

112722 Meeker Christian Church

Last week I asked our leaders for their thoughts for the coming year. From that are two important thoughts for the congregation in the form of prayer requests: One was to have enough young folks to start a Sunday School again. The second was to have more members for the board. Their suggestions prompted me to ask about spiritual gifts which led to some questions and today's message:

First is the question: what does this fellowship of believers want to be known for? Mark gives us one possible answer in Mark 12:30-31 *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

That answer follows with another question: "How are we to express that love?" The old fisherman Peter gave a good answer in 1 Peter 4:10 *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.* NIV

Spiritual gifts are not a mystery, but a reality for every Christian. This next paragraph is a summary and you will hear it several times this morning as a clarification for Spiritual Gifts: **Spiritual gifts are not so much about what you can do, but it is all about the One in whose name you do it. Colossians 3:17** *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

All sorts of people have all sorts of talents and learned expertise, but those things count as nothing in the eternal perspective whereas **Spiritual gifts are not so much about what you can do, but it is all about the One in whose name you do it.** Therefore only a Christian can have Spiritual gifts.

But let's backup for a moment and focus on that earlier passage about love, expressed by our use of spiritual gifts with the more full context of 1 Peter 4:7-11

7 *The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.* 8 *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.* 9 *Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.* 10 ***Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*** 11 *If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. NIV ...*

(repeat) 10 ***Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others.***

Peter taught us to be a church determined to use the persons & their gifts that GOD has placed in this place at this time for His divine plan, purpose and glory - and NOT to be a church that says God we want You to bless what we want to do, but that we want to be a blessing by doing what YOU want us to do!!

i.e. not to do church for the sake of form and tradition, but to be church for the sake of functioning under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the O.T. we see Israel time and again being involved in church worship of rites, rituals, religious orders, rules and regulations and this is what the prophet Amos was given to convey to them about those activities: Amos 5:21 *"I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me.* Later in Bible history Jesus came on the scene and the book of Acts records the explosion of the N.T. church as it equipped persons for life and service to glorify God, and not try and exist by rites, rules and rituals. Then what happened? A wonderful explosion of the gospel of Jesus to the world, especially the gentile world. ///Then the N.T. church repeated exactly the same mistakes of the Hebrew church of old. The church became form without function. Then the Reformation in the 1500's and another explosion in the church apart from their customary form

which led to a tremendous dissemination of the gospel of Jesus. But alas that faltered and this congregation is a result of the Restoration movement of 1790-1840 that began on the United States frontier during the Second Great Awakening of the early 19th century.

But now these 200 years later it behooves us to examine ourselves so that we do not get caught up in doing the same thing all over again and become more form than function! Here is a thought to test that hypothesis: are we doing things because of a sense of duty rather than delighting ourselves in the Lord? If duty is a greater motivation than delight then form has become important over function. A second test is if church is a job instead of a joy then form has become more important than function.

The Pentecostal gifting of the Holy Spirit in Acts awoke and empowered the followers of Jesus. We come together as a church patterned after the gospel message of Jesus epitomized by the church model empowerment in Acts who were given to identify and recognize that a life inspired by the gospel of Jesus and His saving grace was manifest in culture by the utilization of the unique and divinely inspired gifts of the Holy Spirit in each of the believers lives.

In the first century it reclaimed the world through righteous living and service, it dealt with the pain and suffering of discouragements in life, and taught righteousness in Jesus so everyone became an equal partner in the labor of the Lord on earth. That is our heritage!!!

We desire to function as a training post, model and facilitator for holy Living.

Holy defined is = presence of God. ==Living with the presence off God.= Holy Spirit.

The purpose this morning is to encourage you to identify your spiritual gifts and use those gifts in the teamwork of continuing to build this body of believers to equip others in their growing faith.

Remember: **Spiritual gifts are not so much about what you can do, but it is all about the One in whose name you do it. Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.***

We function as a church determined to use the persons and their spiritual gifts that God sends us for His purpose and glory.

Even though the Bible has a lot to say about gifts, the Bible does not attempt to exhaustively list the spiritual gifts. So instead of searching the Bible for something you could select to do from a list,- rather we are to search the Bible for righteous values to guide us into identifying your special spiritual gift(s).

Other ways you will recognize your spiritual gifts are the things you feel strongly about that can be used to help and encourage others in their walk with Jesus. That is a realization of church being a joy, not a job. And a delight and not just a duty. Another way of recognizing your spiritual gifts is when someone suggests they see in you as a gift, knack or talent.

Our ladies group is doing an excellent job with getting ideas presented and praying through and following through with functioning by their combined spiritual gifts.

Even recognizing a concern or problem is a spiritual gift, much less being able to do something about it! Different ones decorate, clean, prepare communion, pray, teach and a host of other things I have not itemized. Those are spiritual gifts prompted and promoted by the Holy Spirit. I am so grateful for those who have stepped forward in administration and organization and other things like the recent card and letter ministry to Pearl's grandson in the military. Those, each and every one are manifestations of Spiritual gifts.

By the way – training and practice may lead to spiritual gifts, but in themselves

are not a spiritual gift. I may learn how to change a tire, but until that training results in honoring God and His righteousness it is not a spiritual gift.

Spiritual gifts are not so much about what you can do, but it is all about the One in whose name you do it. Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

You may have an interest in forming and/or being involved in communicating with the lonely and home bound or ill, or recovering from surgery, or battling drug addiction or pornography, or depression or just giving your permission to be contacted as a calling team for prayer or moving something heavy or awkward or transportation.

Do we need to do some rethinking or rescheduling to generate a “linger longer ,or before” time of coffee or hot chocolate? What a great way to help us get acquainted with each other which is a spiritual gift being used to identify and encourage each others spiritual gifts. Another one I am praying for is a song leader or leaders, perhaps in the form of a musical team for leadership or to plan the music, arrange for specials, invite guest musicians.

Then there is missions, benevolence, perhaps something in the arts, agriculture National 4-H and National FFA celebrations are coming up after the new year. Fellowships, fun, Women or men’s Bible Study, discipleship, teaching, helping shutins to in turn use their gifts to pray and serve the Lord no matter what their condition, and a list as long as your arm as possibilities.

Matthew 25:40 *“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’*

There is something for everyone. And when we accept that - that is when the HOLY SPIRIT truly takes charge. The point is all of those and the host of other

ideas that came into your minds are putting shoes on the bare feet of spiritual gifts!

All this leads us to this incredible description in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 with the function of the Spiritual gifts in a local church: here is an excerpt: *12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. -25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

Spiritual gifts are not so much about what you can do, but it is all about the One in whose name you do it. Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Col 3:22-24 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. NIV

Hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized, live by utilizing your spiritual gift