Compelling Community — Delivery Transcript

Romans 12:3–9 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, January 21, 2024 · *This is the Way*

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Well thanks to the band for leading us in worship. That was a really special time of worship, amen. Really meaningful. Appreciate them using their gifts to encourage us. And the best part I think of our team is not just that they're amazingly talented, but that they are eager and sensitive to inviting the Spirit of the Lord into this place. You can listen to good music anywhere, you can listen to it on the radio, you can listen to live music. But there's something special about the corporate gathering of God's people. That invites the presence of the Holy Spirit in a way that is unique, that you don't get when you're by yourself.

And I really appreciate our team being sensitive to fostering those kinds of environments. And it's actually one of the core values of our church that we create or help foster environments that puts you in a position so that you can truly experience the manifest presence of God. God is obviously present everywhere. We recognize that theologically, but there are certain times where God manifests Himself in a special way in your life and you become over or especially ministered to by his goodness and his grace and just his presence being there to enable you to persevere through the many trials and tribulations of life and to overcome some of the sins and challenges that we face on a regular basis.

And so that's what Sunday worship is about. And I'm so grateful to the Lord for how He has been faithful to manifest Himself in special ways these last many weeks. And I don't think it's any accident that it's related to a culture of prayer that we're trying to develop. We're being prayed for right now in the choir suite. I accidentally bumped in and ruined their prayer time right before service. But I saw them there interceding for us and I believe that the Holy Spirit responds to those prayers. And so if you have your Bible we're going to be in Romans chapter twelve and if you're new to our church, if you're a guest, we're kind of doing a little in-house family discussion over the last three or four weeks and we've got one more week next week.

Where we are examining our values as a church. I think it's important to realize that before God is concerned about what you do with your life, he's much more concerned with the kind of person that you are and are becoming. And as a church, there are certain things that biblically we want to become before we try to achieve biblically what God wants us to achieve in terms of making disciples and growing the church and reaching unreached people, it would be foolish to try to achieve those things without first allowing the Holy Spirit to form us into the kind of people that God desires us to become.

And so we have summarized those biblical values under five different statements. We call these our core values in our church. This is maybe you might think of this as the personality of our church or the culture of our church. We want a life-giving culture. We want people to be drawn to what God's doing in this church. And that'll only happen when we have life-giving biblical values. And so I mentioned the first one of or the second one of pot of tangible encounters with the living God. We talked about making Jesus known wherever we go.

Last week we talked about how the word, we're a word church. We preach the word in this church, but we do so because the word changes the way that we live. This week, however, we're focused on our fourth core value, which is to build communities that serve like Jesus. Obviously we want to be like Jesus in every way, but we want to specifically in the local church be like Jesus in the way that we serve. And we in the local church have an opportunity to form a kind of community that's different than other kinds of community out there.

We see community everywhere. You know Starbucks is very popular these days because people are craving community and belonging and being a part of something and that's wonderful. And I'm a part of a lot of different types of community, but the community that's in the local church, when it's doing it correctly, is unlike any other kind of community in this world. It is truly a supernatural, compelling community. And that's what we want in our church. But it doesn't come automatically. It must be aspired towards. And there must be certain kinds of ingredients in place and things that we pursue and other things that we resist.

And Romans chapter 12 I think beautifully lays those out in verses three to nine and that's where our text is going to be this morning. And so read it together. We're going to look at the first half for the first part of the core value and the second half for the second part of the core value. In verse 3, Paul says, it's by the grace given to me that I tell every one of you to not think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead think sensibly, or some translations will say, think soberly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one.

Now, as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts don't have the same function, in the same way in the body of Christ we who are many are one body, and individually members of one another. And so when you think about what does it mean to build

community, that supernatural community that's unlike anything else, I think there are some attributes here in this passage that form, I'm going to think of it as the foundational layer upon which community is built and I like acrostics I guess because I'm a preacher and I like mnemonic devices so I summarize it under H U G hug because when I think of a church community I think of hugs.

