

“What to Do When the Economy Stinks – Part 2”

Text: Romans 12:5-6

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

Oakland, California

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PRAY!

This morning we continue the series I started the first Sunday of October, “You Are Shaped for Significance.” We looked at Job 10:8, “*Your (God’s) hands shaped me and made me...*” and saw that God has made each of us unique. This uniqueness was broken down into an acronym: S-H-A-P-E, SHAPE. Over the next five weeks we were going to take a closer look at each part of our own personal SHAPE.

In the days before Christmas you’re going to hear one word a lot. That’s the word “gift”: gift giving, gift receiving, gift wrapping, gift lists, gift certificates.

I want to talk to you this morning about another kind of gift, spiritual gifts. This is the S in SHAPE: Spiritual gifts.

God is a giver. The moment you give your life to Jesus Christ, God gives you three things:

1. **Eternal life.** When I open my life to Jesus Christ, instantly I’m given eternal life. Romans 6:23, “*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*” I never have to worry about my future. I know I’m going to heaven. It’s solid and secure.
2. **His Spirit.** The moment I give my life to Jesus Christ, God gives His Spirit to me to live inside me. The Bible says, “*God has given us His Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.*” And He’ll never leave you and you’ll never be alone. God is with you from every point on after you give your life to Christ. The Holy Spirit is in your life.
3. **A special gift to use for His purpose.** Romans 12:6, “*God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.*” New English, “*The gifts we possess differ as they are allotted to us by God’s grace, and must be exercised accordingly.*”

When you are saved, when you become a believer, a follower of Jesus Christ, God gives you a brand new purpose for living, a new life purpose. And He never asks you to do something that He doesn’t give you the ability to do. So when He gives you a new life purpose, He also, at the point of salvation, gives you a special gift or gifts to fulfill that purpose.

The Bible has a lot to say about spiritual gifts. There are at least twenty of them listed in Scripture. We couldn’t even define them all in the time allotted. The

Bible says that every Christian gets at least one gift. It's different from natural ability. Everybody has natural abilities. But only believers have spiritual gifts.

- When you were born physically, you were given some physical gifts by God. Hearing, taste, touch, sight, smell natural talents...
- When you're born again – when you're spiritually born – God gives you some spiritual abilities to serve Him. Every believer has at least one. They are given to you at the moment of salvation. God gives them sovereignly. That means He chooses which ones you're going to get – you don't choose. They're given by grace – you don't earn the gift. It's just God's free gift to you.

Anytime you're serving God and you're doing it well and you're doing it with enjoyment, you're demonstrating giftedness.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. MY GIFTS SHOW GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE.

- A. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, *"There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working but the same God works in all of them."*
- B. Your spiritual gifts determine how God wants you to serve Him, once you understand what your spiritual gift is. The gift was given to you the moment you were saved, it answers a lot of questions, like...
 - What's God's plan for my life?
 - What does he want me to do now that I'm a Christian?
 - What should be my ministry?
 - How should I spend my time?
 - Where should I focus my life?
 - What is God's will, purpose and plan for me?
- C. All of these factors are answered when you understand your gift. Every Christian is called to serve the cause of Christ, but your spiritual gift shows how you particularly are to serve him.
 - If you're gifted in organizing, then God wants you to be an organizer.
 - If you're gifted in teaching then you need to be a teacher.
 - If you're gifted in music then you ought to be a music person.
 - If you're gifted in reaching non-Christians you ought to be an evangelist.
 - Whatever you're gifted in determines how you're to use your life for God.
- D. Notice the word "different". It's used three times in this passage. It says there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, different kinds of service, different kinds of working. Every gift in your life is unique. You're not to copy other people's spiritual gifts. God knows the gift that is best for you. That's why He chooses it.
- E. Here's an example: If each of seven spiritual gifts were represented

in a family. When somebody in the family dropped the dessert on the floor at the dinner table, here's what each person would say according to their giftedness:

- Mercy: "Don't feel bad, it could have happened to anybody!"
- Preaching: "That's what happens when you're not careful!"
- Serving: "Let me help you clean it up!"
- Teaching: "The reason it fell is because it was too heavy on one side." Your motivation is to explain.
- Exhortation: "Next time let's serve the desert with the meal!"
- Administration: "Jim would you get the mop? Sue, pick it up. Mary, help me fix another dessert."

