



Spirit Life (Part 2) – A Father's Gifts

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Deone Drake: Happy Father's Day to you. Wow, Happy Father's Day to you.

Jonathan Drake: Happy Father's Day to you.

Deone: That was really awkward.

Jonathan: At least someone said it.

Deone: This right here is the reason that I'm a dad and I think it's kind of a cool Father's Day present to actually be communicating God's Word together.

Let's get something out of the way here. Almost every single Sunday my wife and I hear someone come up to us and say "you must be proud of your son". And although we wouldn't use that word necessarily, we are. But we're thankful. And the reason that we're thankful isn't because he's able to communicate a message like he is able to which we're very thankful for, but it's because he walks with God. And because he walks with God, he

loves his wife well. He loves his family well. He loves God's church well.
And that you're proud of.

And I say that to us dads to remind ourselves that in the day to day stuff we could easily forget what's important. We know that. And what's really important is that we point our children towards walking with God and loving God. And just let that be an encouragement to you.

Now Father's Day for us was special, but it was also a little weird because Jonathon has a little bit of different take on Father's Day. I have a homemade card like I'm sure you Dad's do as well. And this says "Happy Father's Day, thanks for giving me lots of breaks, Dad, because if you didn't I'd still be grounded for scribbling on the table at Pizza Hut. Happy Father's Day!" I think he wrote that last year. Another Father's Day card, which I could not find, it says on the outside "Happy Father's Day" and inside it says "DNA test pending". Now Jonathan: I destroyed it, that's why you couldn't find it. Deone: He destroyed it. He can deny it all he wants, he's my kid. But he's always had this strange idea, and I've never heard another kid say something like this. He believed that on Father's Day he should be getting all the gifts because if it weren't for him, I wouldn't be a father. Would someone with a biological background explain to him after this service that if it weren't for me and his mother, he wouldn't be here. That's necessary. Jonathan: No, that's not necessary. Deone: We don't need to have that talk. Jonathan: We're fine, we're good. Deone: That was his mindset. Jonathan actually entered Liberty University back in 2006 with forty-five hours towards his Bachelor's Degree because he took all of the classes that we offer here through our Renovation Institute. And yes, that

was a shameless plug for affordable accredited education. But because of that, he saved us thousands of dollars at Liberty University getting his Bachelor's Degree. And of course, he thinks that he deserves a cut of it.

But that's what it means to be a dad, isn't it? I mean, it seems like it's our number one responsibility to invest in our kids. We talk a lot about living with an open hand, sometimes we feel as dads like we're living with an open wallet. But that's okay because you know what? Father's know how to give good gifts to their children. Father's know how to give good gifts to their children. Notice that I've emphasized the word "good". Because not every gift, not everything we do for our kids or could do for our kids is good. And we need to step back and see the big picture.

For example, it may not be good to give them something simply by way of pressure because every kid in the neighborhood has it. It may not be good in the long run to involve them in every last sports event and every extracurricular event so that they end up not realizing that the most important thing is that they walk with God. Because you see, when I handed him something or when I invested in something, it wasn't just investing in a child, I was developing an adult, and that needed to be stepping back.

So it meant a lot of things to me but one thing it really meant that I knew that it wouldn't be good to give him everything he wanted. I knew it wouldn't be good for me to give him everything he wanted. I think of his 1993 Christmas list. He's six. Twenty-four pages long. It's in columns. Catalog, page number, the item and the price. And I calculated that if I had

gotten him everything on that list, it would cost more than the house we were living in at the time. So I knew it wouldn't be good to give him everything that he wanted, but it would have made him like me for a while, and if that's what your deal is, then go for it. But I couldn't do that and for a couple of reasons.

One, I couldn't do that because I wanted him to know that life wasn't all about him. I think that's important. When a child gets everything they want and when a parent is totally unable or unwilling to say "no", that's exactly the kind of adult they produce. And as I step back I couldn't do that to Gabe, his wife. Where she would be saddled with someone who thinks that life is all about him. I couldn't do that to the people that he would end up working with. That he would think that life is all about him. So I couldn't do that for that reason.

I also couldn't do it because I wanted him to need others who had what he didn't have. So I didn't give him everything because I wanted him to need others who had what he didn't. Isn't one of the joys of childhood saying "hey, I'm going down to play with so-and-so because he just got this new toy for Christmas and I don't have it and I think it's cool". But having everything that he wanted wouldn't give him the incentive to do that. I also wanted him to share what he had with others.

