

Charismatic Gifts: Giving, Leading, Mercy

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[0 : 00] Okay, made it this far. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to Romans chapter 12. One more time, we come, as we're looking at the spiritual gifts, we look this morning at the last three, giving, leading, and mercy.

So, we want to read the text, we'll ask the Lord to empower it, speak through it, and then we'll dig in.

So, if you're able, please stand. I need to, I'd appreciate it if you don't move sideways very much, that would be, I'm going to try to keep my head forward more, so.

Then you don't dance as much. Okay, so we're going to read from Romans 12, 1 through 8. I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your logical worship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that by testing, experience, proving, you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

[1 : 35] For, by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

For, as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ.

individually as members one of another, having gifts that differ, according to the grace given to us.

Let us use them. If prophecy, in proportion to the faith. If service, in the serving. The one who teaches, in the teaching.

The one who exhorts, in the exhortation. The one who contributes, in generosity. The one who leads, with zeal. And the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

[2 : 43] So reads the word. Let us pray. Father, guide us today. Help us to see the distinctions of these gifts. So that as we minister to one another.

We ourselves recognize which gifts are ours. So that we might then know how to apply this text. And how we can then recognize the gifts of one another.

That we might encourage each other. In the ways that you have graced us. In the ways that you have given us extra measures of grace.

In each of these gifts. And Father, we pray that because this is the way you have designed your church. This is the way you've designed us to be together.

To function. In the way that you've designed. So give us clarity in this, Father. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. In Las Vegas.

[4 : 01] There are more Catholic churches than there are casinos. Who would have thought? And it is no surprise that in these churches in Vegas.

When the offering plate is passed. They get a number of casino chips. Instead of cash. And since there are these chips come from many different casinos.

You can't just, you have to take, you know, Harry's to Harry's and Larry's to Larry's. Whatever. I don't, it's been a long time since I've been in a casino.

So, the Catholic Church had to design, devise, devise a method to collect all these offerings.

So, when they collect them, they then send them to a nearby Franciscan monastery. Where they are sorted and then cashed in at the various casinos.

[5 : 02] And you'd be surprised to know that this order of monks, the ones who do this, are called the chip monks.

So, I read this on the internet. And I'm sure it's true. It's like, where's he going with this? What is this?

So, speaking of gifts. Speaking of gifts. See the segue? See how clever that was? Digging, huh? Today's focus is on wholly different kinds of gifts.

Not token gifts we give to God. But true, empowered gifts that God gives to us through His Spirit. And we've been seeing that in Romans 12, Paul is teaching not only fundamental Christianity, but what is absolutely essential to fundamental Christianity are these gifts.

These gifts are not something that are just extra. They're not something we should be only concerned with when we come to a passage that talks about them.

[6 : 17] In Paul's mind, hi, Jenny and Ron. In Paul's mind, these are absolutely fundamental to how we work together.

So, look at his logic. We see in verse 1, he talks about, this is logical that because of God's mercy shown to us, we would absolutely surrender our whole life to Him.

That's just logical, Paul says, as a living sacrifice. And then adding to that, verse 2, how do we do that? Well, we don't conform to this world, but we are continually being transformed by God.

That's His part. Our part is the renewal of our mind. And we're renewing our mind, at the end of verse 2, by the measure of the will of God. And as we are in the process of doing that, he says, we're testing, right?

There's a process to understanding the will of God in a practical manner. You can understand the will of God in terms of this, this, this, but how does that work in my own life?

[7 : 25] So, he's saying that as we're being transformed and renewing our mind, we're proving what the will of God is in our life. We're actually living it out. We're experiencing it.

And we experience that which is good and acceptable and perfect. That's His will. And then what's fascinating to me is where he goes with that, verse 3. He now explains what does that look like?

What does a transformed life look like? What does a renewed mind look like? Well, verse 3, he says, it's about not thinking about ourselves in the wrong way, but to think with sober judgment according to the measure God has given to us.

Verse 4, where does that go? So, if I have a good self-evaluation of myself, where does that go? Well, that goes, verse 4, into an explanation of what the church, how the church is designed for as in one body, right?

We have many members, members do not all have the same function. So, we are a body. So, he gives the analogy of a body with members, verse 5, then connects it to us. So, just like this picture of a body with many body parts, so we, though we are many, like the members of a body, we are together one body in Christ, and then this is a fascinating phrase, end of verse 5, individually members one of another.

[8 : 51] In other words, he's saying, though we are individuals, though we're different, we are individually connected to one another. We're not individualists.

We're not independent. We are actually interdependent because we're one body. I don't get to be the I and go roll around, you know, on my own.

It's what he's got to say. And that's, you know, funny, but that's what he says in 1 Corinthians 12. If the whole body were an I, right, where would the sense of smell be?