You know I when I first became a pastor was not a big hugger. And then I'm still not a big hugger, but I get over it and I do it anyway. But there's a physical hug that you can get in church, you know, the infamous side hug, the church side hug. But biblically there are some values, some spiritual and emotional and just personal values that make that physical presence of people supernatural. And I don't have them in order, but in the order of sequence in the text, first you see the value of grace.

It is by the grace Paul says that God has given to me that I'm saying this to you. You also see the value of humility to not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, and then of course you see the value of unity. There were many parts in one body. So I want us to think about those things before we look at these gifts and serving and the very practical manifestations of why is it that these kind of ingredients, when they are present, form a type of community that is different from other types of community in our culture.

And the first is the culture of grace, and we're going to talk about this a lot next week. But Paul, when he's talking about serving and building community in the church, he f he begins by recognizing even his apostleship. Even his like very important job description and title and authority and all of that is not something that he received because he was good or worthy or talented or deserving. It's because of God's grace. And I think that's an important thing for every single person in the church to recognize, particularly people who have some kind of platform or title or anything like that, to realize that that is given to you as a gift of God's grace.

You are not God's gift to green earth. You didn't get this because you were somehow deserving it's because of the grace of God. And if anybody was growing up around me and Roby You would think what all the other people in Roby think when they hear that I'm a preacher, they just kind of scratch their head and go, oh that's interesting that you're a preacher. I always tell people I'm the black sheep of my family because I went into ministry it's that kind of mindset that you're you didn't get this because you somehow deserved it.

Your ministry is not Thor's hammer, in other words. Only the worthy can hold the hammer. None of us are worthy. And this is true whether you are entitled in the church or untitled, whether you're a professional minister or a layperson, whether you're a parent You have a ministry to your children, a ministry to your spouse, the opportunities that you have in the workplace, the opportunities that you have in the local church, even if it's not an official title. Mm being mindful that that gift is a gift of grace. And when you think grace, most of us think

like the theological meaning of the term grace, that we're saved by God's grace, that it's somehow wrapped up in salvation.

But that's not what's in view here. It's not about salvation. It's about your service. It's about what you do in building up the body. What you do, the talent you've been given are a gift of God's grace. The second thing he says is to see. See yourself—a gift is a grace. Number two, see yourself as you are. He says to not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. And that's kind of his definition of humility. Humility is not thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to think.

Humility isn't thinking less of yourself than you ought to think. Humility is thinking of yourself as you really are. To think soberly to use the an analogy that Paul uses. And I think that analogy of sobriety is the perfect analogy because if you've ever imbibed in any kind of alcohol too much or if you've been around someone who is imbibed in too much alcohol or any kind of intoxicating substance, you know how they can get really chatty. And they can all of a sudden begin to think that the words that are coming out of their mouth are the most important life-giving words to man.

Has anyone ever experienced this? And if you haven't, just go to a bar and talk about theology and you'll have the best time of your life. They all of a sudden everybody has a little bit of alcohol and they're, you know, their John Stott or Billy Graham or whatever. But as soon as they sober up, what they begin to realize is it doesn't sound nearly as good sober as it did when I was as I was drunk. And that's what Paul is talking about in the church, that we can have an elevated sense of our own importance.

We can kind of think that our contributions are the most important contributions. Our words are the most important words. My job description is the most important job description. And that's simply not true. You're not nearly as important or good as you think you are any more than someone's musings while they're intoxicated are any more grandiose than they may think they are. You need to think of yourself with sober judgment. Now if you ask the question how do I know if I'm proud? How do I know if I'm a proud person?

The beautiful thing about Romans 12 is you don't determine whether or not you're proud based on external things, even though that's what's tempting, right? You think of a proud person, you think of somebody that's like super charismatic, up on the stage, drawing attention to themselves, super bubbly. That may seem like pride, but biblically that's not how pride is determined or defined. Pride is not determined by what you do, it's determined by how you think. And you can have someone who's super quiet. And unassuming and in the back corner and they have just as much pride as somebody who's out there super bubbly and confident and charismatic.