You see, one of the tensions that we have as parents, isn't it, the balance between giving them what they really need and then sometimes teaching them generosity and going beyond that and surprising them with something. And sometimes we don't know what that looks like, but we

have to step back and say what is the effect of our generosity on our children. I wanted the effect of our generosity to be where he would develop a generous spirit and he would share with others. Not misinterpret it as a right for entitlement. So I wanted him to share what he had with others.

But I also and perhaps most importantly, I wanted him to see who the gift was pointing to. Christmas for his eighth year was miserable. The next year was better. But I didn't want him to see me as a forever life-long Santa Claus. I wanted him to see who was behind the gift and that's the giver. And so now, almost thirty years old, his Christmas lists are much shorter. They still exist, by the way, but they're much shorter.

But here's what's really important. One of us is at Tim Horton's and the other says "hey, why don't you come by and we can just chat". And that relationship that we have with each other is priceless. And that's what I was longing for. My greatest joy is that the gifts are no longer important, the relationship is.

Now I need to tell you, I didn't do that perfectly. But I hopefully did it in such a way that I pointed to the One who does. Listen to these words that Jesus says in Luke chapter 11. "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent, or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

What's He saying here? No dad, no father would ever give to his children something that would eventually harm them. We wouldn't do that. That would be evil. And Jesus says if you being evil, what's He doing? A Hebrew idiom, to make a comparison, if you think you're good, the good that God is far and away surpasses the good that we would do to the point where it's almost evil. If you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

What's He saying? The Father, our heavenly Father knows how to give the best gift to His children. Our heavenly Father knows how to give the best gift to His children. Because here's what we really need. Here's what our sons and daughters really need. They need the Holy Spirit in their lives.

So we've just begun this series on the Holy Spirit. Last week Pastor Jerry unpacked two questions for us. Who is the Holy Spirit and what does the Holy Spirit do? And all that he said funneled down to this one great idea that we want to launch off of this morning. The Holy Spirit is the active presence of God in the world who calls attention to Jesus.

What we want to begin doing now, today is to focus on the how. How does the Holy Spirit call attention to Jesus? And for this moment He gives spiritual gifts to His children. And He will do it in such a way that you and I will see the same four elements hidden behind this message that drive it. That He'll do it perfectly. The Holy Spirit will give gifts to us in such a way that we don't think life is all about us. The Holy Spirit will give gifts to us so that we need others who have gifts that we don't have. The Holy Spirit will

give gifts so that we will generously share them with others. And the Holy Spirit will give gifts to us to point us to the One who gave the gift and that is God.

Jonathan: So when you contemplate that the Father, the Heavenly Father that we have, He knows how to give the best gift. It really moves you to consider what is miraculous. Because it's a miracle, isn't it? That what the Bible, how the Bible describes us apart from Jesus is that we are actually self-declared enemies with God. That we aren't just disinterested, but that we're actively walking in the opposite direction, a life apart from Jesus. But God in His mercy, He brings us across the line of battle that we've declared with God through sin. And He doesn't just destroy the hostility that exists and make us an ally, although He does that. But instead, He makes us an adopted child. We're adopted into His family.

Paul describes that very thing in the book of Galatians, chapter 4 beginning in verse 4. Take a look at this verse; "But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are His sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are His child, God has also made you also an heir."

It's just astounding. It's actually baffling for me to think about this, that God takes us from an enemy slave. And even as we just sang together that "I'm no longer a slave to fear, I'm a child of God", that's a reality because of what Paul says in Galatians 4 that God did. That God takes us as enemy

slaves and He elevates us to a beloved child. He elevates us to a place where we receive His affection and we experience a relationship with Him in a way that Jesus, His only Son, knows and experiences the Father's love. It's astounding that we could be brought into that. But one of the ways that He does that is He gives us His residing Spirit that allows us to call God "Abba", which is just an Aramaic term that means "Dad". That we would be able to call God Dad instead of Judge is astounding. And His Spirit residing within us is what makes that possible.

But one of the ways that God confirms His Spirit's presence in our lives is through spiritual gifts. But maybe you've got some misunderstandings or a lack of understanding about what the spiritual gifts are and what we hope to do today is point you to the Scripture and hopefully help you forward in your journey of following Christ in this one specific arena. And if you've been around any length of time you've heard us talk about spiritual gifts before, and you maybe even are able to connect it to something that we call one of our Four Outcomes. That we believe that there should be a few things that are evident in the life of every single person who is in Christ, every single believer in Jesus.