Where would the hand be? Where would the, right? So, this is what he's saying. So, the gifts then, verse 6, were individually members of one another. How? By these gifts. By means of these gifts.

So, these gifts are our hands. These gifts are our eyes. These gifts are the feet and the heart and the ears of this body. So, which are you?

[9 : 50] That's what we've been looking at. So, these gifts, as we look at these gifts, we look at things like serving and exhorting and mercy and sharing, those kind of things.

We could say, well, all of us are to do those things. And that's true. We're all called on some level to do, to serve and to teach even on some level, to lead on some level.

We're called to do all these things. But what he's saying, some of us have a particular gift at this. He's meaning that you are given an extra measure of grace in that area.

Though we're all called to it, that's your specialty. In fact, it's not something you have to really work at. Because it's a gift, it comes a little bit easier for you than anybody else.

I mean, if serving's your gift, it's like that's just what you do. You would do it anyway. But you're more drawn to that.

[10 : 57] Same with teaching or exhortation or as we get into these today, leading, contributing, leading, and mercy. So, this is how the Holy Spirit moves and stirs us and draws us into serving the body.

So, if you don't know what your gift is, that's okay. If you're involved in the body, if you're participating and engaged in the body, you will be using your gift.

You'll be using it, even if you don't know what it is. But, I think studying and understanding what it is will give you that much more advantage. Because then you'll know how to apply this text.

Because if you didn't know your gift was serving, then you might neglect your gift and do something else. But if you know that your gift is serving, then he says, well, if it's serving, then what do you do?

Serve. Focus on that. If your gift is teaching, if your gift is exhortation. And don't neglect that by doing something else. Because, you know, it's like I didn't do the work day.

[12 : 03] Because I'm a teacher. I don't have to do the work day, right? Okay, I didn't do that right. You were supposed to laugh. Doesn't mean I don't do those things, if that's right.

But it means, for the most part, I don't distract myself with a bunch of other things. If I know what my gift is, that's my focus. And then we find in these last three today, we'll see that whereas in service, in his serving, the one who teaches, in the teaching, the one who exhorts, in the exhortation.

Notice the last three, the modifier is a little bit different. Now it's the one who contributes, not in the contributing, but now he says the one who contributes in generosity.

So there's a, if that's your gift, then there's how you focus your gift. Okay, same with leading. The one who leads, he doesn't say the one who leads in the leading.

He says the one who leads with zeal. So that, and then you come to the last one. It's really, I think, important. To me, it stands out. Because the one who does mercy, not just get with showing mercy, because I think the person who has the gift of mercy is going to do that.

[13 : 20] In fact, I think that he's saying with cheerfulness to kind of guard you a little bit. Because I think you can overdo, because the person with mercy is going to kill themselves probably with mercy.

Right? And they're going to lose their cheer. Right? So it's a way of kind of measuring that. And then what we discussed this morning is it's not just about, the cheerfulness is not just about kind of a measure of when I should take a break, like Jesus took retreats, right, from people.

But then it's the purpose of my serving. The purpose of my mercy is to cheer the other one. That's a really good insight.

That's what I'm about. Right? So that's why we're taking time to look at these gifts, because once you know your gift, then you kind of know how to examine a little better.

Especially these last three, because they're talking about, because if your gift is leading, you need to think about what does zeal mean with that? What does that mean? Or if my gift is contributing, what does it mean to do it generously?

[14 : 40] And actually, that's not the right translation. The right translation is singleness. So what does that mean? Yeah. I should probably get into teaching before I confuse you with too many things here.

So we saw the gift of prophecy. You have it in your outline. It's written out for you. It's the ability, the extra grace ability.

At times, this is not a permanent, ongoing thing. This is the ability at times to report a practical message that is spontaneously brought to mind.

It's not something you just always know. It's in a moment. It's spontaneously brought to mind by the Spirit. And that message is not only practical, but it's accountable to the Scriptures and others in the church.

Prophets measure prophets in order to edify, exhort, and console members in the body. So that's all drawn from the Scriptures. And we see in verse 6 when he talks about prophecy, if prophecy in proportion to the faith.

[15 : 51] If your translation says our faith, you need to cross that out because that is not the text. It is the faith. Because if you're measuring your prophetic statement according to your own faith, then it's totally subjective.

What measurement is that? And that's why I think the danger of what happens today is people have this gift of prophecy, and then they don't have any limit on it. Because, well, I have faith to believe that God really told me this.

How do I know God told you that? Remember, John says, test every spirit. And what Paul actually wrote was according to the proportion of the faith.

That's measurable. The faith. The body of truth. So a prophet's not going to be giving some new truth. Some new doctrine. That's why I say what a prophet speaks is something very practical.

