

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on November 5, 2017**

**"Transformed Living with Spiritual Gifts
Part 2 (Romans 12-15)"**

[In today's sermon, "Transformed Living with Spiritual Gifts Part 2 (Romans 12-15)", Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows that our calling is to serve God and our neighbor with spiritual gifts given to us by God.]

Notes

Connecting the dots (review):

- What is the single most important thing we can realize in this life time?
 - It's salvation
- So, how is salvation defined?
 - It's our relationship with God.
- Why were we saved for relationship?
 - To be transformed by the Holy Spirit to become more and more like Jesus Christ.
- If we are living and practicing the transformed life won't we at the same time be growing in a "flourishing relationship with Jesus"?
 - The obvious answer is "yes."
- How many surveyed among growing churches identified as having a "flourishing relationship with Jesus"?
 - A recent survey, from Harvard, says only 11%.
- Do we want to be part of the 11% or the 89%?
 - Of course the 11%.
 - In Romans 12, Paul encourages us not to be conformed to the world, but rather to be transformed by the Holy Spirit.
 - For this to happen, we don't just sit back and do nothing, but there is a part for us to play – to place ourselves on the path of grace.
- When we are "flourishing with Jesus" not only does life get better, we get better at life.
 - When we experience the love, joy, peace and self-control and all the other "fruits of the Spirit" that come out of that "flourishing relationship" it makes life better, doesn't it?
 - The more we focus on whose we are and what our true identity is, we get better at life.
- What does it take to enable the Holy Spirit to flow through us – what would that be? (Hint: 2017 Theme Scripture.)
 - John 15:5, "Abide in the Vine, our source of renewal and bearing much fruit."

- So how do we stay connected to the Vine –it’s through conversation (prayer), it’s through curiosity (studying the Word), and it’s through contemplation (meditating on what God has been doing in our lives and various Scriptures)
- How does Scripture support our abiding? (Hint: Summing the Bible in two words)
 - Belief and response.
 - So, when we believe and have faith, then there’s a response that naturally comes with it – that’s how the Holy Spirit works.
- So if we are abiding in belief and response what will we be doing? (Hint: New Hope motto – or position statement)
 - Loving God, loving others without fear, shame, guilt, or doubt.
 - Unfortunately, fear, shame, guilt, and doubt were part of our religious past.
 - It was that way even in days of Jesus because the religious leaders imposed on the people fear, shame, guilt, and doubt.
 - That’s not what Jesus does for us.

By Definition:

- An ungiven gift ... is a gift not given.
- A gift not given ... is not a gift.
- Think about this concept as we read what Paul is telling us in verses 3-8.

Romans 12:3-8 (NASB):

12:1-2: summary - Living Sacrifices not conformed to the world but having our minds transformed and renewed proving the perfect will of God.

12:3-8: summary – Serving God and the body of Christ (the church) with spiritual gifts whom God has given to each.

- Please note it doesn’t say spiritual gifts were given to “some” but to “each” one of us.

Romans 12:3 (NASB), For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think;

- This requires genuine humility.
- So Paul requires each of us to respond to others in humility.
- Because if we are arrogant, we don’t truly serve or help anyone.

3b) but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

- When we exercise genuine humility, Paul tells us we are also using “sound judgment.”
- When we engage in that response of spiritual gifts, if it’s not based on faith first, then it can quickly degenerate into legalism, which is obedience without faith.
- When we do things on our own initiative without the Holy Spirit impacting on our hearts or motivating our actions, it becomes legalism.
- So, we’ve got to get the faith “horse” well established in front of the obedience “cart.”

- It's out of what God has given us that we are then to share those spiritual gifts.
- Paul is now going to give us 7 of these spiritual gifts – although, it's not a complete list.
- One can also find gifts mentioned in Ephesians, 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 and 1 Peter.

4) For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5) so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

- This pictures the New Hope table that pastor Craig has been talking about, where each of us are sitting around it as all one family, one body loving God, loving others and now exercising and living out those spiritual gifts.

6) Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly:

- This reflects our response and participation which comes out of belief and faith and when Jesus and the Holy Spirit are speaking to our hearts.

if prophecy [propheteia - speaking forth the mind and counsel of God], according to the proportion of his faith;

- So, the first gift is “speaking God’s mind or counsel.”
- How do we know when someone is doing this? A clue might be that it’s what Scripture tells us.
- So, when we speak out of Scripture, there’s a pretty good chance that we are speaking “God’s mind and counsel.”

7) if service [diakonia – service of believers], in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching [didasko – to give instruction];

- So there are also service gifts and teaching gifts.
- This is God’s work – it’s not our doing even when we exercise our spiritual gifts, it’s the Holy Spirit working through us to do His good will

8) or he who exhorts, in his exhortation [parakleo – to call to one’s side/aid]; he who gives [metadidomi – sharing generously], with liberality; he who leads [proistemi – to stand before, to lead, to attend to], with diligence; he who shows mercy [eleeo – to show kindness by assistance], with cheerfulness.

- There are also gifts of exhortation like visiting Christine’s mom Socorro.
- There are gifts of sharing our treasure generously, no matter how much or little we can generously give.
- There are also gifts of leadership and showing kindness with cheerfulness to others.
- What pastor Craig wants to do is to open up the speaking schedule, once a month, to our elders and to those who feel like they have a gift for speaking or those who have a message they would like to bring to us.
- Michelle Fleming will be giving the sermon the first week of December.
- And our elders will be delivering our Communion message, as well, starting today.

- Pastor Craig is also going to start a hermeneutics (interpreting the text) and homiletics (presenting the text) club for those interested.

Romans 12:3-8 (Mirror)

3) His grace gift inspires me to say that your thinking must be consistent with everything that is within you according to the measure of faith that God has apportioned to every individual. Let the revelation of redemption shape your thoughts.

4) The parallel is clear. There are many different members in one body, yet not one competes with the other in function.

- If we're exercising spiritual gifts in humility, we are not in competition with one another, but rather we are sharing with one another what God has given us.
- Now no one has been given all the spiritual gifts, so when we come together at the table, we share with each other what God has given to each one of us.
- You might all this – a “spiritual potluck.” (Pastor Craig may have initiated a new phrase.)

4b) Instead every individual member co-compliments the other. 5) In Christ, the many individuals are all part of the same body and members of one another.

- So all of us, seated around the New Hope table, show love and care for every one of us.

6) Our gifts may differ in function, but his grace is the same. If it is your turn to prophesy, let faith and not a title be your inspiration. 7) The same goes for every aspect of ministry, whether it be serving or to give instruction,

8) or to just be there alongside someone to remind them of their true identity; always let faith set the pace. You are intertwined with your gift, wrapped up in the same parcel. Lead with passion; minister mercy cheerfully.

- Paul is encouraging each one of us to live a transformed life, as God has given each one of us spiritual gifts to do that.
- As we share those gifts with one another, we build up the body of Christ and we also become transformed in the process.

Conclusion:

- Now in our transforming care groups, which we now have 6 of them, we're going to go through a specific process to identify how your personality, your abilities, and your spiritual gifts all work together to identify where you are and how you might serve, how you might build up the body by continuing that transforming work.
- Please take an advantage of that by joining these groups.

Communion message given by elder Larry Omasta:

- Good morning everyone.
- Now before we take Communion, let's first look into the historical and Biblical background of this ceremony, which will give us greater understanding as to why we come to the Communion table.

- Now, in the Old Covenant, there were literally hundreds and hundreds of rituals and ceremonies one had to do or perform – some on a daily basis, some on a weekly basis, others on a monthly basis and some even on a yearly basis.
- Now when Jesus came to this earth, as the Son of God and as our Savior, He did something very interesting.
- He never, in all of his teachings, talked about any of the Old Covenant ceremonies or rituals nor did He do any of them in His own personal life.
- Instead, He showed us a new and better way of how to relate to God and that's by allowing God to give us His love so we can extend and share that love with others.
- As a personal example, Jesus shared the love of God with the obvious sinners of His day.
- He didn't condemn them but shared God's love with them and that love was so powerful that it transformed them.
- Now, it's interesting that while Jesus didn't do any of the Old Covenant ceremonies, He did introduce a New Covenant ceremony at the Last Supper, which is truly amazing.
- And the account is found in the Gospel of Luke 22:19 (NIV),