And one of those outcomes is this. I wanted you to see it. It's that each believer will discover and use spiritual gifts. That each believer will discover and use spiritual gifts. We believe that the Scripture, the testimony of the Scripture says that this this should be evident in every single person who claims to be in Christ. But what do we mean when we say that? We mean that each Jesus-follower is gifted by God for the

common good and the advancement of the Gospel. Everyone is necessary. Everyone. Everyone in Christ is necessary to that end.

Now you maybe have seen that in print before, maybe you've seen in on a wall before displayed. But maybe even if that's true, you may not understand what a spiritual gift is, let alone what yours is. That's why we want to go to the Scripture. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, this is probably his longest treatise on the topic of spiritual gifts. He addresses a few specific things that I want to call our attention to today, beginning in verse number 7 of 1 Corinthians 12, it says this: "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." To each one, to every single believer the manifestation of the Spirit is given. Manifestation means to be revealed, to be disclosed and displayed. It means that it's not hidden, it's not concealed, it's evident.

And so maybe we see in manifestation another word that we hear and use sometimes and that's the word "manifesto". If someone publishes a manifesto what are they doing? They're publishing their thoughts on the specific topic or a bunch of topics so that they can be known and spread. And so what God does in giving us the Spirit of God is that He uncovers His presence in our lives in a few specific ways, not the least of which is through Spirit gifts that He gives to each one.

He says something similar, Paul says something similar in verse 11 of this same chapter, 1 Corinthians 12. Look what this says: "And all these gifts are the work (or the activity) of one and the same Spirit (they're His gifts, they're His) and He distributes them (here it is again) to each one, just as

He determines". He distributes them to each one, in other words that He wants every single member of Christ's body to be participating in this one thing, the gifts of the Spirit. And He gives different gifts to different believers, yet they're all working towards one purpose.

But what is a spiritual gift? Let me give us this definition, that maybe we can grab onto and grab some handles onto so that we have an idea of what we're talking about this morning. And here's that definition: "A spiritual gift is a Spirit-energized ability that puts Jesus on display in my life." It's a capital "S" Spirit-energized ability. This is coming from God's own Spirit that it's His abilities that are working out through my life, putting Jesus on display. Remember how we established and began this series, that the role of the Spirit is to draw attention to Jesus. That's what He does.

So that's exactly what takes place when we receive the gifts of the Spirit, upon our adoption into God's family. When we receive those gifts upon our adoption, we get brought into the family business making Jesus known in the world. And He equips us for that very thing.

But why does God give us the gifts of the Spirit? Maybe that's a question we need to answer. Why does God give us the gifts of the Spirit? I'll give you a few things, you might think of more. But here's just three for our purposes today. Number one: So we act as a unified body. So we act as a unified body. We get this idea of the body of Christ, you maybe have heard us use that term and Paul develops that idea in 1 Corinthians 12 comparing the church to like a physical body.

But that's also a metaphor that he develops further in Romans, and I want to specifically draw your attention to Romans chapter 12 beginning in verse 4. Look what Paul says here: "For just as each of us has one body (okay, that makes sense, I've got one body) with many members, (many limbs, many digits, all those things), and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us." He says, even though there's diversity there has to be an inherent unity. Even though we don't all have the same gift, we're all working together as one body.

And this makes sense to us, right? Because in a physical sense, like in our physical bodies we get this. We don't even need to explain it. But for the sake of analogy here's what we know. If my hand goes rogue when I'm cooking up some burgers this afternoon, and my hand just decides to put flat right on the grill? That Weber grill is going to leave a beautiful imprint of the logo on my hand. That's, what happened there? My hand wasn't listening to the signals that were being sent to the hand. That's not an indication of health, that's an indication of disease. But when all of the bodies systems are working in tandem with one another, that is an indication of health. If I could switch metaphors for just one moment, I would say it this way. That we would act in concert with one another towards a specific purpose. That we would act in concert with one another.

So think about a musical concert. Every instrument is not playing the same exact note all the time. It's not like they got the oboe and the violin and the flute and everybody else to just play "G" for two hours. That's not a

concert. That's obnoxious, alright? That's not a concert. That's not even music. That's just a note. But for us to see a concert where every instrument might be playing different yet complimentary notes at the same time, there's a harmonious display that is just beautiful to us and we appreciate it's majesty when we see it.

