

Use Your Gifts (Part 1)

Laying the Foundation

Introduction

Next Steps

- A. As I've been mentioning lately, over my years here, I've come to identify certain key steps along the pathway of discipleship to Jesus that I just always want to keep before us as a church.
 - 1. We're calling them next steps. There's nine of them, and they essentially compose what I'd consider to be the critical path of discipleship.
 - a. They take you from skepticism and doubt through faith and community all the way to outreach and service.
- B. In that sense, then, they follow our mission and values, where we see that our mission as a church is to, through the gospel, help restore people to God, neighbor, and city.
 - 1. Or, in other words, to use our core values: we want to see people brought to Faith, plugged into Community, and going out on Mission.
 - a. So there's three directions, really, up to God with Faith, in to neighbor with Community, and out to the city with Mission.
- C. And each of these three directions has three next steps associated with them. And little by little I'll be dropping booklets and content and things that will live on a Next Steps Table we're building for the back of the Sanctuary.
 - 1. Again, the goal is to keep this stuff always before us, so we're thinking about what it means to be a healthy and thriving follower of Jesus, and we're kept on the rails of discipleship and growth and things, and you can see where you fit in it all.
- D. Now, most of the content for these Next Steps resources we'll be unveiling has just been developed from sermons and things like this. So most of the nine are already almost ready to go.
 - 1. But there was one that I hadn't really touched on from the pulpit much, and it's the seventh step, what I'm calling Use Your Gifts.
 - a. So I've got a couple sermons on this that I think will help us make a start at it.

Following the Path

- A. Before I read our text for this morning, let me begin by showing you the connection between this step and the rest of the path.

- B. I think many Christians, sadly, may be prone to think that the church exists simply to serve them—that we come in to get filled and things before the start of another hard week. And then at the end of that we come back again, the way people pull into a gas station, you know. We plug in to get filled up and then we go on our way.
1. We see the church then more through the lens of the marketplace or the entertainment industry, we're the consumer, the client, the audience.
- C. But God has something much different in mind for us. And we see this as we follow along the next steps pathway . . .
1. The first step is Consider Jesus, which is just the idea of bringing your questions and your doubts and simply learning about who he is, what he's said, and what he's done. That's the step really for those who are outside of Christianity and looking in, wondering what it's all about.
 2. But then the next step is Be Baptized, this where you come to repent and trust Jesus and so you "go public" with that and submit yourself to baptism as Christ has called us to. It pictures our association with him in his death and resurrection.
 3. The third is Walk the Sacred Path, and this is the idea of learning to be alone with Jesus, it's cultivating your devotional life. What does it look like to read Scripture and pray.
 - a. So those are the three that really step along towards that first value of Faith.
 - b. But then we come to the next three and the pursuit of Community. . .
 4. So we have Become a Member, which, of course, is the idea of plugging into this church with a sense of covenantal commitment, you press into the body.
 5. And then there's Join a Home Group. And that's pressing in even further towards other believers and doing life together.
 6. But then, at the deepest level, we have Pursue Discipleship, and that's where we have what we call DNA Groups and you're really getting into the finer details of walking with Jesus and doing it with a few other guys or gals.
- D. But you know all of this to this point could be seen through the lens of: "It's about me." Faith and Community. "God saves me. God speaks to me. God fills me up. God puts me in community, where I am known and loved, where I have friends and family in Jesus. This is nice. I could get used to this."
1. But, if we stop here, we really do miss the full range of motion Jesus is trying to work out in us. We could easily stay in that consumer mindset.
 2. Jesus brings us to himself and plugs us into community not so we can finally lounge in luxury, but so that we can serve . . . like he did.
 - a. Remember, that's the point of regeneration and discipleship in the first place, we're being renewed and conformed to his image. And the Son of Man came, ultimately, not to be served, but to serve ([Mark 10:45](#)).
 - i. And so he calls us not just towards Faith and Community but also towards Mission. He wants you to use your gifts for the building up of others.