F. We're all different and God's given us many, many different gifts. My gift shows God's plan for my life individually.

II. WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO WITH MY GIFT?

1. Discover it. 1 Corinthians 12:1, "*I don't want you to be ignorant of gifts. I want you to know them.*" God wants you to know them more than you do because He wants you to use them. He's not trying to hide them from you. How do I discover my spiritual gifts? Two ways. By examining and by experimenting. By examining my Christian life and by experimenting with different kinds of service.

A. First, I discover my spiritual gifts by looking back on my Christian life and saying, "In the ways I've served God so far, what have I enjoyed, doing? What has God blessed? Where have people been impacted? Where have I seen results?" If you've never gotten involved in any ministries since you've become a Christian there's no way you're going to know your gift. That's one of the reasons you don't know what it is, because you've never gotten involved in anything. Often you get involved in something and other people will see a spiritual gift in you before you do. They can see it in you. Look back on your life.

1. Seminary class

B. If you don't have anything to look back on, you're going to have to depend on the second way which is by experimenting with different kinds of ministries and service. There are many ways you can serve here at PBPC. What interests you? You try different ministries and one of them will feel like your niche, what God's gifted you to do, what you're good at. It will be enjoyable. You'll like doing it. When you do that, you've found your gift.

1. Sunday school, NOC, homeless, taught classes, Class president., hospitality...

C. The only way you discover your gift is get out there and start doing something. Try it. You examine and experiment with different kinds of ministries so that you discover the gift that God made you to have, so that it is fulfilling and it fills your self-worth and you find enjoyment and it impacts society. That's the purpose.

2. **Develop it.** Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:14, *“Don’t neglect the spiritual gift that is in you.”* A lot of you already know what you’re good at. You know how God’s gifted you. But you’re not using it for God’s glory. You’re neglecting your spiritual gift. Only you know why, but know that Satan will do everything he can to keep you from using your spiritual gift so that you don’t know the thrill of being used by God.

A. You need to keep your gift alive: strengthen it, deepen it, increase it, cultivate it. Don’t get discouraged. Don’t quit. Just because you’re gifted in an area doesn’t mean it’s easy. Don’t give up.

3. **Use it.** 1 Peter 4:10, *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”* Circle “use”. God want you to use it and the church is the place to discover and develop and use your gift. That’s one of the purposes of PBPC: to help you discover, develop and use your gift (CLASS 301).

A. Ephesians 4:12, *“Why is it that He gives us these special abilities to do certain things best? It’s so God’s people will be equipped to do better work for Him, building up the church, the body of Christ, to a position of strength and maturity.”* When I look at this, I think God’s plan is brilliant. God’s plan is this: “Everyone will get a spiritual gift if they’re a Christian so that everybody can contribute, so that everybody’s important, so that nobody feels insignificant, so that we all function together like a symphony. God gives every Christian a spiritual gift so that each person can be a partner with God in the most important task in the world, building His kingdom.”

B. God’s plan is that some people set up, some people organize, some people make artistic signs, some people do music, some people teach, some people work with kids, some people know how to raise the money financially, some people put it all together. Everybody’s important. No one is more important than the others. It’s all God’s plan. It takes everybody.

What we are talking about here is of vital importance. God is not going to hold you accountable for gifts he didn’t give you. But He is going to hold you accountable for gifts He did give you. The Bible says, *“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”* God has made an investment in you and it is a sin to waste it. There are a lot of people out there who fear death. Don’t fear death! If you’re a believer you’re going to heaven. Instead of fearing death, you ought to fear a wasted life. God has shaped you for significance. And the first of that shape –S – is spiritual gifts.

God has given you a gift – the next step is yours. What are you going to do about it?

PRAY

Only God knows what kind of spiritual explosion and excitement that could happen in our church if everybody discovered, developed and used their gift. Would you make that commitment today and say to God in your heart:

“Father, with your help, I making a commitment today to discover, develop and use the gift You’ve given me.”

Some of you have never even opened your heart to Christ. The Bible says that “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.” Would you accept God’s greatest gift, Jesus Christ and ask Him to come into your life today?

“Father, I look out on these faces and I see so much potential and I see what you want to do in people’s lives. May they catch a vision for it today. In Jesus’ name. Amen.