

BODY LIFE



LOVE



SERVE



GIVE

Mosaic is the **art** of decoration with small pieces of colored glass, stone or other material. Small **tiles** or fragments of pottery or of **colored glass** or clear glass backed with metal foils are used to create a pattern or picture.

The church is similar to a mosaic. It is made up of people who are 'broken' who when put together by God's grace and begin to serve each other make a wonderfully beautiful picture of what Christ is like.

We are continuing our series on 'Body Life'. We have been looking at the working definition:-
What is 'church' and what does it do?

The local church is a community of people who believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. They are devoted to Scripture are organised under appointed qualified leadership and gather regularly for preaching, worship, the Lord's Supper and baptism, and go out into the world to live and speak about Jesus in the world.

This morning we are focusing on **COMMUNITY** and what it means to be a community. We are going to look at this aspect of serving that flows out love which is the key mark of the church. In fact this is one of our 'church values.'

We are committed to equipping every member to use his or her gifts in serving God and His people.

The first step in serving is...

1. Thinking rightly about yourself

Read: Romans 12:3

We are to have sober judgment. A realistically view of ourselves. Think sensibly about ourselves. Not having too high view of yourself but on the other hand not having too low a view of yourself. Not with self-importance but not with self loathing either.

HOW?

By the measure of THE faith. This is the Gospel. As we measure ourselves against the Gospel we will think properly about ourselves.

What is the GOSPEL?

This is what John Piper says:- *Paul has spent 11 chapters teaching us the gospel of Christ—that we are great sinners, that God is infinitely holy and just, that we are therefore under his wrath and condemnation, but that God, in his great mercy has sent his Son Jesus Christ whose perfect obedience and death in our place makes it possible for God to justify—declare righteous—all who trust in Christ, so that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

And on the basis of that great work of salvation for all who believe in Christ he now begins to build his application for life in chapter 12. "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God . . ." In other words, the Christian life is built on the mercy of God. We are not a people trying to earn the favor of God. We are people who are stunned that we have been shown utterly undeserved favor mercifully because of Christ. We do not try to earn mercy with a merciful life. Instead we are able to live a merciful life because we have been shown mercy.

So we assess ourselves in light of the Gospel. We are either a sinner out of relationship with God or a saint in relationship with God through the death of Jesus. This is only because of God's grace not because of us or anything we have done. This leads self forgetfulness.

Think rightly about yourself.

The **second way** we are to measure ourselves if we are Christians is by the truth that we are all members of the body.

Read: Romans 12:4-5

We are **not** islands and so independent. We are not saved to be an individual but saved to be part of a body. Not independent but interdependent. We all play a part in the family of God.

In the Tour de France there are teams of cyclist. Each team of members who play their own role. One or two of the team are called domestiques. This means servant. Their job is work for the team by going back to the team car to pick up food and drinks for the whole team. They are servants of the team.

We are all members of the body and we are each to play a part in the body.

2. You are GIFTED

Read: Romans 6-8

WHAT ARE GIFTS?

"Certain capacities given by God so people can do a specific service."

This is one of a few lists of gifts in the NT. There are 20 or more gifts mentioned in the New Testament.

The 5 lists are not exhaustive lists. The selection mentioned seemed to be nearly random. It is like it is a selection from a much bigger bunch. God is a god of rich and colourful diversity. We try to limit God. If you were to look at all of them you can make some conclusions about gifts.

WHO RECEIVES GIFTS?

Every Christian. This is explicit in 12:3-6. Also in these verses:-

1 Cor 12:11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Eph 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

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.

This is also made clear in the body analogy. As in the human body, so in Christ's body, each member has some function. See 12:4-6. Every Christian has a gift and therefore a responsibility. This should transform your life and involvement in church.

We can fall into the trap of thinking that church is like a bus. A bus where the driver sits up the front doing all the work while the passengers sit back and do nothing towards getting to their destination.

The church is like a body. God gives our church all the gifts it needs for the life of our church, its health, growth and work. We are to pray God will raise up gifted people; always looking out for gifts that are buried or hidden; to encourage people to exercise their gifts and to make sure there are opportunities to do use their gifts.

So we are a charismatic church. Any church made up of Jesus believing people is a charismatic church. If you believe in Jesus you have the Spirit. You can only believe in Jesus by the Spirit. If you have the Spirit you have a gift or gifts.

How you serve might flow out a talent God has given you at birth. Some of you are good at art.

It might flow out of your passions. You might love kids. You might love old people.

What is your passion? If you had extra money what would you spend it on? If you had time to be committed to one cause what would it be? Where are you affective? Does what you do make others happy and encouraged. It may come by trial and error. You may need to cultivate your gift.

You will also need to serve in response to needs. Jesus did this. He came to preach but when confronted with needs he met them. When it comes to serving I think it is sustained when there is a combination of all three.

WHO GIVES GIFTS?

They are from God's grace. See 12:6 - free and unearned. This keeps us humble. We cannot boast and there is no room for jealousy. From God's Spirit. We can lessen a gift we have if we are envious of others gifts. Making out as if God doesn't know what he is doing.

You are a gift to this church. This body. This family. To Lakeshore congregation. To the people. To the person sitting next to you. To the ministry you do or are to do and so the gift you have as well. You have a divine mission. A mission from God. A divine appointment. We need you and you need us.

So if you have been hanging around for a while it is time to think about what you are going to do. Or if you've been here and think this is a big church and we've got everything covered we don't. Talk to me:- we need someone to do admin; meals for new parents; more ppl to minister to the kids Speak to about... sound and words to screen. media and communications and many more.

WHAT ARE GIFTS FOR?

God's gifts are given to be used. How should they be used? Not for ourselves and our own good. Not just for Sunday church. Service gifts are to 'edify' or build up the church.

1 Corinthians 12:7 says:- Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the **common good**.

To help, comfort or strengthen others. This will mean you need to serve outside the area of your gifting.

Just imagine a kid coming to their mum. Mum can you tell me about Jesus. Sorry son I don't have the gift of teaching. Mum I'm hungry well sorry I don't have the gift of hospitality.

Sometimes you just need to do what is necessary to help other people. Just like at home. Sometimes you need to do it because it needs to be done.

YOU ARE GIFTED.

Love must shape all our relationships and so the use of our gifts.

4. So serve in love.

Read it: Romans 12:9-13

This could be just a spray of miscellaneous instructions but probably is a list of ingredients for the recipe for LOVE.

Practise means to follow or press hard after, literally to pursue as one does a fleeing enemy. Hospitality means love of the stranger. A home can never be happy when it is selfish. Christianity is the religion of the open hand, the open heart, and the open door. Jesus is not just concerned with that we serve but how we serve.

This is where Growth Groups are so important. They provide a place to meet regularly with a small group of 8-12 people to get to know them and to serve each other.

Serving is what we can do to do **ministry like Jesus**. To serve like Jesus who came not to be served but to be serve. He washed feet, he feed, he taught, he encouraged, corrected