Ironic Satisfaction

- A. And, in this, there's this ironic satisfaction, that I'm sure many of you have experienced. One of the ways we get filled up is by pouring out.
1. When we just hoard all the blessing that flows to us from God and the church it just stagnates and sours in our souls.
 2. But when we remove the log-jams and break down the dams of our selfishness, well, the water flows free and remains fresh and vital.
- B. One of my favorite texts on this is [Isa. 58:10-11](#), where God says: “[10 if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. 11 And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.](#)”
1. Here's the ironic satisfaction I'm talking about. How do you get to be like a watered garden? You water others. You want waters that do not fail to satisfy you? Let those waters flow from you to satisfy others. That's how it works.
 - a. This is why Jesus himself would say: “[My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work](#)” ([John 4:34](#)).
 - i. He'd just ministered to the woman at the well, he'd just brought satisfaction to her, connecting her to living water and things, and the disciples come back and say, “Aren't you hungry?”
 - ii. And he says, “I'm already full! I'm doing God's work!”
- C. All this to say: when God saves you and brings you into community in the church, he has something for you to do. He has a ministry, a purpose for your being here. He wants you to use, to steward, your gifts for his glory and the good of others.
1. And I want to help us a little with this . . .
 - a. So far as using our gifts are concerned, in this first sermon we'll try to lay the foundation, and I'll draw out six truths from [1 Cor. 12](#) in particular (although one of them is going to have to wait until next time).
 - b. Next time I'll try to help you consider your place in it all. We'll get personal and try to figure out how you would go about discerning your gifts and starting to use them. For that I'll give six looks you can take to get some clarity.
- D. So let's begin to lay the foundation here . . .

The Text

[1](#) Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. [2](#) You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. [3](#) Therefore I want you to

understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. (1 Cor. 12:1–31)

Six Truths

A. Now what I’m going to do is just make my way through these verses, drawing out six truths as we go: (1) We Are Humbled (vv. 1-3); (2) We Are Gifted (vv. 4-13); (3) We Are Needed (vv. 14-20); (4) We Are Needy (vv. 21-26); (5) It’s All from Grace (v. 27); and (6) It’s All for Love (v. 31).

1. Each of these truths are really like stones we’re laying in the foundation of this idea of using our gifts.

Truth #1: We Are Humbled (vv. 1-3)

A. Looking at vv. 1-3 now for a moment, I’d just like to draw one thing out. It strikes me that before we really get into this whole discussion concerning spiritual gifts and the body of Christ and things, Paul

draws our attention to the fact that the Spirit really starts in this by leading us to say: “Jesus is Lord”—“and no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit” (v. 3).

B. Now, there is of course a whole host of reasons Paul could have decided to bring this out first, but I think perhaps one of the reasons is to put us in our place under the Lordship of Christ from the outset.

1. In other words, before we are humbled and broken beneath him, we can never really be of any use to him, or others for that matter.

- a. And that’s been a huge problem with these Corinthians elsewhere in the epistle. If you’ve ever read 1 Corinthians, I’m sure you couldn’t escape noticing that fact. They’re proud. They’re competing. They’re talking about who is better than the other and coming up with all sorts of metrics for determining such a thing—anything from which leader in the church baptized you to which spiritual gift do you have? And because there’s this pride, it’s all wrong.

C. So Paul opens with this fresh reminder that before the Holy Spirit can really make use of us, so far as these gifts are concerned, he has to humble us to the point where we can say: “Jesus is Lord . . . not me.”

1. We can’t even begin to use our spiritual gifts until we’re broken of our self-rule. We are of little use to the kingdom so long as we think we are of great use.

- a. It is only when we have given up on our own strength and purpose that we can at last be reinvigorated with his. He can start using us because we stop fighting back.

D. The image in my mind is that of a wild horse. If you’ve ever seen a good western, then you know, before a wild stallion can ever be of any use to the cowboy, he’s got to break it first. The thing won’t take bit and bridle until it’s broken. Until it’s humbled.

1. And so it is with us and spiritual gifts. The first stone to lay in the foundation is that of humility. The cross of Christ crushes us so that power of Christ can be manifested in us. “Jesus is Lord.” That’s where it starts.