Rather, an application of truth. And so we looked at that a couple weeks ago. If service in the serving. Serving, we call it as the grace ability. The extra measure of grace ability to provide for practical physical needs in the local church body, moved by the spirit and deliberately relying on the strength which God supplies.

[17 : 10] So that's a very practical gift. And we're all called to serve, of course, and help people in physical, practical ways. But this person is drawn to that. This gift is just, you're just drawn to it.

You're stirred to do that. That's just, you just do it. Teaching, the grace ability to unpack, interpret, and explain the scriptures to other believers. Independence on the Holy Spirit.

Stirred, again, this is not just that you have to do this, but that you're stirred to articulate the truth clearly and apply it convincingly. What's the purpose of it?

For the deeper knowledge and understanding of the hearer. So we're all called to teach on some level because we're all called to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, teaching them.

So we're all called to teach on some level. But the person with this gift is, finds it fairly easy to do. I mean, they read the scriptures and they get it easier than other people do.

[18 : 14] They just see it. And they're able to unpack it and then they're able to explain it to others. And when they're reading the text, here's the problem with this gift, is you start reading this text and you start thinking about how you can teach others instead of applying it to yourself.

Anybody go there? Yeah, that's the problem with teachers, right? I want to, you know, and forget, oh, yeah, I got to learn this too. So I have that problem. Because I'm thinking, okay, how do I, you know, how do I teach this?

How do I expound this? Okay, teaching. And then we saw the gift of exhortation is the grace ability. We're all called to exhort and encourage one another. But the gifted one has an extra measure of grace in this ability to come alongside other believers in different ways.

One way is to support with comfort and counsel. So that's kind of just coming when putting the arm around somebody, sitting with them and being with them, encouraging them, that kind of thing. Or to motivate with encouragement.

So that's kind of a little bit more of an active encouragement, a little more patting on the back. You're doing good. Keep going. You know, keep going. And then there's the exhortation to challenge with exhortation.

[19 : 31] That's more of a get with it. I'm appealing to you. I'm urging you to go. You know, it's kind of a little bit more of a push. So it can be the arm around.

It can be kind of the pat on the back. Or it can kind of be the real pat on the back. You know, a little bit more push. And, again, this is a gift that is moved through the tugging and prompting enablement of the Holy Spirit.

So the Holy Spirit will probably be directing you to certain people to encourage them. And as I said last week, I think the life verse for this gift is Hebrews 10:24.

Consider one another to stir them up to love and good deeds. Right? And where we're all called to do that, the person with this gift, that's just their go-to.

As soon as they come, they're kind of thinking about other people. And they're, like last week we had the prayer and share, and so they're listening to some of these. And they're already being moved to, oh, how can I encourage that person?

[20 : 41] Right? Or I heard about this, so I want to reach out to them. That's just, that's how that gift kind of looks. Okay? Whereas others of us kind of have to be encouraged to go encourage.

Right? This gifted person, they just do that. They just do that. Okay. So now we come to three more. Giving, or as the ESV in my translation has, one who contributes.

Or giving, and then leading, and then mercy. So we'll look at these today. Lord willing. So the next one in verse 8 is, ESV says, the one who contributes in generosity.

I'm going to call that one giving or sharing. It literally means to share with others. To distribute. You're giving out. You're imparting to others.

You're sharing. We were all taught to share as children. Right? Right? Some children can do that. Some children can't do that. Right?

[21 : 44] But we try to teach children to share. Right? And what do they do? They perfect that sin nature. No, it's mine. Right? So we're not talking about natural sharing.

Of course, we all should share our toys with one another. And share our things with others. Right? That's a good thing for everybody to do. Here is a person that is gifted to just, they just will give you the shirt off their back.

They will just, whatever you need, they will give it. It's pretty simple. They will do that. So we define this gift as simply the extra measure of grace, ability to be sensitive to and moved to thoughtfully supply needs in the body of Christ.

As the spirit leads with a genuine, generous motivation, not seeking attention. So let's unpack that. How is it applied?

To contribute with, the text says with generosity. Again, I'm going to have to get a new translation because I'm having real trouble with ESV here through this study.

[22 : 56] Because they're picking words that just aren't there. It's not generosity. It's simplicity. And I trace this word through the New Testament.

It just, it is in other texts like in 2 Corinthians that is talking about giving. And so they translate it, give with generosity. A cheerful giver, right? Giving with generosity.

But it's this word. And the word doesn't mean generosity. It means simplicity. It means singleness of purpose. So even, you know, when we're called, it's not about being generous.

It's about being singular in purpose. It's about being genuine. It's about, you know, you're not letting the left hand know with the right hand. You're just giving.

You're not giving with an agenda. You're just giving. You're just sharing. It's not to be noticed. It's not to get attention. It's not to meet some other selfish end.