And (Jesus) took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them (His disciples), saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." 20) In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

- So Jesus is telling us that the bread and the cup are symbols of the New Covenant.
- Here Jesus is introducing us to the phrase "the New Covenant."
- And He also told us what the symbols of the New Covenant were.
- Now the apostle Paul was inspired to write about this and encouraged the early New Testament churches to continue to take Communion and also taught them the significance of this ceremony.

1 Cor. 11:23 (NIV), "For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24) and when he had given thanks (eucharistia), he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25) In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

- Now to get a better understanding of what Paul is referring to, let's take a look at a couple of key words and phrases.
- First let's look at the verb "given thanks" in the sentence, "when Jesus took the bread and had given thanks ..."
- Jesus knew what the bread symbolized – it symbolized His sacrifice that was going to happen on the cross.
- And so Jesus, in thanking God, was thanking God for allowing Him to be a part of the reconciliation of mankind, because He knew what the bread symbolized.
- And what's so amazing is that the Eastern Orthodox Church doesn't call this ceremony "Communion" but "Eucharist" based on this Greek word "eucharistia."

- Now the Western Christian churches, for the most part, call this ceremony “Communion” based on what Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 10:16, (American Standard Version):

**“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?
The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”**

- Most of the older translations such as KJV, NKJV, etc. use the word “communion”.
- The NIV uses the word “participation” and the NASB uses the word “sharing”.
- The Greek word translated “communion” here is “koinonia” which means “fellowship, participation, sharing, as well as communion.”
- The word “communion” signifies the greater definition.
- For Paul, then, eating and drinking of these two elements are more than just symbols.
- The eating of the bread and drinking of the cup at the Lord’s Table helps us to “participate” or have “communion” with Jesus because He’s participating with us, as well.
- So, it’s a mutual participation.
- And we also know that Jesus’ spiritual presence is in the elements, not physically but spiritually.
- So, Jesus’ presence is here – the bread reflects His broken body and the cup of wine or grape juice reflects His blood or His life.
- And so when we come to the table, we continue to share our lives with Jesus, but more importantly He continues to share His life with us, which is truly amazing.
- Jesus doesn’t leave us alone – communion is a reminder, “I’m sharing My life with you.”
- It’s also interesting that the apostle John uses the word “koinonia” in his gospel and his three letters to the New Testament churches to show that our “koinonia” or “fellowship” is to be experienced both vertically with God and horizontally with our fellow human beings.
- The last phrase we want to look at is this: Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” When Jesus said this, He was referring both to the bread and the cup.
- The Greek word for “remembrance” has as its meaning more than just simply “a mental activity of remembrance.” It also carries the meaning of “action or activity.”
- So, in essence, when we remember what Jesus did for us, we take action and come to the table.
- So when we partake of communion, we not only come to worship God but we come to “interface and have communion” with Him.
- So now, we will participate in the communion of the Lord’s Supper.
- Please take the bread and cup of wine or grape juice back to your seat and we will eat and drink together.
- First, before we come forward, let’s offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

Prayer:

- Our gracious heavenly Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thank you Father for your incredible love for each and every one of us.

- We come to you with open hearts, giving you praise and thanksgiving especially for giving us your Son.
- And Lord Jesus, we also thank you for what you've accomplished on the cross to reconcile us to the Father, so that we can come into God's family and be His dearly beloved sons and daughters.
- We ask you to bless this bread and these cups as they symbolically represent your body and your blood, which is your life, and what you've accomplished for us through them.
- And Lord Jesus, help us to continue to share our lives with you and interact with you so YOU can live your life in us through the Holy Spirit and so that YOU can continue to transform us so that we can share YOU with your life and your love with others.
- Thank you for giving us these elements of the bread and the cup as a continuing ceremony down through the ages.
- We praise you and ask this prayer in your name. Amen!