

Jacob Hanson  
02-10-2019

Sermon Title: "Using Our Gifts, Inside and Outside of the Church"

Prelude

TFWS #2172 "We are Called"/UMH #340 "Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy"

Green Book #3040 "You Are My All in All"/UMH #500 "Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart"

Responsive Reading: UMH#833 Psalm 112 1-10

Greeting

Sharing of Blessings and Concerns

Prayer of Confession: UMC Book of Worship #480

Children's Message: "Am I an eye or a foot in the kingdom of God?"

Apostle's Creed

Lord's Prayer

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:1-20

Romans 12:4-12

Sermon: "Using Our Gifts, Inside and Outside of the Church"

Sermon Song: TFWS #2175 "Together We Serve"/UMH #98 "To God Be the Glory"

Offering

Doxology: "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" UMH #95

UMH #672 "God Be with You till We Meet Again"

Sending Prayer

Benediction

Announcements/Dismissal

Postlude

Questions: (Some are from our Confirmation Resources)

- 1) Why is it so important that God gives us a variety of gifts?
- 2) What kinds of gifts has the Lord given you? What spiritual and practical gifts do you possess that you can use for the kingdom?
- 3) How have you been able to use your gifts for the good of others inside and outside of the church?

Memory Verse: 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:4 “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.”

Weekly Challenge: Contemplate what gifts you possess from the Lord, and find ways to use them inside and outside of the church.

Pastor Jacob Hanson  
02/03/2019

### **Opening Prayer**

Good morning, welcome to Kasson/Pleasant Corners United Methodist Church. I am Pastor Jacob Hanson, and it is a joy to be here in worship with you this morning. Over the course of this month we are looking at the different facets of membership within the church. By membership we are not talking about UMC membership necessarily (we are doing that in our new member classes, ask if you are interested) but rather we are talking about Church membership as a whole, Church with a big “C” rather than a little one. In other words, the things that we are talking about are traits that all good church members have, whether they be Methodist, Catholic, Lutheran, etc. Last week we talked about the two sacraments, Baptism and Communion, and how they are essential parts of our membership in the church. Baptism marks the beginning of our journey with the Lord, while Communion is a frequent reminder about what Christ went through for our sakes. This week we are talking about how we are to use our God given gifts in service to both our local church and to the folks in our community. There is a lot to say on this topic, but if the sermon was to be summed up in just a few words, I would say as good church goers we should be serving each other in our congregation and also those out in the community so that all would know who it is that we serve.

In our scriptures for today we looked at a couple of passages dealing with the gifts given by God, and this idea of the church body. In these two scriptures, both written by Paul but to different cities, we see that there is this idea that we as the church are called to work together seamlessly for the good of everyone. The practical example that Paul uses is that of the human body, which has many individual parts but is interconnected. Romans 5:4-5 again reads “For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.” Part of being a Christian is this understanding that we are not completely on our own in any way, we are a part of a team. For these people, the Apostle Paul (being spoken through by the Lord), wants them to recognize that they are not separate entities. In the letter to the Romans Paul is reminding that congregation that they are a part of God’s kingdom, they are not all on their own.

Paul had likely never actually been to the Roman congregation from what we can deduce, but he knew members of it, and he was lead by the Lord to proclaim some basic truths to these

people. In much of the book the focus is on how we as Christians are to live our lives for the Lord, and if you read through the whole book of Romans you will see a lot of concepts that are basic to Christian faith. Things like doing good towards your neighbor, following the laws of the government so long as they don't go against the faith, and the importance of sexual purity are just a few of things that he will spend a great deal of time talking about. The point he is sharing here in Romans five is that the church of Rome is not independent of the greater universal Christian church. He wants to remind them that they as Christians in Rome have brothers and sisters in Christ who live in other places, and that they are all interconnected. Bringing that into our modern context, it is akin to us remembering that not only Minnesota or America have Christians, but that we are related by the blood of Christ to believers around the world. That is the easy part of this scripture. But if we dig deeper in both our reading from Romans and especially in our reading from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians we can see that this idea of us as the body of Christ extends to us as individuals as well.