[23 : 58] It's just simply, there's a need. I'll give to it. Plain and simple. It's simple. It's simplicity. It's singleness. Pure motives. So it's used in Luke 3 where Jesus talks about if you have two tunics and your neighbor doesn't have any, what do you do?

You share. Share with the one who has the need. You share your extra one. It's used in Matthew 25. Remember in Matthew 25, Jesus is describing the last judgment, right?

When the king returns, he sits on his glorious throne. He separates the nations. He separates the nations like sheep and goats. And he says to the sheep and he talks to the goats and he talks, right?

And he says to the sheep, you're the ones that when I was hungry, you fed me. You're the ones that when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. You're the ones that when I was naked, you clothed me. You're the ones that when I was alone, you came.

You're the ones that whatever my need was, you supplied. That's the giver.

[25 : 13] Now, we're all called to do that, right? The sheep do that with other sheep. We do all that. But this person with the gift is just that they just do it. They don't have to be prompted. They're prompted by the spirit, but they don't have to be prompted by any of us.

They don't have to even think about it. They just know. Okay. There's a need, right? If they're hungry, I feed them. If they're naked, I give them clothes. If they're alone, I visit them.

I give. It's what the early church did. In Acts 4, it talks about how, remember, the church had needs and everyone started contributing.

People just started, here, whoever has a need. I got extra clothes here. Who needs that? It's just that kind of giving. That's the giver. They just do it.

They don't have to be urged. They just see the need and they'll do it. You know people like that? You like that? No?

[26 : 11] I'm not like that either, but I know people like that. I know if I asked them, they'd give it to me. So, Paul uses this word as he describes the basic Christian who's transforming their life.

In Ephesians 4, he talks about, you know, putting off the old, putting on the new. And then he's going to give illustrations of what that looks like. So, one illustration of transforming your life, right, is no longer steal, but now give, right?

So, Ephesians 4 says, let him who steals, steal no longer. You're putting off the old. But rather, let him, you'd expect him to say, share.

But first, he says something else first. Because you've got to do something else before you can share. Let him who steals, steal no longer. But rather, let him labor. You know, work.

Get a job. It's basically what we say. Get a job. Stop stealing. Get a job. Let him labor. Performing with his own hands.

[27 : 20] Not taking somebody else's work. Doing your own work. What is good? Work is good. Why do I work? In order that he may have something to share with him who has need.

Not just to supply my own needs, but I'm working. A Christian works not just to supply my own needs. I work so that I have enough to give to others who have need. Not just so I can stockpile for myself.

That's the starting point for someone who has this gift. Now, Paul's calling all Christians, that's part of our transformation of our life. To be givers instead of takers, right? But for the person that has this gift, yeah, that's their starting point.

It's absolutely. They don't have to tell them to do that. They're going to do that. So, for the one who has the gift of giving, it's not something hard for them.

It's a desire that they have. They're always willing to share whatever is needed. And then this word simplicity, you know, giving with simplicity.

[28 : 28] It's the same word used in Colossians 3.22 where he's talking about being a good worker, right? He says, bond servants obey in everything those who are your earthly masters.

How do you obey an earthly master? How do you, you know, how do you obey your employer? What if you have a bad employer? What if you're, what if the person you work for is a real jerk?

You know, what if, what if they're not just a jerk? What if they're really unfair? Right? So, how do you do that? So, this is what he's talking about. Serve them, obey them in everything who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service, as people pleasers.

In other words, not just when he's watching and when he's looking, but even when he's not looking. But with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

That's the same word we have in, if your gift is sharing, sharing, yeah, sharing, contributing, do it with simplicity.

[29 : 30] Not generosity, that generosity wouldn't make any sense here in Colossians 3. He's contrasting sincerity of heart with eye service and getting attention and doing it when people are looking.

So, in other words, if your gift is giving, you're not doing it to be seen. You're not doing it to be noticed. You're doing it, you know, with sincerity. You're just doing it because there's a need.

No agenda. So, are you a giver? Is that your gift? Anybody?

Any givers? Because I want to know who you are when I need something. No, I think some of us already know who the givers are here because we know who we could go to.

If we really needed something, they wouldn't hesitate. So, the next gift in verse 8 is leading.

[30 : 33] I haven't fallen yet. I'm good. And if I fall, by the way, if I'm not bleeding, just leave me alone. I'll probably be okay. Because if I'm laying down, I won't be as dizzy.

Okay. Leading, leading, leading. What's leading? Leading literally means someone who stands before others, right? So, they're in front of others. They're leading. It can mean someone who administrates or governs or manages.

Okay. If you are a leader, it implies that you have followers. Okay. So, what is leading? Well, let's define it this way.

It's the extra measure of grace, ability, to take responsibility in guiding or piloting, steering people in the body of Christ.