It doesn't matter what they do, what matters is how they think about who they are whether you think too lowly of yourself or too highly of yourself, your pride is determined by what you think. So Paul says, think soberly. See yourself as you really are. See yourself as how God has made you, which means you're far worse off than you could have ever imagined, but at the same time you're far more loved in Jesus Christ than you could have ever dared to hope. When you have that humility, it creates a culture for community.

When that humility is not present, the presence of that pride kills biblical supernatural community. And that's why Paul deals with this first before he talks about gifts and serving and building up the body, he says, you can't do that unless and until you're humble, because your pride will be toxic to your relationships and your pride will undermine everything that you're seeming that you're trying to do with your gifts. So you need to recognize your gifts as a grace. You need to see yourself as you really are. An analogy I came across this week that I thought was helpful.

It's kind of cheesy, but I like it. Imagine if your tools could talk. Any of you guys have tools, even girls have tools. My wife has a toolbox, so everybody's got tools imagine your tools could talk and you're sitting there operate you're trying to do something with your tools and you've got one proud hammer who thinks because he's the hammer he can do everything that there is to do. And so you're trying to nail something into a piece of wood and the hammer says, hey, I'm your hammer. I can do that.

Let me nail that nail. So you say, you're a hammer? I'd love for you to nail the nail. So you start nailing the nail, but then you come across to another part of your project and it's got screws in it. And your hammer looks at the screws and says, I know you're tempted to use that screwdriver, but you could just turn the board over and use the hammer. I can still get it done. You don't need to use a screwdriver, use me. And so you try to take the hammer and start nailing out the screw and it doesn't work as well.

It'd be much better if you would have just used the screwdriver for that kind of a job. Then you f you realize, well I got to go outside and dig a hole and your hammer says, hey, I can dig a hole. Just use your hammer and hit the dirt as hard as you can, maybe turn it around and use a little fork hand and then you can dig a hole and you so you go out there and you try to dig a hole with that silly looking hammer and you realize that this hammer is not for digging.

This I need a shovel for digging, so you go and get the shovel. But the hammer, all he can see is how needed he is and how useful he is, and that's how some of us act in the church. And that's how some of us neutralize community in the church because we're trying to force who we are on everybody else and we're trying to think that we're the only thing that can get done what needs to get done in the life of the church when the reality is there's a whole set of tools who are crafted a certain kind of way for certain kinds of jobs, and there's all kind of different jobs in the church, which is why there's all kinds of different people in the church.

And so see yourself for what you are. If you're a hammer, you're a hammer. If you're a screwdri if you're a screwdriver, then you're a screwdriver. If you're a shovel, then be a shovel, but don't project that onto somebody else and don't think more highly of yourself than you ought to think. Which leads to the last ingredient for biblical community, which is unity. Even the word community has unity built in. It's from the Latin calm, which means with, and unitas, which means one we're all one in the local church. There's this y there's this unique thing about church community that I think is unlike any other kind of community because the people you run with in your church community, you would probably never run with outside of the church.

Amen? You've probably made friends in the local church that if y'all were growing up in school, you would have been bullying them and taking them to task and making fun of them and all that stuff. Probably you wouldn't do because you're a better person than me. But You get what I'm saying, you would never naturally form those kinds of friendships. But for whatever reason you get in the context of a local church and the two of you sit down in a small group together and you're talking about your love for Jesus and they're talking about their love for Jesus and all of a sudden there's an affection.

Born in your heart, I believe from the Holy Spirit, where you begin to befriend them and to love them and care for them, even though you would never do so normally otherwise. That's biblical community, that's supernatural community, and it breaks down generational barriers. This kind of unity breaks down socioeconomic barriers. This kind of unity breaks down cultural barriers of preference that oftentimes in our culture are raised up and separate people. It breaks down political barriers. It breaks down every barrier known to man because it's not based on anything in this world.

