

Pastor Mark Mikels

- November 17, 2019

"THE SPIRITUAL 'GIFTING' OF SERVING"

(Romans 12:7a; Luke 22:27; Mark 10:24; 2 Cor. 4:1, 8-10; John 13:1-5)

Intro ...

Last week we jumped into the heart of this new series of messages called: "**SPIRITUAL GIFTINGS**" with an examination of the spiritual "gifting" called **Prophecy**.

We defined '**Prophecy**' as "*Speaking forth God's Word.*"

An attendant comment identified one with the '*Gifting of Prophecy*' as possessing an absolute **assurance** that the Word of God is true and reliable and wonderfully sufficient to provide direction in life.

The believer with this '*Gifting*' is engaged in both '**Declaring God's Truth**' and '**Denouncing Man's Sin.**'

"**Let Me Tell You**" is the identifying phrase of those born-again believers who are '*prophetically gifted.*'

This morning we come to the **Second** of the Seven Giftings –

TODAY'S 'GIFTING' IDENTIFIED AND DEFINED

*"If a man's gifting is **SERVING** ('diakonion') ..."*
(Romans 12:7a)

Notice first of all ...

The word that the Apostle Paul uses here is the same word that he used in that I Corinthians 12 passage ... "*diakonion*" – which is translated in our English Bibles both by the word "*service*" and the word "*ministry.*"

The NIV translators have chosen to use a form of the word "*service*" here in Romans 12:7.

In the Corinthians 12 passage, Paul was pointing out that Jesus Christ, as Lord of the Church, directs the members of the body into various '**kinds**' of service or ministry.

Here in this passage Paul is zeroing in on the specific "gifting" or 'gracing' that underlies them all.

It's ...

"THE GIFTING OF SERVING"

Some people approach their entire Christian Life and Work from this Particular viewpoint ... With a desire to **SERVE**.

Here's how we define it ...

SERVING:

"INVESTING oneself in MEETING the needs of OTHERS"

Simply put ... Believers with the '**Gifting of Serving**' possess an acute desire to alleviate the needs of others ...

Now all believers are to serve one another as the need and opportunity arise but those with the "**Gifting of Serving**" just always seem to be "*first on the scene*" and seem as well to "*relish the opportunity*" ...

They frequently act as though you are serving them as you allow them to serve you!

The **key phrase** that characterizes them is ...

"LET ME HELP YOU!"

Obviously, this is an extremely **important** 'gifting' and an extremely **necessary** 'gifting' for any local body of believers.

Being sure that the needs of its people are being met is one of the most fundamental **responsibilities** of a local church ...

Every local church would want to be known as a place where "*They really take care of their own.*"

That has been a desire of mine ever since *Sonlife* Community Church began ...

We have purposefully sought to be just such a place and over the years, thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours have been invested in meeting the needs of those within this fellowship.

Over the years, I have seen some extraordinary examples of such '*Serving*' in action.

I have seen families sustained during times of financial downturn. I have seen individuals supported and comforted during their final days.

I have seen a woman in our church some years ago (with her husband's full concurrence and encouragement) move into the home of a terminally ill saint for a period of months, thus allowing that dear saint to remain in her own home and receive hospice care until she peacefully passed into the Lord's Presence.

Those with the '**Gifting of Serving**' are powerfully motivated to:
"Invest themselves in meeting the needs of others."

They '*see all of life*' from the perspective of one who is powerfully motivated to:

"Recognize and meet people's needs - especially people in their family of faith."

I certainly thank the Lord for all those with the '*Gifting of Serving*' here at *Sonlife* Community Church.

So ... now that the Gift has been **defined**, let's take a moment or two to discuss ...

TODAY'S 'GIFTING' REFINED ...
(Some direction and amplifications)

*"If a man's gifting is serving, let him **SERVE**."*

Jesus himself is our prime New Testament example ...

*"I am among you (he said) as **ONE** who **SERVES**."*
(Luke 22:27)



Jesus possessed both an acute sensitivity to the needs of others and an equally acute desire to meet those needs.

Those whom the Holy Spirit "gifts" with the '*Spiritual Gifting of Serving*' do as well.

So ... by way of direction, Paul would say:

'Don't just 'sense the need', don't just 'feel the desire to meet the need' but allow that desire to thrust you into action. Step out in the power of the Spirit and do something about meeting the need.'