I would guess that most of us as Christians would recognize that we are joined to Christ when we receive Him into our heart. We know that Jesus loves us, that we are covered by His blood and He separates us from our sins. So we know that we are joined together with the Lord. Most Christians also understand that we are linked to each other by Jesus's blood as well. But it is important for us to realize that all of us have a role to play in serving the Lord, both in the church and in the community. Just as a body is made up of many members that individually have different functions, so too is the church made up of various people with different abilities and jobs. In our reading from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians Paul brings up how the body could not function if it was only an ear or an eye, but that all of those parts are needed. What that means for you is the understanding that without each of us using the gifts the Lord has given us, the church will not operate as it optimally should. You should know that your gifts and talents are needed within the church and within the community. You are essential in many ways.

You don't have to be a medical professional to know that the human body can operate pretty well without some of its members. There are many folks who get along pretty good in life after losing a limb, or one of their kidneys, an eye, etc. However, the reality is that if the body as a whole is not operating as it was designed, then it won't work totally efficiently. If your leg is broken, it won't matter how great of shape the rest of your body is in, you aren't running a marathon. If you have a concussion, you aren't going to be able to do your job as well, even if you are a skilled worker. If in the church we have great youth programs, we preach Christ crucified, and we love each other... but we don't have any volunteers for these things, then the church is not going to reach its full potential. If as a church we know our scripture, we pray for each other, and we love Jesus but we don't do any outreach, then we are missing a vital component. Just like Paul says in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, we are all of the same Spirit but we are different members... and we are all vital to the overall success of the church.

In many churches today the truth is that you have the same ten people who do the majority of the heavy lifting. You will have a certain number of people who will volunteer for 90% of the things, and then beyond that the rest of the congregation will not have much to do with the overall success of the church. This is not aimed at anyone specifically, nor is it even necessarily a huge problem in our church, but it is something that most American churches struggle with, and it is important for us because if you are not engaged in using your gifts for the Lord then you will not be fulfilled in this life nor will the church be able to replace you. Realistically, many Christians are not working at peak performance for the Lord, and so in many churches the full potential of that congregation is never met. You are a needed part of the church. You, with your gifts, talents, abilities, and connections are an integral part of this congregation, even if you don't realize it. You are an important part of the church's mission, its role in the will of God, and its continued function. The Lord has plans for you that only you can complete. Only you have the unique gifts that the Creator has given you. Only you have the specific connections, outreach capabilities, etc. that you possess. No one can take your place in the plans that the Lord has for you. Yes, the Lord can get along fine without us and His will still comes to pass... but we miss out on His greater plans for us, and the church misses out on your involvement. Obviously serving the Lord with our gifts and talents looks very different for each of us individually, but together it makes a complete unit.

Getting down to brass tacks, where is your place within the body of Christ, with His church? What are you called to do with your gifts, talents, and abilities? The first thing we must do, is understand what gifts and talents and abilities it is that we possess. Not everyone is gifted in preaching, teaching, words of wisdom, etc. We each have our own spiritual gifts that are labeled in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:1-20. In our church not everyone knows computers, or sound equipment, or has musical talents, or can paint well, or works well with children. Each of us have a unique skill set, and knowing what your skills are is very important when it comes to serving the Lord well. Some skills are easy to identify. If you are young and strong, there are some things you can physically do that older folks can't. If you have great accounting skills, are educated in teaching or nursing, etc. then you probably possess some talents in those areas. The spiritual gifts though can be more difficult to identify. Are you gifted in preaching or teaching scripture? Are you a prayer warrior? Are you a compassionate individual? Those kinds of skills, the ones we see referenced in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, generally take time to develop and identify. Part of identifying those gifts is knowing other Christians whom you trust (and are not brand new to the faith) that can honestly tell you what it is they see you as gifted in. Again, not everyone is a gifted preacher or teacher, but you certainly have some valuable gifts that you should be using to glorify the Lord. Another way to identify those gifts is to honestly be in prayer about them. Ask your Lord in prayer regularly, "What is it that you want me to do? What kinds of gifts have you given me that you want me to use?" At some point another day we will really delve into those spiritual gifts, but for now we are going to just leave it at that each of us possess some of them. Once you know what kinds of gifts you do have, spiritual or physical, then it is vital to your Christian faith to be using those gifts for the Lord inside and

outside the church. A good Christian isn't simply someone who comes to church once a week, and a good church member isn't just someone whose name exists on a church membership roll. A good Christian and a good church member will be actively involved in their congregation.

