

## Remnant Life Church

July 30, 2023

### The Holy Spirit

Pt 7

#### The Gift of Serving 1

Romans 12:4-8

We have been looking at the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives as Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

- He is present
- He is working in our and through our lives
- And His work can be seen most clearly in the life that is being continually regenerated

We also have come to recognize that the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian is not finished when a person becomes a believer, rather it is just getting started

- He continues to work in our lives by empowering us
- By indwelling and illuminating our lives
- And by continuing to teach us

Yet we make this more difficult by the way many have begun to view and treat the very place where this is trained and honed

- There are many believers today who claim church has no value for them
  - Those who embrace this thinking and use it to justify their absence are playing right into the enemy's hands
  - I know several former pastors who are now in this group
    - They present this thinking as if somehow, they have moved beyond the need for church
    - They even go so far as to say that God is ministering to them and others like them in a much "deeper" way by staying out of church
  - That is flat out wrong and goes against what the Bible says
    - **Heb 10:24-25** *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another...*
  - It is in the fellowship of this gathering, the time of worship, the teaching presented, and the encouragement and love for one another that the work of the Holy Spirit is developed, nurtured, and then taken to be shown to those in your life and sphere of influence.

Four lists of the spiritual gifts

- Three by Paul and one by Peter

The first list is in **Romans 12:6-8**

- Prophecy; service; teaching; encouraging and comforting others; giving; leading or giving aide; acts of mercy

The second list is found in **I Cor 12:4-11**

- Wisdom; knowledge; faith; healing; working miracles; prophecy; the distinguishing of spirits; speaking in tongues; interpretation of tongues

The third list is in **Eph 4:11**

- Also known as the 5 offices of ministry
- Apostles; prophets; evangelists; pastors; teachers

The fourth list is in **I Peter 4:11**

- Public speaking or preaching; service to others

This morning I would like to get into one of those gifts that, I believe, is already very present in this church – the gift of service or serving

**READ – Romans 12:4-8**

Notice first how Paul begins this –

- **Vv 4-5** – *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ, we who are many form one body...*
- The reason Paul makes this point is to prevent anyone from thinking or saying that one gift is more important than another
  - He uses the body because, of course, everyone can understand this analogy
  - When you are going through the course of the day your hands, eyes, mouth and brain are vital to accomplishing your tasks
  - But you get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom and you crack your little toe on the dresser, that little toe becomes the center of your universe
  - Paul is saying, every gift has its place and its importance within the church
- That is not only important for us to understand about each other but what we recognize about ourselves
  - When every part of the church (meaning each of us) is content and fulfilled by exercising our gifts you have a church that is not only effective in the call mandated by God, but joyful in the tasks
  - But this does not mean you are bound to operate in one gift – more about that another Sunday

What is the gift of service or serving?

- Very simply, it is giving of yourself to others for their benefit, comfort, or need
- But what does that look like?
  - Is it a theoretical serving where I convince myself that I am available should anyone approach me?
  - Or is it practical and seeking a way to become involved in meeting a need?
- I believe the best way to answer those questions is to examine the life of the perfect servant – Jesus Christ

Jesus' earthly life showed us that to be a servant is to live a selfless, God-centered life

- His entire life and ministry were exemplified by serving other people

- The ultimate act of service was laying down His life as the final blood sacrifice for our sins

Jesus Himself proclaimed His earthly mission as one of service to others

- **Matt 20:28** – “...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
  - What we see in this one statement is a primary reason why the people in Jesus’ day did not know what to think about Jesus – why they could not understand Him
  - Especially the religious leaders of the day
    - The Pharisees, the teachers, and the rabbis were revered and served
    - The Pharisees certainly made sure they were treated that same way
    - Jesus had more of a reason than all of them – He was the Messiah!
      - But He did not act that way
- **Luke 22:25-27** - *Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.*
  - Jesus is speaking to the disciples just after they had been quarreling among themselves about...who was the greatest among them (seriously?!)
    - Servants of God are to serve others, not assign themselves a title of honor for what they do (That is the benefactor Jesus is speaking of)
      - Unfortunately, in many churches today, those who find themselves in positions of responsibility often become difficult to be around
    - A pastor I was working with once turned to me and said, “I want to teach you something,” my response was, “No, Thank You!”
      - Why? – Not because I did not want to learn but because he said it with great pride
      - BTW – we did not continue working together long after that
    - Jesus, once again, says to them, *I am among you as one who serves*
  - Jesus was continually teaching His disciples, not just through His words, but through His actions, the value, importance, and godliness of serving

We can then also look at the teaching of the apostle Paul to the new churches of Asia-Minor

- Paul takes the themes of Jesus’ life, His teachings and expands on them
- **Gal 5:13** - *You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.*
  - Three primary components of serving
    - It is a choice born out of the heart
      - IOW you are free to choose
      - In fact it must be a choice because if you do something out of a sense of obligation then that is not serving
    - Not done in the flesh
      - In other words, not for personal or selfish gain

- In humility
- **Eph 6:7** - *Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people*
  - Paul directly addresses in this verse the proper motivation for serving
  - That is a good question to ask
  - Am I doing this to please God, or people?
    - You can actually spot the answer to this pretty quickly
    - If a person gets offended following their involvement because no one thanked them for what they did, the answer is they are trying to please people
- **Rom 12:6-7** - *We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;*
  - Serve in the way that God has prepared you
  - What someone else does not mean that you do that same thing

All of these elements of serving come back to Jesus, the perfect servant, and His final act of serving for all mankind – His death for our salvation