Into what? Into maturity. So, you're not leading to a project. You're leading them into maturity in Christ.

[31 : 44] And the leader is one who takes initiative, applies diligence, and organization under the direction of the Holy Spirit. That's how I would define biblical leadership.

Okay. They're stirred to take responsibility. They're not just... Elders are called to lead, right? They are leaders. Deacons are called to lead.

They are leaders. That doesn't mean they're gifted at it. But they have a responsibility to do it. But one who's gifted at it, they're good at it.

They do it well. They have followers. Right? Because people recognize and trust their leadership and respect their leadership.

They don't have to push people. People just, yeah, we're with you. Okay. So, how do we apply it?

[32 : 46] He says, the one who leads with zeal. With zeal. In contrast with idleness. With eagerness instead of sluggishness. Diligence instead of lagging.

Right? So, I assume that it's a temptation sometimes when you're leading and you're tired to kind of lag at it.

Right? To get a little sluggish and idle. Because like any of these gifts, you can get exhausted in them.

And so, there's a temptation to let it go. Let it slide. And so, he's encouraging. If this is your gift, keep being zealous at it. And if you can't be zealous, take a little bit of a retreat.

Get back with the Lord. Re-energize. Re-energize. So, where's this word used?

[33 : 43] It's used primarily in texts that deal with known leaders. Right? So, 1 Thessalonians 5. It talks about a leader who is respected.

So, if one has this gift, you will be respected with it. You will have earned people's trust.

Okay? Because you will have applied it with zeal already. You will have taken responsibility to help others, to help steer the body toward maturity. And people will recognize that and follow you and look for that.

We see the same word for zeal used a few verses later in verse 11. Do not be slothful in zeal, but fervent in spirit.

Serve the Lord. So, zeal versus sloth. It's primarily used in Timothy.

[34 : 41] This word for leader is primarily used in Timothy. It's used both of in describing elders and deacons. So, in 1 Timothy 3.2, he says an overseer, speaking about the office of elder, must be above reproach.

And he must be a whole bunch of other things. And then he says he must be one who manages. Here's our word. Who manages or who stands before, who leads his own household well.

Keeping his children under control with all dignity. So, there's ways of keeping children under control, right? There's the dignified way, and there's other ways.

Okay? One who is a good leader at home, a good manager, taking responsibility for his children, does it with dignity.

Okay? Now, why do children have to be kept under control? Is there a problem with children? Do children have a problem with self-control?

[35 : 52] Oh, okay. So, every parent knows this, right? How do I help them develop self-control? Well, that's someone who does that well is a good leader, good manager, good administrator.

Okay? Now, notice how he talks about it. So, he talks about this word as managing his household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity. Then he explains a counterpoint to that.

If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church? So, in other words, an aspect of this leadership is taking care of things.

He's not just that he's organized and, you know, telling them what to do. He's caring. He takes care. He understands the flock.

So, a good parent is going to understand my child and different children are different, right? Boy, that was profound. Different children are different. You should write that down.

[37 : 00] That's really good. So, you have some children who are very amiable and some who are less amiable, right? So, if your children are real amiable, you could look like a brilliant parent, right?

Because they're always sitting quietly. You know, they have no, right? They're not squiggly and wiggly. And then if God graces you with a child that has lots of energy and little attention span and, you know, others things, you know, it's a little bit more involved then, isn't it?

So, it takes good management, right? To learn how to parent different children. Where's my child?

He's not, why isn't he here today? Where do you go? See? And if your child is adopted? No, we won't go there. It's a whole other, yeah.

Because when they're like you and you can see yourself in them, you kind of know maybe how to handle them a little bit. But when they're not like you at all, it's like, oh boy. Got to learn, huh?

[38 : 09] So, that's how he's comparing this word. And then he says the same thing about deacons. Let deacons be husbands of only one wife and good managers of their children and their own household.

So, again, both elders and deacons, people who have responsibility of leadership in the church, first must be tested in how they lead their home. Are they good leaders at home?

How are they with their children? Right? Especially when their children have trouble with self-control. How do they handle that? Right?

So, what does that mean for a gift? Well, that's kind of a starting point for a person with this gift. They're really able to do that well.

They're able to work with people really well. They're able to lead and guide them. And I like this word piloting. They're guiding in the Bible. In 1 Corinthians 14, 28, it uses a different word for, it doesn't use the word leader.

[39 : 18] It uses the word administrator. And there the word means pilot or steer. So, anybody administrators? I'm sure there are people, right?

You guys are kind of bosses and stuff, right? So, you're steering people, right? You're piloting.

You're helping them. You know, Rick can probably relate to piloting. You're piloting them, right? You're helping direct them. I like that picture of the leader.

He's a pilot. He's got a hat. Plane. Or a people. Okay.

