

Know Your Gifts

22 - Ephesians: Rise Up & Walk
Church on the Park | Sunday, 2 December 2018

Text: Ephesians 3:1-2; Eph. 4:7

Theme: Know God's gifts in order to use them effectively.

Intro: Over the last few weeks we've been talking about honouring God, honouring his house and stewardship. I've actually been building an acronym—HOUSE—over the last few weeks so that you can remember the teaching. But, I haven't shared the acronym yet. 'H' stands for **honour** God's house. 'O' stands **offer** your first fruits, tithes and offerings. 'U' stands for **use** your gifts. Today, I'm going to cover the 'USE' (also, the last three letters of house) in one bundle. **Use, Serve and Edify.** You see, the purpose of your gifts (that are given by God's grace) is to serve God's people and edify (build up) God's house. And more specifically today, I want us to explore the gifts in Scripture so that you can understand and use them.

1) God's gifts are tools through which Jesus builds his church (1 Sam. 13:16-22).

- The **tragic situation** of Israel without weapons (1 Sam. 13:16-22).
- The gifts are **tools**.
 - They are tools **Jesus has made** and **given** to each of us so that we can **build his church**.
 - These tools come from his **grace**. We **don't earn** them.
 - But you do **become better** at **using** them as you work with them.
 - You also become **more effective** using them when **you mature in Christ-like character**.
 - The tools can cause **damage** if you don't use them properly.
 - Take, for example, a **hammer**.
 - A hammer can build a home, but it can also bruise your **thumb**, and even **kill** someone.
 - So we need to **approach** the **gifts** with great **reverence and respect**.
 - **Misuse** is **dangerous**.
 - The only proper place to **sharpen** your tools is in the **Kingdom**.
 - We shouldn't be going to the **world** and the **enemy** to develop our gifts (cf. 1 Sam. 13:16-22).

2) Without the Lord's gifts the church will never be built up (Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 1:7, 12:4, 14:1).

- Sadly, the gifts are often **frowned** upon in the modern church.
 - The first reason is **emotional**: they have been misused.
 - The second reason is **intellectual**: theologically some believe in cessationism—that means the spiritual gifts ceased after the first apostolic age.
 - The third reason is **relational**: we don't want to look weird.
- However, these **reasons** don't make much sense in **light** of the **New Testament**.
 - First, a **gift** (*charisma*) is an **expression of Jesus Christ and his grace**.
 - Second, the gifts are the **natural outflow of the Holy Spirit**, who is **the gift**—Christ within us (**Luke 11:13**; Acts 2:38, 8:20, 10:45, 11:17).
 - Third, **if** we are building God's house **without grace (the gifts)**, we are building God's house in **our own way** with our **own tools**.
- The gifts (that which comes from grace) are absolutely **critical**.
 - That's why **Paul constantly emphasised** them. (Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Cor. 12:4, 14:1)
- Also, on a personal note. God has given **Anna & I grace** to **pioneer** and break the ground.
 - Hopefully, you see this grace in operation.
 - But, this does **not** mean we can do **everything** forever. We need help to share the load. And some of the help we need can only be offered when you **mature**.
 - **Eva** at the table, when she saw I was overloaded with work.

- The **gifts** are also **weapons**. These weapons help us **guard** the house and advance.
 - *Could you imagine an army without weapons? Or, could you imagine a builder without tools?*

3) Get to know Jesus' tools (1 Cor. 12:1).