It's based on something outside of this world. It's based on the person and the work of Jesus Christ. And when you allow that community and a church to be formed around that supernatural gospel, Holy Spirit, Jesus-centered reality, spiritual reality, then it forms something very, very special. When that's not the centerpiece, if that's not the soil out of which your community is being grown, then it won't be supernatural, it won't be compelling, and it won't change people's lives. But that's not what we have. We have the opportunity. To have biblical unity.

That this is just an aside. There are two things that I think have a tendency to neutralize true unity in a local church and the one is trying to push for uniformity instead of unity. We need to celebrate diversity in other words. I think a lot of churches apologize for their diversity a lot of churches try to program around their diversity. Even our church, if I can be honest, our whole approach of doing two different styles of music. While I recognize there's an evangelistic goal in that that I think is noble, there is an ugly underbelly if we're not careful

where we can say, we want those type people over there and these type people over here, and that's not gospel community.

We should have young people should be free to enjoy and love the hymns, and older generations should be free to love and enjoy contemporary music. And it ought not look like uniformity in either one of those two services because there's a supernatural element that can tear down that wall of hostility whether it's generational or preferential. You understand what I'm saying? So we need to press into our gospel unity that is that is not based on styles and preferences and generational perspectives. Celebrate diversity. We ought to celebrate racial diversity insofar as it is beginning to f blossom and flourish in a church.

There are churches who see that and run the other direction. And that should not be. Our cult our church should be as diverse as our city because we're going to reach people from all over our city. Different types of political personalities, I mean preferen or different types of personality types, different types of racial demographics, socioeconomic demographics, generational demographics celebrate diversity. And the second thing is avoid gift projection. Which is this tendency that we have to, since we're wired a certain way, we project that certain way onto everybody else and expect them to think and behave the way that we do.

If you've ever been married, you know your tendency towards gift projection hit a brick wall about three or four months down the road. Your wife isn't anything like you. You know, your husband isn't anything like you. And as soon as you try to start. Well, if she would just think the way I thought, we would never fight. Or if she would just do what I do, your gift projecting. And people do that in the church as well. People are wired towards serving. I love to serve and I'm the most serving servant that has ever served.

And I expect everyone to be a silent serving servant just as I am a silent serving servant. And I just see that person, he could have taken out that trash and he didn't take out that trash. He's just not a very good Christian. He's a poor Christian. I just can't believe it. And somebody else who's wired towards like teaching, got a gift of teaching, and he listens to somebody try to express a biblical text and goes, I just He just totally butchered that text out because he d he doesn't even love j does he even know how to read.

I mean, good grief. And you're projecting your gift of teaching onto that other person and you laugh, but however you're gifted, I'm telling you there's a tendency in you to project that onto somebody else and to get a little bit disgruntled and upset because it's not just going the way you think it ought to go. And the reality is we're one body, many members. A lot of us are wired a lot of different ways, and God has done that by design because it is good. It is good for the body.

So look at what he says in verse four. We have many parts and one body and all the parts don't have the same function. And in the same way, we who are many in one body in Christ,

we're individually members of one another. So I want you to think about the people in this church like they're part of your body. The body has all sorts of different parts and every part is important. And a lot of times it's the unseen parts that support the seen parts. All the seen parts may get all the attention, but if it wasn't for your kidneys filtering out all that stuff that you're putting in your body then you wouldn't be able to do some of the things that you do visibly and externally.

And the same is true in the local church. There are people who are behind the scenes unseen servants and they're making everything else possible for some of those more seen parts. But when we begin to think of ourselves superior because we're more visible or inferior because we're less visible then we're losing that supernatural, gospel-rich community that is different than the rest of the world. So you want to give a hug? Be humble. Pursue unity and never forget that even you on your best day are only able to do what you do because of the grace of God.