And so it is in the body of Christ, that there's different but complimentary gifts that are all working together towards this one purpose. To make Jesus known, to put Jesus on display. It's not on the screen, but Paul says in Ephesians 3 verse 10 that God's intent for the church is that now they would testify, reveal, display that His manifold wisdom of God would be made known everywhere. The manifold wisdom of God is hidden in Jesus Christ so what are we saying, that God's intent for the church is that they would make Jesus known. And so these gifts of the Spirit, when we work together in that endeavor, we make Jesus known in the earth. We put Jesus on display.

And this goes against the cultural mantra that we receive all the time, that you don't need anybody else. You do you. You're just kind of like your own island, you don't need anybody else. But that's not how life works, and that's certainly not how the body of Christ works, that we all need each other. And the Spirit gives us a diversity of gifts so that we could be in harmony with one another and therefore in harmony with God's purpose. Not only for our lives as individuals, but for our lives as the body.

So the first reason God gives us the gifts is so that we would act as a unified body. The second reason is this. So we mature. So we mature. Well, that

makes sense, right? Because to think that you don't need anybody else and you can just kind of do it on your own or only align yourself with people who share your passion, that's an immature way of looking at life. And so for us to grow up and mature in our faith, God gives us these gifts so we mature as a body.

But these gifts, I need to tell you, these gifts are, maybe follow this train of thought. These gifts are for each of us. We've established that already. The gifts though, and there's a kind of erroneous idea that exists sometimes within Christianity, not necessarily within our church, but kind of exists within maybe the broader church. And the myth is this. That the leaders are gifted, and the body of Christ just watches the leaders use their gifts. That's not how God designed the body to work. That too is an immature view. Now God has given gifts to leaders, and God has given leaders to His church, but these leaders don't replace Jesus. They are under-shepherds that direct everybody to the Good Shepherd who is Christ, the head of the body.

But we need to understand that the gifts that the leaders received, they have a purpose, and Paul explains what that is in Ephesians chapter 4. Look at how he says this in 4, verse 11 through 16: "So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and the teachers, (these gifted leaders) to equip Christ's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every

wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect (here's this word again), the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does it's work."

So God gives leaders to the church, gifted leaders to the church in order to fan into flame the gifts of the Spirit within the body. That in doing this, they will, leaders will equip God's people for works of service to find out the gifts of the Spirit in their lives and use them. That's the role of leaders. The role of leaders is not to vicariously perform works of service on your behalf and then you contribute to the ministry to say "good job, keep it up, pastor". But instead you give and contribute to the body of Christ to validate that Ephesians 4:11 and 12 is taking place in your life. That leaders are getting up in front of you and saying things like "Have you discovered your gifts? Are you using your gifts"? If that's not happening or if you're not responding to it in obedience, then that may be an indication not of maturity but of immaturity.

And Paul says that leaders are to do this, but he doesn't stop there. He says leaders should be building up towards maturity, but then he says the body itself builds up towards maturity. Why? Because leaders aren't in a hierarchy above the body. Leaders are an empowering agency within the body to push God's people towards service. And when God's people take that step of obedience and leverage the gifts of the Spirit in their lives, that friends is an indication of a maturing body of believers. That's what we

want for you. And we don't want you just for that to fall on deaf ears. We want that for you.

But there's a third thing. Why does God give us the Spirit gifts? It's so that we will proclaim, our lives will proclaim God's glory. It's so our lives proclaim God's glory. Here's what I've noticed, and I'm guilty of this too. We have a tendency to compartmentalize our own lives. That I've got my God life over here, and this is when I bring it out, on Sunday. And then I've got my work life over here. And then I've got my love life over here and every other bucket that you can think of. But that's an erroneous way of looking at life.

Now we to this point, we've been looking at what Paul has said about the Spirit gifts, but the Apostle Peter, he also weighs in on this topic. And I want you to see what he says in 1st Peter chapter 4. He says, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another." That sounds like a theme we've heard already. There's some congruence in what the Scripture is telling us. So that that's huge for us. "Use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace; whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God." Or some translations say as if you were speaking the very words of God. "Whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies - in order that," listen to this, "in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

That in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. Aside from how beautifully trinitarian this passage is, that you use the Spirit gifts to glorify the Father through the Son. Aside from that beautiful reality, here's

what we can't miss. You don't just have this God life over here, and that's exactly where it stays until Sunday, June 25th. Here it is Sunday, June 18th, and God life stays on this shelf until that time. And then I've got work life, and then I've got love life, our school life, or I've got friends life, or hobbies life. You've got all these different compartments.