Final gift. Mercy. This is an easy one. Everybody has this one. Right? I don't know, Bill.

[40 : 18] What is it? Okay. So, let's describe it this way. It is a gift that shows mercy, obviously, or shows sympathy. There's a heart-soul level thing to this gift.

Not that there isn't to the other ones, but this is where this one starts. There's a feeling. There's a real feeling in this. And I describe it this way.

It's showing sympathy for misery of another. For misery. Now, misery can have a whole kind of different, a lot of different looks to it. But I think this kind of gets a grasp of it.

They have sympathy for misery. They take pity. They show kindness. But they recognize people in some form of misery. And they have mercy on it.

They feel for that. They can identify with it. So, let's define it this way. It's the extra grace ability where they are drawn to be sympathetic.

[41 : 27] Sympathetic meaning they can see and feel and identify with whatever that misery is. And they show great compassion and kindness and patience to broken Christians in misery.

Or broken Christians who are neglected. With either physical or spiritual needs. And their goal is to bring restoration to them with the help of the Holy Spirit.

This is a gift that I think really acts out gospel ministry. I mean, that's what led God to save us.

Mercy. That's what drove Jesus' ministry. Mercy. He felt for us.

Right? So, he left his throne. And we saw this mercy in Christ all through his ministry.

[42 : 36] I mean, people just came to him. And the text would say, he felt moved. He would see a crowd, right?

And it would say, he felt for them. Saw them as not just a crowd of needy people. But he saw them as sheep without a shepherd.

So, he sees the real need. Sees beyond it. So, it's interesting that this is... We might call the people with this gift, you know, they got the big heart.

Right? Right? I mean, they'll just melt for anybody with a need. Right? Not necessarily, but... There are people that have this gift that isn't a spiritual gift.

There's a lot of people that go into professions because they're merciful kind of people. Like the nursing profession, et cetera. Those kind of... You know, or special needs kids or something like that. They have this kind of draw.

[43 : 38] But this is a gift that's an extra measure of that that's applied in a spiritual way within the church. What's fascinating about this gift is he says, the one who does acts of mercy do it with what?

Cheerfulness. That's odd. That's odd. The Greek word literally...

Well, I'll say the Greek word. The Greek word is hilarity. Hear any English in that? Hilarity. With hilarity. Cheerfulness.

Joy. Right? Gladness. So, you think, well, mercy, isn't that applied usually in kind of a negative situation?

Somebody's hurting. Somebody's in pain. You're going to that. And you do it. You know? So, it's interesting. And I think it works in two ways.

[44 : 43] I only thought before this morning, I only thought it worked in one way, as a guard for those that have this gift. Because you can overdo this gift. You'll feel this mercy and compassion for all kinds of needs.

And you'll want to answer all those things. And before long, you'll be just, you know, not very cheerful person. Because you're exhausted. So, I always thought...

And I think partly that he says apply it with cheerfulness to kind of guard you. In other words, if you're coming to a point where you're showing so much mercy and you have no more joy left, that's a good sign that, okay, time for a retreat.

Right? Jesus took retreats from people, didn't he? He said, okay, time to get away from the crowds, guys. Now, the crowd still followed him. But, you know, at least there's an attempt to get away and take a break.

Right? There's a... You have limits. But the other thing, as we had discussion this morning and someone was sharing this morning, I learned there's another aspect to this, which makes total sense.

[45 : 51] If you're showing mercy to someone, what are you wanting to do? You're coming alongside... You're understanding. You're coming alongside them.

But what is it you're wanting to do? Encourage them. Cheer them up. You're coming to bring cheer. Cheer them up. You ever been in the hospital or whatever and you got a nurse that's been a nurse for 100 years and they're a little bit bitter at this point?

And, you know, do they really cheer you up? And then you can have the other kind of nurse that's just... Woo! You know? Kind of like that.

So, though you're applying a gift that can be very emotionally draining and emotionally costly because some people you show mercy to will just take advantage of that and drain you, right?

Jesus had that all the time. Where's the other nine lepers that I cleansed, right? Because you're merciful, you're going to get used sometimes.

[47 : 07] But there's the goal to give.

You're not just coming alongside and commiserating. You're showing mercy to help repair them, to help restore them. So let's look at some illustrations of that. Matthew 9.

Again, Jesus is... He has called Matthew the tax collector. And Matthew's so impressed with Jesus that he invites all his other tax collector friends and other people who are really associated with not the righteous crowd, right?

So Jesus is eating with tax gatherers and sinners. And the Pharisees notice this and criticize, why is your teacher, you know, eating with sinners?

He's supposed to be a rabbi. He's supposed to be righteous. He's out there rubbing shoulders, you know, acting like those people are okay. What's his problem? So what does Jesus say in Matthew 9?