In your life. If we'll build on that foundation, we will see something very special happen in this local church that will be attractive to the world. Now with that foundation in place, Paul goes on to talk about these gifts. And I think this is so helpful and practical. I want to look at these seven gifts and I want to encourage you, however you are wired, however God has gifted you. To be about using your gift in the context of our church. So verse 6 says, according to the grace given to us, we have different gifts.

So every person in the church who is in Christ has been given a gift, and maybe more than one gift. We've got all kinds of different gifts. And then he goes to this list of prophecy and service and teaching. He says if your gift is prophecy, then use your gift of prophecy according to the proportion of one's faith. If your gift is service, then use your gift in serving. If it's teaching, in teaching. If it's exhorting, then exhortation. If it's giving, give generously. If it's leading, lead diligently if it's showing mercy, then show mercy with cheerfulness.

Just real simple, he's saying everybody in the church has a gift. More than one gift, maybe. And your gift that God has given you in the body of Christ is for the good of the body. In other words, if you don't use your gift, the good isn't being received. So every member has a gift, every gift is for the good of the body, and the good of the body is only received when the gift is deployed in the life of the church. And so be deploying your gift. Now, should we get all wrapped up in these seven gifts?

I'm not sure. I think the seven gifts are not a complete list of all the spiritual gifts in the New Testament. Some people try to take the four different gift lists and they compile them into this big data sheet and then they work up all these definitions and then they develop these spiritual gift inventories. Has anyone ever taken a spiritual gift inventory? And you go, you do your inventory, and they're like, you have the gift of leadership and you have the gift of service and you have this and that. And then it's almost like you get so narrowly defined by

what your spiritual growth inventory said that you don't think outside the box that maybe God has gifted you beyond those ways I don't think that the list in the New Testament are comprehensive or complete.

I also don't believe you can only have one spiritual gift. I think the Lord can gift you in a variety of ways. I think you can be gifted in certain seasons and certain ways and then different seasons in different ways. The way I like to think about spiritual gifts, maybe this will be helpful to you, if you think of a Venn diagram, you know the ones with the circles. So draw if you drew three circles. One circle is your abilities, your natural talents. The second circle is your, I'm going to call these your affinities the things you're passionate about, the things for which you have a burden, spiritual burden.

And then you've got, I'm going to call this your affirmation circle, what other people affirm in you. People go man, when you do that, I just, man, I'm blessed. I'm so encouraged. I feel like it really helps me when you do X, Y, or Z. I don't care if it's in the list or not in the list. I don't care whether it has a Bible name or not a Bible name. If there is something in your life, a gifting that is at the center of your abilities and your affinities and what people affirm in you and it's very likely that that's a spiritual gift.

Assuming that using that gift in the life of the church brings about people's good. It is beneficial to them. And I really think that there are gifts of ministry today that are unique to our time and to our culture and to the resources that we have. Maybe there's a social media gift maybe there's a communications gift, maybe there's a gift of technology, I don't know. But the point is you can be have a natural ability and affinity for something and when you deploy that in the life of the church, people say, that's such a blessing.

Whatever that is, press in on it. Now, the seven gifts, having said that as a disclaimer, the seven gifts I think are really helpful because they're not super specific, they're very broad. Some people call these the motivational gifts of the Holy Spirit because they're more about what excites you, what gets you out of bed in the morning. And I think that there's something to this gift of prophecy. I'm going to give you a one-sentence definition. These are not the best definitions in the world because I wrote them. Okay, so you'd probably find a better definition.

But to me there's simple ways to think about it. The gift of prophecy is a unique ability to convey God's word so that people actually hear it. People debate whether the gift of prophecy is still operational today, and that's a fun debate to have. We're not going to have it this morning. Some say the gift of prophecy has ceased, others say the gift of prophecy exists, it just looks different however, you land in the debate, I think the consensus agreement would be that prophecy is the ability to hear God and communicate what he says so that other people hear.