And what Peter reminds us of is that these Spirit gifts aren't restricted to within the walls of a building that belongs to a church nonprofit. The gifts of the Spirit are yours to go with you on the road wherever God has you, that in every way it's a spirit energized ability that puts Jesus on display in your life, so that in everything, you may bring glory to God. That our lives may proclaim God's glory in every single way.

So that is some of the why behind spiritual gifts. But as I'm giving that to you, as you're hearing that, maybe some of you are thinking, okay. I hear the why. But I need to know the what. Give me the what of spiritual gifts. Specifically, what is my gift?

And to help us there, Paul writes these amazing words. Jonathan has referred several times the 1st Corinthians 12. It's where where Paul unpacks what spiritual gifts are. But he starts off with what is really a very ironic statement to me. It looks like this. I do not want you to be ignorant. I do not want you to be uninformed about your spiritual gifts. It's interesting to me, because if we really take a survey of the body of Christ, many people are. That they might say, I don't know what my spiritual gift is. Or I'm not using my spiritual gift.

We have to start from the vantage point that God does not have an unemployment line. God wants to use everyone. And so that includes you. You might be new to this whole thing. And you've never even heard this term mentioned. Or perhaps you've been a believer for a long time, and you would say, I still don't know what my spiritual gift is. And it very well may be because you haven't used it.

But what I know what Paul spoke these words about I don't want you to be uninformed about your spiritual gift, to resolve that issue he didn't hand to them a spiritual gift test. Now we got some online, and if you if that will help you point you in the right direction, that's great. Use it.

But I would rather give to you what what I think are four very helpful questions that might begin to to point you in the direction of what my spiritual gift is. And so these are questions of reflection for you to take home and to be looking at them, and to ponder them, and to seek wise counsel as to where God is pointing you.

Here's the first. What needs do I see? What needs do I see? Using the body analogy, if every part of our anatomy had eyes to it, all those parts would have different perspectives. The ears would have a different perspective than the hands. The hands would have a different perspective than the feet. And we believe that if a person is a follower of Christ, they are endowed with a spiritual gift, that one of the ways that will be ascertained is that they will see things in the body to advance the Gospel that other people will not see.

I want to go another step further. I call that a burden. And a burden comes from Lord. Sometimes when we think about needs, we might get distracted and think about some some temporal things that really don't matter. Like I think the church should be doing this. But rather a burden comes from from God. It sounds like Bob Pierce who founded World Vision said, God break my heart with the things that break your heart. And so a spiritual gift may be when God enters into your life and speaks to you, and begins to break your heart for the things that break his heart. And it might sound like this. What breaks my heart is the lost. And you need to spend time with them. What breaks your heart is that people need truth. What breaks your heart is that people need someone to come alongside of them and comfort them and show compassion. What breaks your heart is encouraging people. What breaks your heart is the need for generosity. What breaks your heart is the need for leaders to rise up and do the work of the mission. So part of the question of finding out what my spiritual gift is, asking the question what needs do I see?

A second question. What passions do I have? Or what is my passion? What passion do I have? I believe, we believe, that all of the the things that we're talking about related to the spiritual gifts all have a core, and that core is intimacy with the Father. We believe that that drives all of this. And the reason that's so is because the closer you are to God, the closer you are to God, the more you will know His heart's desire for your life. And you will be gripped by it. That's what passion is. This is what I must do.

Now, we know what passion is. As dads, what we might know how to talk for hours about every last shot we made on the golf course. All 117 of

them. We know what that's like. But what about spiritual things? I am gripped by this. This is what makes me alive.

Hear the passion of Jesus in these words. It's not on the screen. Luke 19:10. The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost. Hear the passion of the Apostle Paul who says in Galatians 4:19, it's like I'm in labor pains until Christ is formed in you. What is that for you? What makes you come alive for the sake of advancing the Gospel? And if you say, I can't think of anything, then my encouragement to you is to get alone with God, and say God, give me a passion to be involved in advancing the Gospel.

There's a third question. What opportunities have I had? What opportunities have I had, where I begun to experience, to taste what it means to be involved in the endeavor of advancing the Gospel? God's plan is that you are equipped, as Jonathan has mentioned, so that you can do the work of the ministry. And that means that you are involved in some place of service. See the progression. You see a need. God lays on your heart a burden. You are driven to pursue Him, and because of that pursuit, He gives you a passion for something. And then you begin praying, God open doors for me to use what I believe I am passionate about.

