

Spiritually Gifted



1 Peter 4:10–11

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Normally I give an introduction and we read, but this morning we're going to read and get right to the sermon.

Scripture

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 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."

What a couple of paragraphs we studied last week! We are beginning to understand that God has actually ordained suffering in the life of us as believers and we're to arm ourselves the same way Christ armed Himself, and in spite of the culture we live in, in spite of what's going on around us, we can still do God's will. It's possible for us to live under the control of God's Spirit so that we live as God does. And then, as we got to the conclusion of the second paragraph, Peter told us that the end is at hand, it's getting close, and he wants us to make sure that we are sober-minded.

He wants to make sure we're living with self-control. Then he makes a statement, "Above all..." and he tells us to make sure that we keep loving one another earnestly because love covers a multitude of sins. He tells us as Christians we are to show hospitality not grumbling. Now, Peter is going to tell us in these two verses we're going to study this morning that we are to serve one another.

So I want you to hear this...we had a 'love one another,' we had a 'be hospitable to one another,' and now we have a 'serve one another.' He's not telling us to do this to others; he's telling us to do this to one another. He is picturing us in a relationship together as believers who are growing into this holy temple of God, and he's going to talk about the relationship that we should have with each other. We're to love one another, earnestly. Why? Because love covers a multitude of sin. Have you ever witnessed something happen to somebody else and you make this statement, "I don't know how you put up with that?" I've just seen some people that have been in some terrible situations, they've had some terrible things happen to them by other people and I just make this comment, "I don't know how you do it!" Do you know how they do it and I couldn't do it? They love that person. I don't love that person. But if you love a person, isn't it amazing how love covers a multitude of sins? Isn't it amazing the ability that love gives you to put up with things, to deal with things that others can't? That's what Peter calls us to as the body of Christ...to love one another.

Then it tells us to be hospitable without grumbling. Now, this isn't when we see someone coming down the driveway and we've just said we hope nobody comes tonight, and all of a sudden, we see lights coming down the driveway. We see the front of the vehicle, and if you're like me, you've got thirty-five seconds to get the house in order. Then you go open the front door with a fake smile and you say, "Wow, we're so glad you're here!" That's not what he's talking about. He's saying there ought to be this attitude we have among each other that we're hospitable, that we open up our lives to each other, and we do that because we want to, because we're brothers and sisters in Christ, because we're part of the body of Christ.

Now, what we're going to focus on this morning are two verses, two sentences. The first is one long sentence, "As each has received a gift, use

it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 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.” Period. Fifty-two words in English to translate Peter's sentence! Ms. Coleman would back me up on this—if I had turned in a sentence that long in English class, she would not have accepted it. She would've given it back to me with red marks all over it telling me I need to break this fifty-two word long sentence into at least two, three, possibly four sentences. So, I can't help it...that's what I've done. No disrespect to Peter, but man, that's just a big sentence. I want us to break this thought down into these four simple truths this morning.

Each One Has One!

What we're going to talk about is you and I are spiritually gifted. We're going to be talking about spiritual gifts. The big picture is each one of us has received a spiritual gift and we ought to be using it to serve one another as a good manager of the grace of God so that ultimately God would be glorified. Wow...that's it. As we look at this passage, I want us to first remember that each one of us has one. Peter's trying to say that each one of us who are in the body of Christ, each one of us who have repented of being a sinner and put our faith and trust in Jesus, have been forgiven of all of our sins, have been born into the family of God—we have one. We have what? A gift, a spiritual gift. Now, how do I know it means a *spiritual* gift? It doesn't say spiritual gift. Yes it does. The word that Peter uses here is the same word Paul used to describe spiritual gift. He uses the Greek word, *charismata*, from where we get our English word charismatic. If we were to look this word up in a Greek dictionary, it would literally mean a gift by grace, a grace gift. It's a gift, a spiritual enabling, a spiritual ability that's been given to each one of us as a believer by the grace of God. We do not receive this gift because we deserve it, we do not receive this gift because we earn it, and we do not receive this gift for our own use. We receive this gift by God's grace. Each one has one...you have one. You have what? You have a spiritual gift, an enabling that's been given to you, not naturally but supernaturally by the Spirit of God according to God's grace at the moment of your rebirth. Wow!