Key word. They hear. So sometimes prophets have to get creative in the way they go about prophesying. One prophet, Hosea, he had to marry a harlot woman and she cheated on him like eighteen thousand times and he kept being like, it's okay, love, just keep on keeping on. Nobody wants to be that prophet, right? But I tell you what, it's a powerful, it's a powerful conveyance of what God is trying to say Elijah had some creative ways of communicating God's message to people. Some prophets were able to tell the future.

I don't know any prophets like that today, but all the prophets got a unique word from God. Here's what's just think of it this way. A prophet is someone who gets a unique word at a unique time. And gives that particular word to a particular people in a particular way with a particular or a unique effect. In other words, it's not these timeless truths that kind of teachers can teach on and people understand. No, it's relevant, it's timely, it's for now. And you've probably had people speak prophetically into your life before.

Or they say, you know, I really sense God doing this in your life. I sense God is trying to develop you in a certain way. And is that verse in the Bible? No, it's not a Bible verse. It may be a biblical truth. But more often it's just something God wants to say to another individual and He's channeled that word through you and you say it a specific way at a specific time for a specific reason to that specific person. And they hear it. They hear what God wants to say.

That's a prophet. That's the gift of prophecy. The gift of service is what it sounds like. It's the unique ability. To meet needs with the effect that people get helped. Okay, in other words, it's not just doing stuff. Oh, I have the gift of service, look at all the stuff I'm doing. No, you got to do stuff and people be helped by what you do. That's the key difference. Are people helped by the service that you provide? That's a gift of service. This is what I'm going to call a high percentage, low visibility gift.

Because very f very few people see the gift of service. I wrote a an a note of encouragement this week to a I can just tell you who it was. It's whatever our pastor emeritus, David Kaysen. I think our church has a culture of service because of David Casen. Thirty-eight years up here every Saturday plunging toilets and mowing grass and whatever the other stuff he was doing helping meet practical needs. But a lot of people don't see that. They can see some of the platform stuff, but they didn't see the stuff that was behind the scenes.

This is a high percentage. Many, many people in our church have this gift, but not a lot of people see them exercising it, but it's helpful. We would not be able to do what we do without the hundreds and hundreds of servants. Who helped meet practical needs? Teaching, this is a platform gift. This is a gift that people see. All preachers should have the gift of teaching because the pastoral role is being able to explain information in such a way that people actually learn. Another again, a key difference. You don't have the gift if people aren't learning from your teaching.

In other words, you're just talkative. You don't have the gift of teaching unless people learn from what you're teaching. So it's your ability to explain spiritual truths in such a way that people go, oh that's what that means. The light bulb comes on. That's a gift. It's a spiritual gift that when you use it, people learn. The next gift, what is the next gift? The next gift is exhortation. This is a unique ability to motivate and encourage people so that they act. Again, it's not just writing notes of encouragement and motivating people.

It's that when you do it, for whatever reason, people are like, well, by God, I'm going to do it. I'm going to do what I'm supposed to do. And man, I love listening to preachers who have the gift of exhortation because every time I listen to them preach, I'm like want to storm hell with a water pistol, you know, like let's go. And I'm not naturally inclined to be that kind of person. I'm kind of slow on the take, a little bit lazy if I'm honest I need people with the gift of exhortation.

This is also the gift that keeps people persevering for the long haul because I can't tell you how many times I've been discouraged. And for whatever reason, God, I believe the Holy Spirit impresses it upon us a person who has the gift of exhortation, and they write the best notes with the very best words at the very best time. And I go, okay, I can keep going I can persevere. I can do this. How many of you have had that happen to you in your life? The fact that not every hand is raised may be an indication that there are some of you who have a unique gift of exhortation and you haven't used it.

Because you've been waiting for permission or you've been waiting for an official title or an official ministry. You don't need it. You can deploy the gift of exhortation in the hallway. If you're creative, you can do it in the bathroom even. You can do it in the hallways, you can deploy your gift of encouraging people so that they act. Do what God has called you to do. The next one is the gift of giving. The gift of giving is using your resources so that needs are met. I think it's important that it's your personal resources.

