

“Minister Your Gift”
(Romans 12:6-8)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. The Lord calls each of us to total consecration.
 - a. Whom do you live for?
 - b. What makes your heart beat?
 - c. What motivates you to do the things you do?
 - d. The answer should be love for the Lord.
 - e. He has made you, saved you, called you to be His servant.
 - f. He wants us to serve Him completely, with our whole heart.

2. In order to serve Him, the Lord has given us different gifts.
 - a. God has called us all and placed us all into one body.
 - b. We cannot make it alone. We need each other.
 - c. We need each other because of the gifts God gives us. He made it this way.
 - d. We are all like so many pieces to a puzzle – all are needed to see the picture clearly.
 - e. We are like so many stones in a building – all must be present for the building to be complete.
 - f. We are like so many parts of a body – if any are missing, the body can't do what it needs to do.
 - g. And so the Lord tells us to gather together and minister those gifts to each other.

B. Preview.

1. The question Paul answers now is, What are those gifts?
 - a. He names seven of them: prophesying, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, and showing mercy.
 - b. Are there are only seven?
 - (i) No. There are others – what we call the charismatic gifts (although all gifts are charismatic gifts or gifts of His grace) which we believe are now ceased.
 - (ii) Perhaps these are categories of all that remain.
 - (iii) Just about everything that needs to be done in the church is included.
 - (iv) Just about every talent given to us fits in one of them.

2. This morning, I want us to look at these gifts/categories to see what they are and some of the ways we can use what the Lord has given us to fulfill the needs of His people.

II. Sermon.

A. Let's consider prophecy first.

1. Prophecy has two uses in the Bible: foretelling and forth-telling. When we think of prophecy, we usually think of foretelling.

- a. This is one of the ways the Lord reveals the future, others being visions and dreams.
 - b. This gift has ended with the closing of Scripture.
2. But prophecy can also mean forth-telling or proclaiming God's Word.
- a. Again, there is the immediate proclamation from God which has ceased.
 - b. But there is still the proclamation from His Word that continues. We usually call this preaching – *e.g.*, William Perkins's *The Art of Prophesying*.
 - (i) This is something one must be called to – it is a part of the pastoral office, given to elders.
 - (ii) The reason is that it's an authoritative act – when God's Word is proclaimed, it comes with authority, His authority, the same authority that the Bible has, the same authority the prophets spoke with, as long as what is said reflects His Word.
 - (iii) This requires a special gift from the Lord for it to be edifying and each is to exercise it as the proportion of his faith allows.
 - c. But there is a sense in which we can all prophesy: evangelism.
 - (i) We can all witness and tell others about the Gospel.
 - (ii) The Gospel is a message with authority.
 - (iii) It is a command – repent and believe – it is to be spoken with God's authority.
 - (iv) We are all authorized to present that message.
 - (v) Some of us may be particularly gifted to do this.
- B. Then there is serving.
- 1. Comes from the same word as “deacon,” meaning ministry or service.
 - a. Deacons are those specifically set aside to minister to the needs of the congregation and for the congregation to others.
 - b. But all are called to serve with their gifts in one way or another.
 - 2. This is the one gift with the broadest application.
 - a. Service is meeting the legitimate needs of others.
 - b. Those needs are varied, and so are the gifts necessary to meet them.
 - c. Hospitality, cooking, cleaning, music – all are useful.
 - d. The gift of service is the desire and strength to use your gift(s) as often as possible, because you enjoy giving in this way.
 - e. Those who have it don't seek their own needs or pleasure so much as others'.
- C. There is also teaching.
- 1. Teaching is the ability to communicate information, to explain, to apply.
 - 2. Certainly all of us are called to teach in some way:
 - a. The elders are to teach all of God's people His Word.
 - (i) They need to teach the whole counsel of God.
 - (ii) They must teach it accurately.
 - (iii) This is why the elder must be apt or skillful in teaching (1 Tim. 3:2).

- b. Husbands are to teach their wives.
 - (i) Wash them with the water of the Word (Eph. 5:26).
 - (ii) Wives are to ask their husbands if they have questions, “Let them ask their own husbands at home” (1 Cor. 14:35).
 - c. Parents are to teach their children.
 - (i) Proverbs was written for that purpose (Prov. 1:4).
 - (ii) They are to raise them in the “discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).
 - d. The older women are to teach the younger women how to love their husbands, their children and to take care of their homes (Tit. 2:3-5).
 - e. All of us are to help each other grow in grace and knowledge.
 - f. But some are especially gifted to do this.
- D. Exhortation is the next gift.
- 1. Exhorting means to urge or encourage.
 - a. It can mean to correct wrong behavior.
 - b. It can mean to encourage good behavior.
 - 2. Elders are to exhort the flock to love and good deeds.
 - 3. We are all to exhort one another to the same: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near” (Heb. 10:23-25).
 - 4. Some are specially gifted at correction, and some at encouraging. We need both.
- E. Giving is also mentioned here as a gift.
- 1. It means simply using what you have to meet someone’s need.
 - 2. You don’t need to have a lot to have this gift.
 - a. It isn’t for the rich, although they have more to give.
 - b. It used to be that those who had more saw it as their responsibility to take care of those who had less or not enough.
 - c. But even those with little can give, and give generously.
 - d. Paul commended the churches in Macedonia because they gave according to their ability and beyond their ability (2 Cor. 8:3), meaning that they gave more than they really had to give.
 - e. Paul says if you have this gift, give liberally or generously.
- F. Leading – the church needs leadership on many different levels.
- 1. Leading is the ability to see where you need to go, to know how to get there, and to communicate that vision to others.
 - 2. We all influence each other in some way. Some, because of their wisdom and zeal, are natural leaders.

- a. We need to be careful here because being a SNL doesn't mean that you're going to be helpful.
- b. That drive must be tempered with knowledge and wisdom.
- c. Moses didn't chomp at the bit to become a leader, and yet he was one of the greatest leaders Israel ever had.
- d. There are those especially gifted to lead in the church.
- e. Typically, they are the elders, which is why godly character, knowledge and wisdom must be present.
- f. But husbands lead their wives, parents their children, each of us are to lead one another in truth and godliness through our example.
- g. Some are gifted in this area and are to exert that influence diligently.

G. And finally, showing mercy.

- 1. Mercy is the fruit of compassion – the heart moving one to show pity, to help, to comfort.
- 2. Again all of us are to show mercy to each other, to our neighbor, even to our enemies.
 - a. “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:35-36).
 - b. The Good Samaritan is a wonderful example (Luke 10).
- 3. But some are especially gifted in this area.
 - a. Their hearts are more easily moved.
 - b. They are more sympathetic – they suffer when others suffer and want to relieve that suffering.
 - c. We need these gifts; we need those who have them to exercise them cheerfully, and not grudgingly.

III. Application.

- A. We are exhorted by this passage to identify our gifts.
 - 1. Has the Lord gifted you to proclaim His Word – given you knowledge, insight, the ability to understand and apply His Word?
 - 2. Has He given you a servant's heart – when you see something that needs to be done, you want to do it or see that it gets done?
 - 3. Are you a gifted teacher, exhorter/encourager?
 - 4. Do you have a generous heart? The ability to lead others? A heart moved with compassion?
- B. Then use that gift – liberally and wisely – according to the Lord's call.
 - 1. We all have a gift, an ability, something to contribute.
 - 2. Let's use it to serve the Lord, to profit Him and His people.
 - 3. Remember, it is more blessed to give than receive (Acts 20:35); you can't out give the Lord, He will repay you. Amen.