E. And let me just encourage you then . . .

1. We tend to think when we are broken, when we are humbled, it’s the end of things. We tried to do it, and we failed. We think that God is setting us on the bench, that’s why things aren’t working.
2. But truly, when he breaks you, when he humbles you, when things go wrong and you feel unsuccessful, like a loser, he’s actually getting ready to finally put you in the game. What you thought was the end turns out to be just the beginning. So take heart . . . he’s not done with you!

Truth #2: We Are Gifted (vv. 4-13)

Making a Few Observations

- A. For this, look first with me again at vv. 4-7: “⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”
1. Concerning spiritual gifts as they’re described here, let me make a few observations . . .
- B. First, they are sourced and empowered by our trinitarian God. Did you notice that?
1. The whole Trinity is involved here. We see the “Spirit” (v. 4), the “Lord” (referring to Jesus) (v. 5), and “God” (the Father) (v. 6). And they’re the ones who distribute these gifts to us and energize these gifts within us.
- C. Second thing you have to see is that every Christian has one—at least one, maybe many.
1. But you see that there in vv. 6-7. God empowers these gifts in who?—“in everyone” (v. 6). And then v. 7: “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit . . .”
 - a. God doesn’t pick favorites here, everyone, each of us, is given a gift in the Spirit. If you have the Spirit of Christ, you have a gift from Christ. More on that later.
- D. But now thirdly, this is not to say we’re all just uniform and monochromatic, right? Though we all are given gifts, we’re not all given the same gifts. There’s unity but diversity. (Not unlike the Trinity from whom these gifts come in the first place.)
1. So we see in those verses, this discussion about variety. “[T]here are varieties of gifts . . .” (v. 4). “[T]here are varieties of service . . .” (v. 5). “[T]here are varieties of activities . . .” (v. 6).
- E. This third observation is what is really elaborated on further in vv. 8-11. Let’s look at those verses now: “⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.”
1. I love how it ends there. You don’t get the whole thing, you get a “portion.” Did you catch that? The Spirit “apportions” these gifts to us.
 - a. It’s the Greek word *diareō* which means to distribute or divide (BDAG). It’s the same used in the parable of the of prodigal son to talk about how the “divided his property between” his two sons (Luke 15:12). You don’t get it all. You get a portion.

Broadly Classifying the Various Gifts

A. Now, it is beyond the scope of this sermon here to try to make sense of each of these individual gifts and things. I shall instead rather take up the matter a bit more broadly.

1. And, you know, in one sense I think that is perfectly appropriate to do so because the Scriptures in general seem to be somewhat broad and imprecise when dealing with the subject of spiritual gifts.
 - a. For example, there are other places where gifts are listed out in the New Testament (cf. [Rom. 12:6-8](#); [1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28-30](#); [14:26](#); [Eph. 4:11](#); [1 Pet. 4:10-11](#); cf. [1 Cor. 7:7](#)) and each of these lists records a different set of gifts.
 - b. Even the list here in [1 Cor. 12:8-10](#) is different than the list Paul gives later in [vv. 28-30](#).
 - i. So clearly there's not one master list of all the options and things. It's inexact. It's a bit open-ended.
 - ii. And the implication in all of this, then, is that no one list is meant to be exhaustive but only illustrative of the kinds of gifts a Christian can be given by God.

(1) And so rather than try to nail them down and define each with utter precision, I'd rather paint with a bit broader strokes.

B. In the broadest sense I think we can divide up these gifts up into two categories: word gifts (e.g. prophecy, teaching, tongues, etc.) and deed gifts (e.g. healing, helping, administrating, etc.).

1. This is essentially the classification put forward by Peter in his "list" (if we could call it that) in [1 Pet. 4:10-11](#): "¹⁰As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."
- a. There are speaking gifts and there are serving gifts. There are word gifts and there are deed gifts. That's the broadest classification we could make.

C. Now, still remaining somewhat broad, but dialing it in just a touch more, there is another way of classifying these gifts that I have found supremely helpful, and I think you might too.