Now, I don't know about you but I have certain natural ability, certain natural talents that I received from my mom and my dad. Their genes just got together for me, and I have a little bit of Bobby and I have a little June in me. In my sixty-two years, there have been times, especially when I was growing up, where I could do something I was naturally good at, and I was naturally good at it because my daddy was naturally good at it. People would look at me and say, "Wow, you're just like your dad!" or "Wow, that reminds me of your dad!" I had some other things that would happen with me and it would remind me of who my mom was, and in that particular area I knew that I didn't get that from my dad I got that from my mom. How did I get that? I got that through my physical birth. Now, I love being a being a papaw. We have four grandchildren from Kory' and Katie and all four of those children are different, yet I can look into each one of them and I can see a little bit of Kory in them and I can see a little bit of Katie in them. But not only that I can do this, I can look at one of them and think whoa, I just saw some Alan Stout. I can say I just saw some Doris. And then, there is a few times where I can see something and it will remind me of Celisa. Occasionally, there will be something I'll see that will remind me of myself in them. It's just a natural phenomenon. There are natural abilities and talents that we get physically from our parents.

Please don't ever forget this—you are a child of God, and when you were spiritually born, you received His DNA. You have a natural gifting, and that natural gifting is who you are because of Him. It's a spiritual ability He's given you. It reminds you who you are. I want to be real clear here—we become followers of Christ, we become Christians when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, yet the New Testament hardly ever addresses us individually, it always addresses us collectively, and collectively we are the body of Christ. Individually, we are body parts of the body of Christ. So when I think of myself individually I have to think of myself as part of something bigger than me, and that's the body of Christ. I am a part of something bigger than me, and that's the church. As a body part, so that I can do my part I have been given a spiritual gift. I received that spiritual gift the moment I was born of God. Does that make sense?

Now Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, is going to say in the 12th chapter that there is a variety of gifts, a variety of ministries, and a variety of activities or energizing. It is the same Spirit, same Lord, same God—one God, Father, Son, Spirit—yet when you see the body of Christ, we are diverse. We are diverse because we have different gifts. We have different ministries and we have different enablings. If you were to study the letter to the church at Corinth, the letter to the church at Rome, and the letter of the church at Ephesus, you would see the Bible mentions different spiritual gifts. These gifts normally are divided in the scholarly world as sign gifts, speaking gifts, and serving gifts. In his letter to the church at Rome and in Peter's letter here, the Bible speaks of the speaking gifts and the serving gifts. But what you must understand is you have one, possibly more, and they were given to you by the Holy Spirit, not for you, but for us so that we could be who God wants us to be as a body. But we cannot be who God wants us to be as a body unless you are who you're supposed to be as a part. So I ask you this question, do you know what your spiritual gift is? Do you know what your spiritual gifts are if you have multiple?

Each One Has One to Use!

Now, if you have a spiritual gift, you have a spiritual ministry. You have a place where God wants you to use that gift. Then, you have a spiritual enabling, a spiritual energy, that comes with that gift. Now, this is why there are some people who have the same gift, they have the same ministry, but there are different results in that ministry. Sometimes we want to brag on the person and make a distinction between one pastor and another pastor, or one Sunday school teacher from another Sunday teacher—but in all reality, we believe as the body of Christ that not only did God give that person the gift, not only did God give that person the ministry, God activated the energy level that person will have that will cause the results that will come from that gift in that ministry. Does that make sense? Do you believe this? I'm part of the body of Christ and I'm a part, and I have a part. I'll ask you this question. Are you doing your part? Each one has one.

Here's my second point—each one should use their one. If you have a spiritual gift, you should be using it. How does Peter say we should be

using it? We should be using it to serve one another. Now, I want to make sure you understand this. When we get ready to serve each other, that service should reflect our spiritual giftedness. It doesn't mean you can't serve God in other areas. There are times when we need workers in the nursery, no matter if you're spiritually gifted there or not, you just show up. Amen? There's a time when we mow the yard whether we're spiritually gifted to mow the yard or not. God wants us to understand that we are in relationship with each other and we serve one another out of our giftedness, and when we do, we're fulfilling who we are as a part of Christ's body. This word, serve, is where we get our Baptist word deacon from. Here at Hardin, we call the deacons "the dirty footed ones" because that word to be a deacon, to be a servant, literally meant to have dirty feet. See, if you were a son in the biblical world, you wore shoes. If you were a servant, a slave, you didn't wear shoes; therefore in dry season, you had dusty feet and in wet season, you had muddy feet. You could just tell who the servants were. They served. So, can I ask you this question? Are there people that you roll up your britches legs for? Is there a place of ministry that involves people within the body, outside the body, as the body where you literally roll up your shirt sleeves and you get dirty? If not, why?

