

October 30, 2011

Sermon Overview:

Why does it seem that in church 20% of the people do 80% of the work? Perhaps it is because we have adopted a consumerist mindset: we go to church to consume and not to contribute. Or perhaps it is because we have adopted a professionalized view of ministry: only those who are pastors are really equipped to serve. Well, whatever the reasons are that keep us from serving, it is only through the gospel that we can overcome these inhibitors and serve. This week, we considered how the gospel motivates our service and ministry.

First, we saw how **the gospel tells that our righteousness and our good works are God's gift to us.** Therefore, salvation does not stop with the forgiveness of sins, but includes the righteous persons we become and the righteous things we will do. Good works are not so much what we do for God, good works are God's gift to us (Eph 2:10). Secondly, the **gospel tells us that we have been tailor-made for a specific work**, designed by God to accomplish a job prepared for us. While other believers were designed by God to do other things, even similar things, no one else is created to do those very things God has created you to do. **The gospel tells us that God makes us useful.**

While we were made useful, we were not made to be useful by ourselves. We only do specific gifts. Thus **the gospel also tells us that we were designed to work on a team**, to be part of a body, the church, which is made up of different people with different gifts and strengths. The implications of this for our service are spelled out in 1 Cor 12:12–13.

As 1 Cor 12:12–13 makes clear, we were not just saved into a personal relationship with Jesus; we were saved into a community, a body of believers and in that body, we all have a part to play. Thus **the gospel also tells us that we were saved to be needed.** This is not to say that we are without flaws. Of course there are areas of brokenness and sin in our lives. But God is greater than our flaws; and in creating us for good works, he can even use these flaws for his good purposes and our personal growth.

If all this is true, then the thing we need most to overcome our lack of service is to believe the gospel—that by grace God gives us specific works to do and in Christ has equipped us to do them.

Questions for Preparation and Discussion Note that some questions are designated for preparation (P) and some for group discussion (D.) Study based on the English Standard Version

Getting to Know Each Other:

1. What was the most fulfilling job or task you have ever done in the service of other people? [D]

Looking at the Bible:

1. Read 1 Cor 12:1–11 alongside Rom 15:3–8. Paul says that he does not want the congregation to be ignorant about spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:1).
 - a. To whom does Paul say gifts are given? What implication does this hold for how you view yourself? What implication does this hold for how you view other Christians? [D]

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- b. By whom does Paul say gifts are given? What implications does this hold for the distribution of the gifts? In other words, were gifts given to the right people? [P]
 - c. For what purpose are the gifts given and what implications does this hold for our use of gifts? [P]
2. It is common for Christians to speak of salvation as if it was a moment-in-time gift, granting the forgiveness of sins. While this is true and glorious...
 - a. How might Eph 2:10 and 1 Cor 12:12–13 enlarge our view of salvation? [P]
 - b. From your experience, what negative consequences can occur when we restrict salvation to a moment-in-time gift, granting forgiveness? [D]

Looking at Our Hearts

1. It is common to hear that in church 20% of the people do 80% of the work.
 - a. Why do you think more people don't serve or minister? [D]
 - b. What are some things that might prevent you from serving? [D]
 - c. How might your lack of motivation stem from a failure to believe the gospel? [D]
 - d. In what ways does our lack of service belittle the gifts God has given to us? [D]
2. Of the statements below, which ones do you believe? Which ones do you struggle to believe? Which one's do you not want to believe? Why? [D]
 - a. *Your good works are God's gift to you.*
 - b. *You are perfectly tailored for your specific work.*
 - c. *You were saved into a body, a community.*
 - d. *You were given spiritual gifts.*
 - e. *You were made to be useful and needed, God's gift to the church.*
3. What specific practices might your group take on to encourage one another to believe these things?
4. What specific practices might your group take on to encourage one another to use their gifts to serve?

Praying for Each Other (*Use these suggestions alone or with other prayer requests to help focus your time in prayer together*).

- Pray that God might use your group to encourage all who feel that they are not gifted to serve.
- Pray that God might use you to direct people to what their gifts are and the ways in which they might serve others.
- Pray for specific ways in which we might value not only our own gifts, but the gifts of others.