1. We have to remember that in all of this we are ultimately just receiving manifestations of Jesus' own ministry and power. That's what's happening here.
 - a. That's why, as Peter says, it's God who's getting the glory in Christ with this. He's the one being shown through us, he's the one being seen when we operate in these gifts.
 - b. Paul goes further into this idea by talking about the church, not just as Jesus' people, but as his body. Jesus may be ascended and seated at the right hand of the Father, but when he pours out his Spirit he distributes out aspects of himself, we

could say, so that now we as individual members of his body, when we come together we show each other and the world a fuller picture of who Christ is.

- i. So Paul goes on in v. 12 and writes: “¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.”
- ii. He puts it even more plainly down in v. 27, which we’ll consider a bit more later: “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

D. And now here’s where I’m going with this: because these gifts are distributed to us as members of Christ’s body, empowering us for ministry, so that he would be shown and seen more clearly in the world, it makes sense, then, that they can be organized according to the three main offices that Christ held so far as his ministry was concerned. Here I’m thinking of what theologians refer to as the tripartite office of Christ. He’s Prophet, he’s Priest, and he’s King.

1. So by this schema, prophetic gifts are those that put an emphasis on speaking and communicating God’s word with power. There’s a particular concern for truth. These gifts equip the person to bring Christ’s truth to others.
 - a. So this would include gifts of prophesy, teaching, evangelism, words of wisdom or knowledge, etc.
2. Priestly gifts are those that put an emphasis on service and showing compassion. There’s a particular concern for love. These gifts equip the person to bring Christ’s care to others.
 - a. So this would include gifts of healing, helping, serving, acts of mercy, etc.
3. Kingly gifts are those that put an emphasis on ruling and establishing organization and structure. There’s a particular concern for order. These gifts equip the person to bring Christ’s rule to others.
 - a. So this would include gifts of leading, administrating, contributing, etc.

E. And you can even see how that first word and deed classification can overlay this prophet-priest-king classification. Prophet gifts are more word, king gifts are more deed, and priest gifts are some mixture of both.

Where Do You Fit?

- A. So I wonder, where do you think you fit in with all this? We’ll obviously think a little more about it as we go, but consider it for a moment.
- B. If I had to put myself in the matrix there, and rank them from 1 to 3, I’d say my gifts trend probably first towards prophet, then to king, then to priest.
 1. I tend to maximize truth and talking and proclaiming God’s word.
 2. I also tend to like organization and process and structure.

3. And I've found that, while I absolutely love people, and caring for folks, that is the thing I've had to put in the most work to grow. It hasn't come quite as naturally. If I'm not careful I can tend to maximize truth and clobber people with it. I can tend to focus on projects over people rather than people over projects.
- C. This is why, by the way, when I went to seminary, knowing this, I actually didn't even take a preaching course. I'd already done five years of preaching weekly, I was somewhat familiar with that. I felt like it was more in my lane.
1. But I had a sense I was weak in the priestly stuff—things like counseling and one on one care. People could be inspired by my preaching ministry, but I struggled to then sit across the table from them and really help them take that truth into the details of their own life in a winsome and gentle way.
 - a. So I decided, instead of preaching courses, I needed to take biblical counseling courses. I wanted to grow in this. It's where I'm weakest I would say.
- D. So prophet-king-priest. That's my guess for myself. I wonder where you think you'd fit?

Truth #3: We Are Needed (vv. 14-20)

- A. But now we keep going on in [1 Cor. 12](#) and we come to [vv. 14-20](#). And here we see that Paul begins to really press in on this body analogy—where we're all members of a body, playing different parts. And he uses this image to really get at two critical truths. The first is this: We Are Needed.
1. This is a word of encouragement for those who might be given over to spiritual despair, feeling like they're worthless, like they have nothing to offer.
- B. Listen again to what he says: “¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body” (vv. 14–20).
1. Do you hear the main objection from the members or the body parts there? “Because I am not a _____, I do not belong to the body” (vv. 15, 16).
 - a. There's this sense that I don't belong here. We look at the other, what we consider more “presentable,” parts of the body and think: “Ah, that's critical, they're needed, they belong. But would anyone even notice if I was gone? I don't think so.”
- C. Listen, some of us are just stuck in our shame.
1. Sometimes we're broken and beat up, black and blue, because others have been hitting us with their words and their opinions and their thoughts.