In addition to using your gifts within the church walls, it is also vital for us to remember that we are supposed to be a light unto the world for the Lord. We are supposed to be examples to those around us that what we believe we actually hold true. To that end, we are supposed to be using those same gifts that the Lord has given us to bless the world around us. The verses from Romans 12:9-12 really capture the essence for what it looks like for us to work with the outside world. These verses come right after the discussion about how we are each gifted individually. They read, "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to pray." If we are loving those outside the church, if we are showing them that we are diligent in our faith, that our faith is where we find our hope in the midst of human struggles, we give them concrete evidence that what we believe we hold as true. By serving those outside the church with our same gifts with a Godly spirit, we make Christ out to be very attractive and loving... which is rightfully so! But if we do not use our God given gifts to serve those outside the church, if we aren't willing to coach or teach or right cards to those in need or make meals for folks when they lose a loved one, then we paint a grim picture of the church.

To close the message for today, let's be blunt, how are you using your individual gifts to glorify the Lord both inside and outside the church? It is important for the church for you to be using your gifts within the congregation because your gifts enhance other church members. It is equally important for you to use them outside the congregation because it shows the world that you are transformed by Christ. As we close the message in prayer and sing our sermon hymn, ask yourself, "Am I using my gifts for the Lord within my church and outside of it?" Don't forget, you are a vital part of the body of Christ, you are needed. Let us pray.

### **Closing Prayer**

Mark 6:30-56

-How did Jesus do this miracle? He is God, He has the power to create.

-There is something really important about Jesus walking on water... it shows Him as both God and man... just as feeding the five thousand did.

-This all takes place in Galilee, a Jewish area that was located north of Jerusalem, separated by Samaria. Many folks looked at Galileans as being a little bit different

February Plan: Membership

Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>:

Opening hymns

Responsive reading: UMH #747 Psalm 15

Greeting

Blessings/Concerns

Baptism: UMH #33 parts 1-11 (Not all parts will be read, only portions dealing with Baptism)

Communion: UMH #12 "A Service of Word and Table II" (Not reading the portion about the giving of peace or offering)

Scripture Readings:

Exodus 13:21-22

Joshua 3:13-17

Mark 1:9-11

Luke 22:14-20

Sermon: "The Two Sacraments"

Sermon hymn

Offering

Closing hymn

Blessing

Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>: Gifts/Service

Opening hymns

Responsive Reading: UMH #833 Psalm 112 1-10

Greeting

Blessings/Concerns

Children's Message: How Do I Use My Gifts for God?

Apostle's Creed

Lord's Prayer

Scripture:

Acts 20:28

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:1-20

Sermon: "Gifts and Service as a Member"

Sermon hymn:

Offering

Closing hymn:

Blessing

Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>: Presence

Opening hymns

Responsive Reading: UMH #841 Psalm 119 1-8

Greeting

Blessings/Concerns

Children's Message: Why Go to Church?

Apostle's Creed

Lord's Prayer

Scripture:

Matthew 18:20

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Hebrews 10:23-25

Sermon: The Purpose of Meeting Together as Church Members"

Sermon hymn:

Offering

Closing hymn:

Blessing

Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>: Prayer/Membership Sunday

Opening hymns UMH #526 "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

UMH #496 "Sweet Hour of Prayer"

Responsive Reading: UMH #819 Psalm 99

Greeting

Blessings/Concerns

Reception of New Members: UMH #38 "Reception Into the United Methodist Church" 14-16

Children's Message

Apostle's Creed

Lord's Prayer

Scripture:

Matthew 18:15-17

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:15-17

1<sup>st</sup> John 1:7

Sermon: "Church Members and Prayer"

Sermon hymn:

Offering

Closing hymn:

Blessing