they've kind of fulfilled their duty I didn't even get to know you in two years do you understand that how many of you would trust a person to walk in two years no it takes time to get there teach and pray love and stay in speaking of this servant we recognize that he's a shepherd but he's also a teacher and what the Holy Spirit is reminding the church of is that the man that God gives them is primarily tasked with the responsibility of being a teacher of the word at the heart of what this man's call is the holy duty of first modeling and then opening the word and calling people to hear it and follow the wisdom and the counsel of God a man who is a shepherd teacher is one who has to live the word and apply the word and then open it up and instruct people from the word and so when I stand before you

[ 36 : 25 ] I stand before you with a sensitivity to the fact that I am responsible for my walk in Hebrews chapter 12 verse 7 the author of the book of Hebrews says you are to remember those who taught the word among you and in saying remember he's saying hey pay attention to their life to their walk to their behavior because really how a man lives ultimately is an indication of what he believes isn't that right you can stand up here in the pulpit and say a lot but at the end of the day what you are comes out in how you act and so I want you to understand that a pastor's life like that

of a godly father in Deuteronomy chapter 6 is first of all to be marked by a love for the word and a willingness to obey it and then subsequently a willingness to teach it let me close by reminding you that the servant gifts are in one sense no different than the serving gifts now what do I mean by that serving gifts are things like showing mercy ability to minister to to administrate different kinds of serving gifts and those are the ones that we find in

Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 and I said that there is fundamentally no difference between the servant gifts which are individuals and serving gifts that we've all been given in that they are designed for the good of the body and their blessing and benefit is only seen when they are actively engaged in doing what they've been called and equipped to do does that make sense if I walked in here tomorrow and said I'm done being a servant I don't like being a pastor well I do like being a pastor but just if I said that that would be sinful would you agree with me that would be wrong yeah I have been I have been the I have I have first of all been saved by the grace of God and gifted for your sake and you have been gifted for one another's sake I have no more right to step away from my responsibility of serving Christ in this place than you do and all God's people said that is theologically accurate and correct and it deserves a loud amen okay took you a while but you got on a roll it's the truth so

Pastor Saul is going to be overwhelmed with people who want to put their spiritual gifts to use in the nursery you had them take care of them amen it's an amen for people that are over 70 that's the right amen okay but anyway hey get to work all of you so let me ask you a practical question are you a believer if you're here today and you do not know Christ talking to you about being actively involved in the body of Christ just doesn't make any sense because the first thing you need to do is come to the cross and recognize that you are a morally bankrupt on the way to hell sinner and you have no hope apart from Jesus Christ you can't stand up in eternity and wave the little stack of chits of the nice things you've done and say

Jesus can I come in I was blah blah blah blah no no and if you're here this morning and you do not know Christ the first thing that you desperately need is to come to the point of confessing your sin and believing in Jesus Christ in whom alone is salvation and if you are a believer Ephesians chapter 4 says with the power of the spirit of God behind it connect and use your gifts for the sake and the glory of Christ only one life will soon be passed only what's done for Christ what will last let's close in prayer Father God not by power nor by might but by my spirit saith the Lord use your word plant it deep within our hearts let it bear fruit to the glory and testimony of Christ give us humble and contrite spirits as we desire

Christ's glory and no one else's and we ask this in your precious name amen and we ask this of God and we ask this of God if any of those any of those any of those any of those any of those any of those any of those any of those any of those any of those any of those