I heard Ed Stetzer say this week that only 30% of members in the church exercised their spiritual gift in the church. Whoa! That means 70% aren't using their spiritual gift. Ed is a guy who studies churches and he pastors a church in Tennessee too. Ed says that if you're a church that has more than 30% of their members using their spiritual gift in a ministry of the church, then you are a freakishly abnormal church. A church only has to have a little over 30% of its members using their gifts to put them in the category of *freakishly* abnormal! Isn't that horrible? What should normal be? Normal should be every one of us in the body of Christ using our spiritual gifts to serve each other! We don't want to be freakishly abnormal; we just want to be a normal body. We want to be the presence of God in this community, but we won't be the body we need to be unless all of us are recognizing we are a part and we're doing our part, and the way we do our part is by using our spiritual gift. Do you know what your spiritual gift is? Are you using it through the body of Christ? We're not

talking about just a ministry inside the walls of this building because this building is just where we meet, where we gather. But when it comes to the life of this body, which is together yet we're in a community, we're in a culture that we're trying to influence, do you have a place of ministry? Is that ministry revealing what your spiritual gift is? If not, that's why I ask this question, why not? I had this thought as I was preparing for this message.

Does anybody know who just won the NBA finals? The Denver Nuggets. Do you know it's possible that Denver nuggets may not have won the finals if there had been some other teams who had all their players playing? There were some other really good teams, and some of their key players were injured and they were on the injured reserve. There were a few teams that were hoping they would get their main players back, never got them back, so the Denver Nuggets was crowned NBA champions. I'm not saying they weren't the best team, but we don't really know.

Do we really know who we are as a church? There are so many of us who are injured. Some of you have come from another place, and you got hurt in that other place and you've decided you're just going to sit until you heal. How much longer do you have to sit to heal? Some of you have decided you just need to be fed more. When are you going to have enough to really take your place among us and help us be who we're supposed to be because you're here with us? We are the body of Christ, and somebody's the knee, somebody's the ankle, somebody's the elbow, and you've been gifted to be that person. But if you're injured, if you're not participating, then we're not at full health. We don't just need you to be here; we need you to be here being who God's designed you to be so that we can be who we're supposed to be.

So, we have a gift and we need to use our gift. Now, if you're here and you haven't been a Christian very long, and you want to find out what your spiritual gift is, I don't think you can just take a class, do a survey, and discover what your spiritual gift is. I don't think you can just read that spiritual gift list and say, "Oh that's me." I think here's how it works, and this is going to sound bragging but I don't mean to brag here. Do you know how I discovered that I'm naturally gifted to ride a motorcycle and

I'm better than most people my age at riding a motorcycle? I discovered at nine years of age that I started having a desire to really want to ride a motorcycle, but I didn't get one until I was a little older. And boy, once I got on that motorcycle, wow! I was just good at it. I became Kentucky State champion in racing motorcycles. I was one of five kids given a factory motocross bike from Yamaha in Japan. Four of them went west of the Mississippi, one went east of the Mississippi, and I was the got it! I would never have known I was good at it until I got on it...but when I got on it, wow! Now, do you know what I wanted to be before I was one of them? I wanted to be a pro basketball player. I wanted to play basketball for University of Kentucky. I tried; I wasn't very good at it. You know, if you're going to play basketball you need to be able to put it in the hoop, and I couldn't put it in the hoop. I just didn't have that. How many of you discovered a natural giftedness by just experimenting, by just doing? Sure! Why does it surprise us that the same thing happens spiritually? You need to start serving, and when you start serving, it's going to become clear to you. You're going to have other people saying, wow, you're really good at this! Wow, you seem to be gifted to this! All of a sudden, you're going to discover what your spiritual gift is. And when you discover what that spiritual gift is, you're going to find your place of ministry and you're going to have a divine enabling that's going to help us be who God wants us to be as the body of Christ. Do you know what your gift is? Do you know where your ministry is? Are you using it through this church? Are you participating or spectating?

