



"I'm Gifted. Lucky Me!"

David Dethmers

I Corinthians 12:1-11/VPC/February 5, 2017

Intro: Lots of conversation around here about Transitional Pastor. The job description includes all kinds of good stuff:

- Dynamic preacher
- Proven team-building skills
- Good listener
- Adept at conflict resolution
- Strong communication skills

And that's just the beginning. We're looking for a very gifted pastor...and well we should.

But what's better than a gifted pastor? 600 gifted members!

Scripture teaches us a good deal about spiritual gifts. This morning we're going to look at three things Christians are called to do as it relates to their gifts:

I. Identify Your Gift

I Cor. 12:7 – "To each has been given a gift..." GREAT. Take 15 seconds right now to identify your three strongest gifts. If you're 25 or over, you should be able to do this. If not, you're wasting the gifts God has given you! ALL OF US HAVE BEEN GIFTED! That's a waste if we don't know what our gifts are!

II. Actualize Your Gift

A gift is not a skill and is fairly worthless unless it's transformed into a skill.

e.g. Anna, my wife, was considering Lasik surgery. She interviewed a number of people. Lots of questions but one primary one: **How many of these have you done?** And how many had complications?

We're not looking for someone with gifts, with potential. We're looking for someone who has transformed those gifts into skills. In society, we get that. In the church, not so much.

Paul was Timothy's mentor: He knew that Timothy had the gift of teaching. In I Timothy 4:14 he says to Timothy: "Do not neglect the gift that has been given you. Pay close attention to your teaching. Devote yourself to it, so that your progress will be apparent to everyone!" It's not enough to have a gift. We have to develop it, hone it, transform it into a skill, a skill that can be used for God!

Our gift is what God has given to us. A skill is what we give back to God!

III. Justify Your Gift

"Each has been given a gift...FOR THE COMMON GOOD." This is where rubber meets the road. Our CULTURE says: It's my gift. Lucky me. Mine to enjoy. Make money with. To enhance my prestige, self-esteem. Scripture says: NO, it isn't yours. It's God's, on loan to you, given for a specific purpose: To build up body of Christ!

e.g. Gifts do not have a "use by" date, an expiration date. We are to continue to use them until the day we die! I looked in my Bible CONCORDANCE: There is no listing for the word RETIREMENT! It doesn't...and shouldn't...exist in the Christian vocabulary. No matter how old you are, no matter how limited...you're still called to use your gifts as best you're able...for God and for God's people.

If you're homebound, if you're in a nursing home, there are still things you can do. You can still knit caps for babies at the border...assuming, of course, you could ever knit. 😊 You can still call people on the phone who are lonely and cheer them up. You can still write notes of encouragement. You can still pray. Until our dying breathe, we can pray. So: how are you using your gifts for the common good?

It'll be probably two years before we have a new pastor: Imagine if 600 people from Valley Presbyterian Church used those two years to identify, hone, and use those gifts for Kingdom purposes! Pastors come and Pastors go. But you are the body of Christ. You are the church. To each has been given a gift for common good. Believe it. Celebrate it! Use it! Amen.