I believe that that kind of motivating energy is actually part of the "gifting" itself ...

People with the gift of service are **not content** to just 'see the need' ... they are **not content** to just 'connect with the need emotionally' ...

Those two steps are just necessary preliminaries – action pretty much automatically follows when one has "*The Gifting*" for those who have it are **not content** until the need is met.

So ... I don't see Paul identifying any "*iffiness*" here.

What he is doing, I believe, is encouraging a '*continuation*' of the thing that comes naturally.

In other words, (Mikels' paraphrase) ...

"If your 'gifting' is service, then follow your Spirit-Given Inclinations and serve ... and continue to serve, no matter what because your service is desperately needed and will be wondrously rewarded."

And in keeping with that understanding and continuing to use the Lord Jesus as our primary example, let me suggest a couple of possible amplifications of this directive ...

If a man's gifting is '**SERVING**' ...

*** Let Him SERVE ... even though COSTLY**

"For even the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

(Mark 10:45)

Make no doubt about it ...

*"Service **always** involves a bit of sacrifice."*

Seldom will it involve the sacrifice of our lives (at least in this country) but it will involve the sacrifice of time and energy and perhaps money.

Paul would say ...

"Take Christ as your example and continue to serve even though costly."

Now let's take Paul himself as our example as we hear him say ...

If a man's 'gifting' is **SERVING** ...

*** Let Him SERVE ... even when TAXING**

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body."

(2 Corinthians 4:1, 8-10)

Needless to say ... service to others is not always easy ...

We can find ourselves at times pretty depleted.

Paul would say ...

"I know how that feels" ... keep serving and trust the Lord for continued strength and if your strength begins to fail, believe that He will send someone along to serve you."

And now a **final** clarification.

If a man's 'gifting' is **SERVING** ...

*** Let him SERVE ... even if MENIAL**

Not every deed of service is of the sort that changes the world – not every deed of service is the type that draws headline attention – not every deed of service seems particularly important in the over-all scheme of things.

Some service is just menial – low level; ordinary and non-spectacular.

However, sometimes the willingness of the servant to perform menial service winds up becoming something of great note as it did the night Jesus and the Disciples shared their last meal together.

The Apostle John shares the moment in the 13th Chapter of the Gospel that bears his name ...

"It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

The evening meal was being served ... Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so, he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him."

(John 13:1-5)

Service doesn't get much more "menial" than that ...
The disciples were stunned.

Jesus' had just performed a task that normally fell to the lowest ranking household servant.

But upon further reflection, they probably were able to say to themselves ...

*'Well, that's just the kind of guy he is' ... It doesn't matter what the need is, he never considers it to be 'beneath him.'
Aren't we lucky (blessed even) to have a master like that?'*

To whatever degree they came to grips with Jesus' extraordinary act and no matter how they rejoiced in his uniqueness as a leader, I have no doubt they were stunned again when he followed up his "servant-like actions" with these words (verses 12 and 15) ...

*"Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them ...
I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."*

In other words (He was saying) ...

*"You need to be willing to be "foot-washers"
if the situation calls for it."*

And so **must** be and so **will** be those upon whom this "Gifting of Service" rests and thrives – they will never despise or disregard the menial task.

Now having seen this 'Gifting' **Defined** and **Refined** a bit, let's just take a moment to see this "Gifting of Serving" **Aligned** ...

*** TODAY'S 'GIFTING' ALIGNED WITH THE OTHER 'GIFTINGS'**

Prophecy – "Let me TELL you!"

Service – "Let me HELP you!"

We could make the case that every 'Prophet'
should have a 'Servant' as a traveling companion, couldn't we?

*** TODAY'S 'GIFTING' ALIGNED WITH THE REST OF THE BODY**

No gift is any more necessary to the fruitful functioning of the Body of Christ and to the ultimate maturing of the Body of Christ than this 'Gifting of Serving.'

Consider the implications of our **Final Thot** ...

Final Thot ...

The 'Gifting of Serving' keeps the Body **AWARE** of
and **RESPONSIVE** to the **NEEDS** of its members.

Without the Servant's **PERSPECTIVE** much
would **FALL** through the **CRACKS!**