2. But other times it's not because of what's happening out there, I'm hitting myself. "How could I have said that? How could I have done that? How could I be this way? It's over for me. I don't belong here. Put me on the bench. I'm cutting myself from the team."
- D. Listen, Paul is saying here, you can't always trust what you're feeling on this. I don't care how worthless you think you are. You are needed.
1. Jesus didn't rise up from the grave so you could sit on the sideline. He rose up so you could be put in the game. That's the point.
 2. And when we're sitting over here on the side saying, "I don't belong in the game, I'm not worthy, I'm not good enough, I have nothing to offer"—we need to realize: we are not just arguing with the Apostle Paul, we're not just arguing with the pastor, we're arguing with God.
 - a. Does he know what's in you? Of course. Does he know you're not worthy in yourself, that you are a broken sinner, that you have made a mess of stuff?
 - i. Of course. That's no surprise. But that's also no obstacle. Because his grace just barrels through those barriers.
 - (1) Look at the losers Jesus makes into his apostles. Peter—the self-confident coward. Paul—the self-righteous murderer? Are you kidding? But that's the point! It's not about you. It's about him. And if he says you are needed for this body to function properly, then that's how it is.
- E. Maybe your dad told you that you were good for nothing. Maybe your mom used to make you feel stupid, the way she would talk to you. Maybe your husband or your wife has you thinking you are worthless and you just better do what you're told. Maybe the church has hurt you and made you feel like you're not welcome and God could never use you. Maybe you're just saying this stuff to yourself on repeat. It's probably some mixed up mess of all of this.
1. But listen, that's not what God is saying.
 - a. He is gently, but firmly, and certainly lovingly, getting in the face of your spiritual despair in these moments and saying: "You are needed. You're not the one saint I forgot to gift. You've got something to use. So, by faith, get up and use it!"

Truth #4: We Are Needy (vv. 21-26)

- A. But the next truth we see Paul really draw out from this analogy of the church as the body of Christ is that, not only are we all needed, we're also all needy.
1. This, then, pushes against the other error we can be prone to as Christians. Now it's not so much the error of spiritual despair but of spiritual pride. There's this feeling of prominence, in a self-exalting, self-congratulating sort of way. Simply put, because of your gifts you think you're better than others in the church.

- B. So we come to vv. 21-26 now and we read: “²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty,²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it,²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”
1. So where the other members of the body were saying, “Because I’m not this or that, I don’t belong” these members of the body are saying, “Because I am this or that, I have no need of others.” “I’ve got it all right here. I am God’s gift to the church. Let the crowds part because here I come.”
- C. I’ve used this illustration before, but you know some people approach the church body like those guys in the gym that think every day is biceps day. In a dude’s mind, we think ladies don’t care about big calves like they care about big biceps (turns out they don’t seem to care all that much either way), so . . . every day is biceps day.
1. But after months, even years, of this, the guys start to look ridiculous. They have these massive tree-branch arms and these tiny twig legs. If you got in a fight, all you’d have to do is kick his shins and he would just topple over.
- D. And sometimes we approach the church like this. There’s only a few parts of the body that we think really matter. And if we’re the bicep we’re thinking: “Man, step aside calves. Every day is bicep day.” That’s the stuff people notice, the flashy gifts, the more presentable parts.
1. So Christ’s body gets all disproportional and disfigured. And we have the appearance of strength but we’re fundamentally weak.
- E. You know, in Eph. 4 Paul talks about this same idea again. He says: “Listen, the heavy lifting isn’t just for a select few, like the church leaders or something, it’s for every member.”
1. So he writes: “He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11–12). In other words: it is only as every member is playing a vital role that the body as a whole is made strong.
 2. Paul goes on to say that this is how we stop being “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (v. 14). Satan can’t just come and kick our shins, because every member is involved in this thing. We’re strong.
- F. So listen, if you’re on the other side of spiritual despair, and you’re teetering into spiritual pride, where you’re thinking: “I can’t stand that person, I don’t want that person around, I don’t need that person here”—just like I said for the previous members, so too for you: you’re not just arguing with the Apostle Paul, or with your pastor, you’re arguing with God.