[48 : 16] Go and learn what this means. God desires mercy more than sacrifice. What does that mean?

God desires sacrifice. Yeah, it's right for you to do the right things. Yeah, you're good Pharisee doing our righteous things. Yeah, that's good. But you know what God desires more than that? Mercy.

Because look what God did for you. What if God was a Pharisee toward you and stayed away from you? Because, you know, you're a lost cause.

You're really bad. Jesus felt compassion. He knew why you were a lost cause. He knows why you got in the place. He knows why, right?

So he comes out of mercy. So he comes to, now why did Jesus, why is it considered mercy that Jesus ate with the tax gatherers and the sinners? Why is that merciful?

[49 : 22] What was he being merciful about? What was the problem of Matthew and his friends? They're sinners.

They were outcasts. They're sinners. They're outcasts. Yeah. They're seen as lost. They're seen as untouchable. They're seen as, well, and consider those people.

So they know they're outcasts, okay? They know they're outcasts. They find an actual, a teacher, a rabbi who is willing to come to their home and eat with them.

Why? Because he sees them differently. He sees what their real need is. He sees that they're really miserable people.

Sinners are miserable people because they're caught in their guilt. They're caught in their shame. They're trapped in their inability to fix themselves. They're unable to stop the very things they know they should stop, but they can't do that.

[50 : 29] And they're despised by religious hypocrites who look down on them because, you know, they can't get their act together.

They were probably those children that couldn't have self-control. I don't know. This word is used in reference to, in Matthew 18, remember the king who forgave the huge debt of one of his servants.

And then that servant went out and found one of his peers who owed him something, and he wouldn't forgive him. And when the king found that out, remember, he said, if I had the mercy to forgive you what I did, you should have had the mercy to forgive, right?

So what the king saw, what moved him to forgive was the mercy in seeing the misery of the debtor. He saw what the debtor felt.

I have a debt I can never repay. It's going to take me 10 million years to pay this off. Or whatever the calculation of the debt was in that. And that's exactly what God sees in us, right?

[51 : 53] He sees that we can't pay the debt. He sees how miserable we are in our shame and in our misery of that. Here's another illustration of how this word is used.

In Mark 5, Jesus goes, he goes in the boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. I don't know if we're going to go over to Gennesaret when we go to Israel, Marianne, but on the other side, you go to the other side, there's a hillside there.

And remember there were all these pigs there and a Jew going to the pig area kind of problem.

But Jesus went there anyway. And remember they discovered a man who was demonized. And he was severely demonized. Remember that he was self-abusive. He was self-destructive.

He was running around naked. He was out of his mind. He was living in the tombs, right? All of this stuff going on. He's just, nobody could control him. Nobody could even bind him up.

[52 : 54] And Jesus set this man free. And suddenly this man was sane, clothed in his right mind. And remember what happened to the pigs.

Here comes the pastor joke, right? You know, the demon said, hey, put us into the ham. Oh, I blew it. Put us into the pigs.

And Jesus said, okay, go on the pigs. And the pigs run down the hill. And they're drowned, which is impossible to drown a pig because they float. But they were demonized pigs.

They were a bad case of deviled ham. There was the joke. So I was like, I blew it. I messed it up. Put us into the ham. Yeah, that's good. But the, so at the end, Jesus, the man who was set free, who had been held captive, was set free.

This man now wanted to follow Jesus. And Jesus said, no, you go back. To your hometown. And you tell people, this is what witnessing is.

[54 : 08] You tell people how God showed mercy to you. So extrapolate that word mercy back to what Jesus did to this man.

And who was this man? And why did Jesus show mercy to this man? What did he see in this man?

What was his condition? He was what? Go ahead. He's a wreck.

Absolutely. But what else? He's miserable in what? He's captive. He's enslaved.

He can't control. He can't free himself. He can't control himself. Nobody else can control him. He is damaged. He's a damaged human being.

[55 : 08] He has been neglected. He's been outcast. He is powerless. And he is trapped. Do you know anybody like that?

I don't mean all in one because they're demonized, although maybe they might be. But do you know people in the body that are damaged? Neglected?

Trapped? In some form? If you have this gift and you see that, that's what you'll do.

You'll see that. You'll see that in people. And you'll be drawn and stirred to go help them, help relieve some of that.

Bring some cheer to them. The bottom line example of this mercy is the example of the Good Samaritan.

[56 : 08] Remember the story of the Good Samaritan? Remember the man goes down, Jesus tells the parable, and he's explaining what's a good neighbor, right? Who's a good neighbor? The Good Samaritan.

Isn't that how it goes? Is there? Sorry. I'm going to blame it on vertigo. So, oh, so he says a man goes down and he falls into these thieves.

These thieves beat him up and leave him for dead and take his stuff, right, and leave him. So then he says, what, a priest comes by, sees him, walks on the other side of the road and keeps on going, right?