- There are many different tools Jesus uses to accomplish his purposes. Let's explore these various tools.
 - **Potentially**, you can have any gift and use any gift because Christ is in you.
 - Do not **limit yourself** where God has not limited you.
 - But, also use your **gifts according to your maturity**.
 - Don't let your **gifts outrun** your **character**.
 - **The Two Main Expressions of Gifts** (1 Peter 4:10-11).
 - 1) Speaking and 2) Serving
 - This is a very broad summary
 - ****Acts 6:1ff**
 - For God, speaking is not merely talk—it's declaring God's creative and transformative Word.
 - **The Five Gifts of Spiritual Leadership** (Ephesians 4:7-16).
 - Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds and Teacher.
 - *Does that mean that someone who is a **teacher** is not an **apostle**?* Not at all. **Paul** described himself as an apostle and teacher.
 - Their job is to equip you for **your ministry** in your family, church, workplace and community.
 - **The Seven Gifts of the Body** (Romans 12:6-8)
 - Prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, mercy.
 - It's important to realise that **prophecy** is **not limited** to speaking in the **first person** for God (ie. "Thus says the Lord").
 - Remember, Jesus never really spoke like this ('thus says the Lord') and yet through all his parables and exposition of Scripture he was prophesying.
 - **Prophecy** comes in many **different forms**.
 - The **seemingly natural gifts**—like serving, giving, leading mercy (later we will see, helps and administration)—need to be done **supernaturally**.
 - The **seemingly supernatural gifts** need to be done **naturally**.
 - In other words, ministered in a **natural** and **relatable way**.
 - **The Gift of Singleness (Celibacy) or Marriage** (1 Cor 7:7)
 - **The Nine Gifts of the Spirit** (1 Cor. 12:1-11)
 - The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, various kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues.
 - All these nine gifts of the Spirit must be balanced with the nine fruit of the Spirit.
 - Discerning of spirits does not just mean the discerning of evil spirits. Actually, it's most likely a discerning of how the multi-faceted Spirit of God is operating (Rev. 1:4; Isa. 11:1-2).
 - **The Eight Gifts of Appointment** (1 Cor. 12:28-31)
 - Apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healing, helps, administrations (piloting a ship), different kinds of tongues.
 - **Interpretation** can refer to interpreting a heavenly language spoken in tongues, but it can also be **the gift of interpreting God's Word in other languages**.
 - Some people have a **gift of translating and interpreting**, both orally and through the written word. *How do you think you have your Bible in English?* It was originally written in Hebrew and Greek.
 - 1 Cor. 14:1, 2
 - Gifts are like **colours**.
 - There's **millions** of colours, but only **three primary colours**—red, blue and yellow.
 - Similarly, there's **speaking, serving and leadership gifts**. But dependent on how they are blended and developed in your life, they will be a one out of ten million gift blend. (There's about ten million colours a human can see.)
 - Please note: these are **not hard and fast categories**. These **lists** give us a **sense** of the gifts. We are **not** to put **people** in **categories** and **boxes**.

- Like for example, in the States they thought that if a person is a **worship leader**, he cannot be a teacher. Yet, the **Levites** were both **musicians and teachers**.
- You should not use the phrase, “**Stay in your lane**,” to limit people where God has not limited them.

4) Use Jesus’ tools for the right purpose (1 Peter 4:10).

- The main issue is we need to use the **gifts** for the **right purpose**.
 - The **right purpose** is to **serve and edify** God’s people.
 - The **right purpose** is to help us all **mature** into **Christ-likeness**.
- The **gifts** are meant to **lead to maturity**, but it’s also through **maturity** that the **gifts are fully unlocked**.
- The gifts **thrive** in an **environment of love**.
 - Love must be the **motivation** and the **goal** of using every gift. Love must be the **atmosphere** in which the **gifts** are **given** and **received**.
- The gifts are given to others to **build you up** to become **spiritually mature** and you are given gifts to **build others up** to become **spiritually mature**.
- **Using** the gifts **without the purpose of maturity** is like **stealing money** from the bank.
- Let’s say God gives you \$1000 and tells you to give the whole thing to someone in need. If you take even some of the money for yourself, you are stealing.
 - With regards to the gifts, you are to **take no glory** for yourself. Everything must be done for God’s glory.

Conclusion: Get to know the gifts that the Spirit gives. Identify your own gifts. Use your gifts to serve and edify. That’s how you’ll use them effectively.