And here's the deal. When those doors open, walk through them. So just begin going through the rolodex of your mind, and asking the question, has anyone ever said to you, you know what? We need people in King's World. And there's this tug in your heart that maybe God's Spirit is speaking to you. Has anyone ever said to you, you need to be involved in community gardens? Has anyone ever said to you, you need to be out in the parking

lot? Or you to be in small groups. Have you heard those words? I know you've heard those words from us. And when you when you hear those words, is there something going on inside of you that says, this may be a door that God is opening form me? Then walk through it. Because this is one of the ways that we know our spiritual gift. For a person who's been a believer for a long time to say, I don't know my gift, and that's why I'm not using it. It may be the reverse. That because you're not using it, you don't know what it is anymore.

There's a fourth question. Where have I seen fruit? Where have I seen fruit? God will use you in your giftedness to affect life change. And when that happens, it's called fruit. And it confirms your gift.

Let me give you a name. Clark Ahegan. There probably isn't anyone in this room who knows that name. Maybe a few. If I say to you Elle Campbell, who used to be on our staff along with her husband Kenny, you may know that name. Elle Campbell's grandfather is Clark Ahegan. Clark Ahegan is from a from a human standpoint, the reason I'm in ministry today. He was my Sunday school teacher. And he gently led me to Christ. Very, very, patient over a long period of time. Knew that I was wrestling with this God issue. And gently led me to Christ.

I wonder who you will be Clark Ahegan for? Will it will be in King's World? Will it be in a small group? Will it be in women's ministry? Men's ministry? Will it be out there in the workplace where you have the the opportunity to touch people's lives to advance the Gospel in the way that God has gifted you to do it? But where have you seen fruit? What a tragedy it would be for

us to walk through our lives and never make a difference in anyone else's for the sake of the Gospel? That is not why He has put you here.

So maybe I could offer this analogy as we prepare to close today. Hopefully given you some things to take home and think over, to pray over and seek God's leadership in. But maybe I could give you this analogy. If you've ever had this awkward encounter. That perhaps there's been an occasion where you were taking a lot of time, energy, perhaps even money, to pick out a specific gift for someone that you cared about. And you did all of this. And you researched the best prices, and you were thinking about this six months in advance of their birthday, or in advance of Christmas. And it was one of those gifts that you could not wait until they opened it. And you give them this gift, and as they unwrap it, they say thank you so much. And I'll use it right away. And then you're feeling pretty excited. Because you gave them this gift, and now it's theirs.

But maybe you've had this, and this is where it becomes awkward. Because you've perhaps maybe a month or two or three later, you've been at their house, and just walking up through a hallway you glance into the home office, and you see on a shelf still in the plastic packaging the gift that you gave. The gift that you spent so much time picking out. And maybe even the gift that you sacrificed for. And you see that it's still in the plastic, unopened and certainly not enjoyed. What are you feeling? What are your feelings in that moment? Anger? Hurt? Probably a little bit of both. And maybe that even led to an awkward encounter and conversation after the fact. Maybe they even said something like, well it's just not really something I'm interested in.

Now if I share that with you, and I only share that for this reason. I'd suggest that there are some of us who God has given us these gifts of the Spirit, and they remain on a shelf. And perhaps it's because we don't have any interest. Perhaps it's because we think God doesn't know me like I know myself. Perhaps it's just a disregard. Or maybe it's something else. I don't know.

But I'd venture to say that there are many of us who could stand to improve in this arena, myself included. That God has given us these gifts of the Spirit, these Spirit-energized abilities, and perhaps some of them are sitting on a shelf. And we're missing out. We're not tapping into the beauty and the brilliance of what God's design is for the body of Christ. Maybe it's because you don't know what your gift is. Maybe you just never heard this before, and you didn't even know that this was expected. Well, we want to help you on this process. Or maybe it's because you never took any interest in it. So you've kind of just kept it out of sight, out of mind. And you're kind of good with where church things are at right now. Why complicated any further with any sort of greater degree of involvement? Let's keep it at this arm's length. This is good for me. And so you don't know what your gift is. I want to encourage you to discover what it is and use it. That's what we're here to do, to help you on this process. Not take your place in ministry, but to equip you for works of service.