1. He says: “Whether you get it or not, whether you want it or not, you need them—If you’re going to be healthy, if you’re going to see and show Christ rightly.”
- G. If I could just be honest: sometimes because I’m the guy on the stage with the mic, because as the lead pastor I’m what some might consider one of the more “presentable” parts of the church body, I can also think I’m one of the more important. I can think that I should get in and get my way, I’ll fix it, I’ll do it myself, etc. Every day is biceps day. I struggle with that. I need to remember this truth. I am needy.
1. Think about it. If I lean more toward prophetic and kingly gifts, like I said, then I need the priestly folks around to help—or I’m going to make this place crusty. We’ll have truth. We’ll have good processes. But what about warmth and service and care for the orphan and widow?
 - a. Now, I do think I’ve actually changed quite a bit over the years on this and I’ll tell you the biggest reason why—my wife Megan’s gifts run more in the priestly direction. So we rubbed against each other for a while and finally I started seeing just how wise she is, how caring, how gentle.
 - i. I’m truly terrified to think of the leader I would be were it not for my wife. And I mean that. I needed her or I was going to be all out of whack. I’d make the church in my image instead of Christ’s!

H. So . . .

1. The prophet type, they need the priestly type to soften them and remember it’s truth with love. And they need the kingly type to help them organize and structure their ministry and things.
2. And the priestly type they need the prophet type to help them not just get squishy on truth and buckle to people’s emotions. And they need the kingly type to help them prioritize and keep them efficient and not just going wherever the needs take them.
3. And the kingly type they need the prophet type to help them keep the processes and things guided not just by efficiency but by God’s word. And they need the priestly type to remind them that we develop systems and things in love for people, that’s the point.
 - a. We could keep going with this, but I think you get the idea. We are needed . . . and we are needy.

Truth #5: It’s All from Grace (v. 27)

A. The last thing I wanted to bring out for now is simply this: it’s all from grace.

1. Perhaps this is obvious but it can’t go unstated. You and I don’t belong here. I’m pretty sure Jesus would be more effective without me, but here I am. Why? In a word: grace.

B. Now, of course, there’s a number of ways I could show you this:

1. For one thing, all along the way we've been referring to these things as "spiritual"—what?—"gifts" (1 Cor. 12:1, 4, 9, 28, 30, 31). That's what Paul calls them. They're gifts. Gifts by definition are those things that we don't deserve. We are freely given them . . . by grace.
 2. But beyond even this, it's clear as day in the Greek. These spiritual gifts, do you want to know what the word is in Greek: **charisma**. You say: "So what, why does that matter?" Well, do you want to know what the word for grace is? **Charis**.
 - a. We get charisma by charis. You don't have to be an etymologist to see the connection. These are gifts of grace.
 - i. That's why Peter just freely switches out one word for the other as we saw earlier, but you may not have noticed: "As each has received a gift [Gk. charisma], use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace [Gk. charis] . . ." (1 Pet. 4:10).
- C. But, you know, there is another way I really wanted to drive this home for us, and it tags onto this body analogy Paul uses yet again. So Paul says there in v. 27: "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."
1. And what I want you to realize is that this isn't the first time in this letter Paul has brought this idea up.
 - a. All this discussion about spiritual gifts and the body of Christ with us as the members, everyone knows 1 Cor. 12 for that.
 - b. But it's actually rooted back in stuff he was saying earlier to these Corinthians in ch. 10. And there we see Paul derives this whole image of the church as Jesus' body with these diversified gifts and things from the Lord's Supper. That's what stands behind all this for Paul.
- D. So he writes in 1 Cor. 10:16-17: " ¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."
1. The bread, we know, was symbolic of Christ's body broken for us on that cross. And that's what I want you to see. Paul's understanding of the church as this diversely gifted and profoundly united body of Christ grows out of his understanding of the literal body of Christ broken for us on that cross. We share in this diverse and unified body because we share in that broken bread. That's how we got here! This whole thing, it's all from grace!
- E. Bottom line: Christ went to the cross, not just to give us salvation, but to give us spiritual gifts—gifts that he's calling us to use in love for him and for others. More on that next time.