Then comes a Levite. He does the same thing. He sees the man, right, but walks on the other side, don't want to get involved, just moves on. Then comes along this Samaritan who sees the man, same thing, but feels compassion.

He's moved. He puts himself in the place of that person. What if that were me?

[57 : 29] That's this gift. Right? So when Jesus finished the parable, and remember what the guy did. He felt compassion. Then he went and did what?

He bandaged him up. Right? Right? There, done. Done my good deed for the day, right? No, he wasn't done. That wasn't enough. Put him on his donkey, took him to an inn.

Right? Had other business to do. So, okay, my part's done, right? Nope. Leave some money for the innkeeper, take care of him. I'll come back.

Not done. Not done. See, I might think, because, you know, I just, you know, I gave him a few bucks and I'm good. Right?

I showed mercy. Yeah? Somewhat, sure. Better than nothing. But see, this gift goes beyond that.

[58 : 30] It's concerned with not just the initial compassion, not just the initial helping, but then the recovery. This gift wants to bring them back.

It's a good Samaritan. And now, Jesus is using that as an illustration of what every believer would do, right? Because he was challenged with, you know, what's the great, what are the great commandments?

Well, great commandments, love God and love your neighbor, right? And the man was trying to justify himself by saying, well, who's my neighbor? You know, who's my neighbor? And so, Jesus takes it to the extremity and he's saying, oh, the Samaritan's your neighbor.

Anybody who's in your path as you go is your neighbor. Anyone in need is your neighbor. So, that's a general mercy that we're all supposed to show. So, what this illustration shows us is that the person with this gift, that's where they start.

That's kind of the everyday thing for them. Or when they come to the congregation and they see needs. That's where they go. They're just drawn to that. I don't have that gift.

[59 : 47] I'm intrigued and impressed with that gift. That's why I think it's a real example of gospel ministry.

It is the heart of God for his people.

Paul says, he talks about grace as God's mercy toward him. He said in 1 Timothy 1, he said, Even though I formerly was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent opponent.

What insolent means? He was violent. Remember how Paul used to drag people by their hair? Right? I mean, in other words, he enjoyed doing that. He was a violent person.

And being able to arrest these Christians gave him an excuse to use his violence. And now he's admitting it.

[60 : 58] Right? Even though, remember how he talked about himself in, where is it? Philippians, where he says, you know, according to the law, blameless. Right?

And all this. Wait a minute. He says he's a blasphemer and a violent. Well, he's a blasphemer because he was cursing Jesus when he didn't know Jesus was the Lord.

So he found out, oops. I'm not so blameless after all. And then when he's finding out that he's persecuting Jesus' people and not some cult.

Okay, now I'm a violent aggressor. So he said, even though I was all these things, I received mercy. I received mercy. I received what I didn't deserve.

I was the unworthy one. I was the one who was a failure. I was the one who thought I had my act together and I really had no act together at all.

[62 : 00] So there's different kinds of sinners. There's the sinners like Matthew, right? That they're just, you know, they're just over the line and that's just where they are and tough. And then there's the sinners who are the righteous, supposedly righteous people who think they're okay and really aren't even close to being okay.

Because they don't really know the Lord. They just think they know the certain rules and they're okay. And so those are the kind of people that when God exposes their sin, they say like Paul, I'm actually the worst sinner.

Are you drawn to hurting people?

Do you identify with people who are damaged and neglected and powerless and broken and suffering and lonely and caught in sin?

See, as God has seen your damaged, powerless, trapped misery and come to you and shown mercy, so you do with others if you have this gift.

[63 : 28] So I close with this. Speaking of mercy. Are you in need of mercy today? Are you in need of?

Maybe you're that Matthew person that's out there and just miserable in your sin. Or maybe you're the righteous person, at least by certain standards, but you know it's all a lie.

And you need mercy. Because you recognize in yourself a brokenness. You recognize that in you, you are damaged.

You are guilty. You are powerless. You are powerless. In yourself. And you are trapped. And so maybe today, you recognize that.

That you need mercy. You need someone who can set you free. Who will see your condition.

[64 : 45] You will see your condition. And come and show mercy to you. You know who that person is?

Yes. He is full of mercy. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your incredible mercy. We pray that you would extend it to each one today who sees their need.

We thank you, Father, that you come to both the sinner who is the acknowledged, recognized, no doubt about we are sinners and failures kind of people.

But you also come for the Pauls. The people who think they're okay. Who follow the rules.

[66 : 02] And yet are hypocrites and just as broken. Just as damaged.

Thank you that, Father, you don't judge by outward appearance, but you judge by our heart. And so come to those whose hearts are open today. And set them free.

And cleanse them. And bring restoration. Show mercy. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.