Maybe some of you know what your gift is, but because you have gift envy, you spend all your time thinking about the gift that you don't have, that you never actually use the gifts that you do have. You're missing out on a dimension of what God has called you to as his son or his daughter. Or

some of you have a gift. You know what it is. But you have what I would call gift paralysis, because you're just waiting for the perfect (in your mind) perfect opportunity for you to use that gift. And in your mind, if you can't use your gift this way, you're not going to use it at all. And if it's not this one specific open door, you're not going to use your gift at all. And so it's sitting on a shelf. And you have gift paralysis, because you're not actually ever using it. And perhaps even to the point that you've atrophied, or forgotten how God has gifted you.

But let me just encourage you with this. And this is something I've not only observed in my own life, but in my life as a pastor that I've observed as well. That God is far more likely to redirect your steps while you are serving somewhere than he is to activate your steps while you're sitting somewhere. So I want to call you to get out of your seat as it were, and to get involved even if it's not a good fit. Guess what. We'll tell you. We love you that much. You know what? This isn't a good fit for you, but we want you over here. And perhaps because you haven't even walked through any open door, God hasn't yet opened the one door that you have in mind. We want to call you to deeper and better things than that. We don't want you to be paralyzed in the standpoint of spiritual gifts. We want you to realize all that God has made you to be and to do.

And maybe you know your gift. Maybe you use it. But maybe you use it at times to put yourself on display, not Jesus. Hey this is this is for me in as much as it's for anyone else. We're preparing a message on spiritual gifts. We want to not put ourselves on display. We want to put Jesus on display. That's why we do what we do. But listen. There's a temptation that's

dangling out there for each and every one of us. To make ourselves look good, to get applause for ourselves, to get recognition for ourselves, that we need validation. No.

These gifts of the Spirit. And you'll notice I'm even avoiding saying my spiritual gifts, because they are the Spirit's gifts in my life, that He allows me to use for a time. And if He says this is enough of that gift for now, I'm going to lead you into something else. I better not cling on to that, as if this is my identity. No it's not. My identity is in Christ. I'm his son. I'm his daughter. Therefore I am a vessel for him to use however he sees fit, just as the Spirit determines.

Now here's maybe what I would say to you. In all of those cases of the above, why you maybe not are using these gifts to the fullest of their expression, I think there's one missing ingredient. And it's love. Now, I don't stop there. And I don't end with that because we needed a warm fuzzy to tie up our Father's Day message. I don't end with love because we ran out of time, and we'll let's just cap it off with love. I say that because in every one of the New Testament passages that addresses spiritual gifts that we've talked about today, Romans 12, 1st Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1st Peter 4. Every single one of them are surrounded and supported by the idea of love in context, if you look at them.

In fact, everyone knows First Corinthians 13 from their wedding. That starts with verse 4: Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. But do you know that First Corinthians 13, remember written without chapter breaks, is in the context of a larger train of thought for the Apostle Paul. In

First Corinthians 12 where he's talking about gifts, in First Corinthians 14 where he's talking about the misuse of gifts, right there in 13 he's talking about love. Why? Because that is the activating fuel for the gifts of the Spirit in my life. That I love Jesus and I love his church, therefore I am going to discover and use these gifts.

Look at what Paul says in First Corinthians 13, one through three. "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." Translation - there has been no life change. "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I can have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing." Translation - no life change. "If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."

There is nothing that we could do or leverage, or attempt to leverage with gifts that could happen for the sake of eternity for the cause of Christ if love is absent from that equation. It will not happen. And you see look, if you don't know your gift, here's what I want to challenge you with. How are you demonstrating that you love Jesus and you love his church with the gifts of the Spirit if you don't even know what that is?

You see, I want to love what Jesus loves, and He is crazy about his bride the church. And I too want to love what Jesus loves. In fact, I love the body of Christ so much because I've been brought into this family that I'm not going to waste another moment not knowing what God's grace, how it has invaded my life, and I want to participate in what He's called me to. So I'm

going to take time out of my schedule to get alone with God, seek His face, so I would ask Him, God would you reveal to me how you've gifted me in this way? How can I be of service to you and your kingdom so I'm not just busy doing things that don't matter, and will evaporate as soon as I'm in the grave, but that will instead last for eternity's sake. I love the church so much, I love Jesus so much, I want to find out what that is. I love the church so much that I'm not going to use my gift in such a way that it draws attention to me. I want to love the church so much that I want to use the gifts to point to Jesus. I want to not just have gift envy and be envious of someone else's platform or opportunity, but that by grace I have been saved. Therefore by grace I will live and serve. And I love Jesus and I love his church so much that I don't want any pride to get in the way of him using me for his kingdom.