Guys, we can't build an auditorium any different than what we built to communicate the gospel, but this building is not who we are. See, when we come in here, every chair is arranged to look at the stage so most of you only see the back of somebody else's head, and the only face you really see is the worship team and whoever's speaking. Do you know it's possible for you to be sitting right now in this group of people and not know who's sitting in front of you or behind you? I would say it's possible. Some of you have been sitting in the same area of this church for about five years and you still don't know the people three seats in front of you. Some of us over on one side have never talked to someone over on the other side. This almost makes it feel like we're watchers, or spectators, and

if we're not careful in this modern culture, we are consumers of spiritual things and we are just growing personally, individually. But we shouldn't just be growing as a Christian, we need to grow as part of the body of Christ, and our identity is not fully known until we find our identity inside the body of Christ. That's who we are—we're the body of Christ and you're a part and you want to do your part, because you want to do what Peter says—you want to serve. Here's how we serve. We find “one another,” some others in our church—that's why we try to get you connected into a small group and we try to help you find your place of ministry, so that you can use your spiritual gift that God has gifted you with.

Each One is a Manager, Not an Owner!

Watch this...Peter's then going to say, “...as good stewards of God's varied grace.” Point number three is each one is a manager not an owner. Each one has one, each one should use their one, but then you have to remember that each one is a manager, not an owner. We're supposed to be what a good steward. Steward was a word that was used to talk about a household manager, and it's where we get our word, economics, from. In the biblical world, owners didn't manage their household. They put other people in charge of the household and they were called the manager. That person managed the household estate for the owner, all aspects of it. Peter is using this to say this to you and me...I have a spiritual gift. The spiritual gift doesn't belong to me; it belongs to God, but I'm the manager of my spiritual gift...So I want to ask this question, what kind of manager are you of your spiritual gift? God's given you a spiritual gift—you don't own it; you just manage it. How are you doing? How are you managing your part in the body of Christ? See, that's all you're responsible for.

Many of you've had the privilege of working for other people. Some of you have started out working in a business and then you work your way up because you have your sights on being the manager. Some of you managers remember when you first got the Assistant in front of the Manager on your name, and wow, you were starting to have some responsibilities in managing. The next thing you know, you went from Assistant Manager to Night Manager, and finally you are now the main

Manager. Yeah, it's all on you. The owner puts all of that business in your care and you manage it.

Get this thought...in the church you're the manager of you, of your gift that God's given you. How are you doing? Honestly? Do you remember that parable of talents Jesus talked about in Matthew 25? He talked about an owner who gave talents and he was going away but he was going to come back—and when he comes back there was going to be an accounting of the talents. Do you realize one day we're going to stand before God and He's going to judge us according to how we managed our part? I'm not responsible for the whole, I'm just responsible for my part, but if all of us were a good manager of our part, can you imagine the whole we would be? So that's why I ask this question, how are you as a manager?

Each one should be glorifying God through the use of their one!

Next, Peter says, "...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." This is real simple. Your gift is either going to be a speaking gift or a serving gift. If you have a speaking gift, when you speak you're commanded to make sure you represent God. It would be bad to have a spiritual gift and represent you instead of representing God. It would be bad to have a spiritual speaking gift and speak your words instead of God's Word. If your spiritual gift is a speaking gift and you are a preacher, a teacher, an encourager, an exhorter—you speak the Word of God. But if you're a servant, you don't serve in your strength you serve in Christ's strength. You let Christ be your strength and you serve so that others don't see you, others see Him. Why? Each one should be glorifying who? God. Through who? Jesus. With what? The use of their one. I want to make sure you get this. I use my spiritual gift to serve one another, and when I do, it glorifies God through Jesus. That's what each one of us should be doing, bringing glory to God through Christ. Now, that's kind of a strange statement. So what is it talking about? I think it's talking about when you and I use our spiritual giftedness in the body of Christ, finding our place of ministry with God's energizing, guess who ultimately gets honor and glory? God does.

God does. If I don't use my spiritual giftedness through God's church, through Christ, the body of Christ, guess who gets the glory? I do.

Guys, we have to be really, really careful here. I know I get on the edge sometimes when I talk about this, but please be careful—some of us have been raised to so believe in being the individual we're supposed to be that we sometimes forget we're part of something bigger than ourselves, and that's a church. We must bring our spiritual gifts under the control of God's Holy Spirit in cooperation with the body of Christ, so that when we do something as a part, it doesn't glorify us as a part, it brings glory to God. That's what we want our life to do, to bring honor and glory to God. Why? Peter says because, "To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." Peter end this with "Amen," which means let it be so. Let what be so. Let God get glory through Hardin Baptist Church by each one of us doing our part as a part, so that ultimately our life is not about us, our life's about Him. Let's just be who He's called us to be. *We* can't be until *you* are. Are you? Will you be so that we can be?