You see, love is the fuel for how we activate these Spirit-energized abilities in our lives. And if love is absent, there will be no life change. No impact for the Gospel. So I want to call you brothers and sisters to love Jesus and to love what he loves, and discover and use your spiritual gifts. That's why he gave them to you. The gifts of the Spirit, they are Spirit-energized abilities that put Jesus on display in my life. And Friends, that is how we will discover our purpose, not just as individuals, but as a family of God, the body of Christ. Let's bow together for a word of prayer.

Where you're at, I just want you to stay still if you can for just a moment. Some of our ushers are getting out of their seats, but other than that I want you to remain where you are. In this room, the Worship Center, in the East Worship Center, all of our campuses, watching online, just listen for just a

moment. If you don't know what your gift is, we can help you with that. We want to help you with that. But you don't maybe you could invite the voice of a wise seasoned follower of Christ, someone who's further along on the journey, just say hey would you would you walk me through this process? Hey maybe would you even using an assessment as a starting point, a spiritual gifts test as a starting point, could we begin a conversation where you could help me discover my spiritual gift? If you don't have anybody like that, but I venture to say you probably do. But if you don't have anybody like that, just stop by the Information Center before you leave today. We would love to just help you point you in the right direction.

If you're saying you know what I know what my gift is, and it's just a matter of obedience for me. I just haven't taken a step forward and said yes, we will help you with that too. We'd love to help you get plugged in somewhere, whether that's within or without the walls of the church. We want to help you. These aren't restricted to just making Sunday happen. The gifts of the Spirit are something that's a part of our lives every single day outside of this wall outside of these walls and as much as inside. We want to help you with that.

I don't know what your need is in this arena, but I venture to say, if you belong to Christ, the Spirit of God is already leading and directing your heart. And if I could just say one thing, it would be listen. Listen to what the Spirit says and do it.

But maybe there's a last group I could address and recognize. That you're here today, maybe you came as a guest because of it's Father's Day. Or

maybe you came and you've been listening, and for some reason something has gripped you today that you can't really even explain and you certainly can't shake. And that is that you have a Heavenly Father. God the Creator, not of just the of the universe, but of you. Your life. And He loves you. And the greatest gift that He could give you is his residing Holy Spirit, his own presence, and that only happens through the gift of his Son, and the sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf, taking the penalty for our sin, the judgment we deserved, and paying a penalty, paying the debt we owed that we couldn't pay. And so maybe this is the first time you've heard a message like this. Or maybe it's the first time that it finally made sense. I don't know. Maybe even you've been running from this truth, but you know that today is the day to stop running. Listen. There's nothing that would make your heavenly Father more happy, more would more full of joy, than for you to today begin a journey of following Jesus by faith. For you to give your life to Him.

So if that's you, and you know that your greatest need is Jesus, when I dismiss us in just a moment, I'd invite you to come by the Fireside Room. Just through the atrium, whether you're in the Worship Center or in the East Worship Center. Just come through the atrium to the Fireside Room. It's clearly labeled. You can't miss it. Just walk in there and say this: I need Jesus. That's all you have to say. We're not going to keep you all day. We know you have plans. You have places to be. But there's nothing that's more important than this. Nothing that would bring more joy to your heavenly Father than this. And I pray that you'll do that.

So God, thanks for your grace in our lives. Not only that we can stand as your sons or your daughter's. That's incredible enough. But that you would bring us into a place where we could participate in this holy and eternal endeavor of proclaiming Jesus on the earth through our words and through our lives. And you've given each person under the sound of my voice a different unique set of gifts, so that they they too can proclaim Jesus and put Jesus on display in their lives. God, call us deeper into the deep end of the pool, that we will trust you more fully, that we will lean on you that we will get outside of what's comfortable and familiar and discover the beauty, the brilliance, the majesty of your design for the body of Christ, the local church. And that we will discover a purpose. Give us that passion. Break our hearts, God. Create doors of opportunity. And then activate our feet to be obedient as you lead us. And I pray, Lord, that you'd show us great grace, that we wouldn't be at the center of any of it, but that we would always hold Jesus at the center. And it's in His name that we pray. Amen.

Thanks everyone. We love you. Happy Father's Day. You're dismissed.