It's not just leveraging resources in general. Anybody can be generous with other people's money. Okay. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about your stuff. Your capital, your finances, your time, your talent, your treasure, and leveraging it so that it meets needs. In other words, you're not just spending money for the sake of spending money. You're able to perceive this is what the kingdom of God needs right now. This is what this local church needs right now, and I'm going to marshal my resources to meet the need. You have a gift of giving.

And God bless the people in our church who have the gift of giving because w that's why some of these buildings exist. These buildings didn't get built on ten percent tithe and offerings. It got built on special gifts of incredible generosity. It's why we've been able to do some of the amazing things that we've done as a church, go on mission trips that we've gone

on, because people who had the gift of giving said, I'll meet that need, I'll take care of it. The gift of leadership, I believe, is next.

This is the ability to use influence so that people get where they need to be. Reached. Again, just because just because you think you're a leader doesn't make you a leader, okay? Just because you have the title doesn't mean you have the gift. But if you can influence people and they get from where they were to where they need to be, then you probably have the gift of leadership. And you can be a leader as a father. You can be a leader as a lay person who doesn't even teach a Sunday school class You just for whatever reason when you speak, people listen, and when you see, you see things other people can't see, you see before they do, you see beyond they do, and people have a tendency to follow you have a gift of leadership.

And this passage is saying be diligent in that leadership. Don't shy away from it. You can lead from the second chair, the third chair, fourth chair, you can lead from any chair. Because it's not about a position or a title. It's about a gift of influence of getting people to where they need to be so that the goal is reached and the destination is achieved. The last one is the gift of mercy. We talked about that this morning in our prayer over the Beatitudes. This again is not just feeling sorry for people.

This is feeling sorry for people so much so that you actually act on the empathy. You actually act to alleviate the pain that the other people are experiencing. It's similar to the gift of service, but it's more oriented around pain and suffering. And there are people in our church who have the gift of mercy. In fact, I did a funeral a couple of weeks ago for a person who, if I was to say they had any spiritual gift, I would say it'd be the gift of mercy. Of alleviating pain. These are people oftentimes who minister in grief ministry, recovery ministry, foster care, adoption.

It's a gift of mercy. And we need the gift of mercy in our church. You know why? Because there's a lot of hurting people in our church. And hurting people need mercy. So, what is your gift? You say, well, how do I know? Well, one of the things that's unique about these seven gifts is every one of these seven gifts is also a spiritual responsibility. I could show you Bible verses outside of leadership. I can't find one on leadership, but out all the others, I could show you a Bible verse that says teach one another.

Everybody in the church, teach one another. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Everybody in the church, be merciful. Everybody in the church. Give, give generously. There's a command for every gift. So how do you know whether it's how do you know it's gone beyond a responsibility to a gifting? The way that you know is the level of joy that you experience when you deploy that gift, when you're doing that responsibility. If you get a unique level of joy out of it and other people get a unique level of benefit from it, that's an indication it's probably your gift.

Alright? So what's your gift? Of these seven things, which one gets you up in the morning? Which one, when you exercise it, has a dramatic impact on people? Whatever that is, do it. That's the point of the text. If you're a leader, lead with diligence. If you're a gift of mercy, do it with cheerfulness. If you're a giv if you have a gift of giving. In other words, it's not all about defining the gifts. We can define the gifts until we're blue in the face. It's not about the definition of the gifts, it's about deploying the gifts for the good of the body because if the gifts are not deployed, then the body isn't helped.

And if the body isn't helped, then we'll never grow into the fullness of God and our church. And so we need every member doing their part. Every member has a ministry. Every Christian has been gifted. So deploy your gift. In the life of the body. That's how we will build communities characterized by people who serve with Christ-like love, who are served in a Christ-like way. Getting ahead of myself. How else do we serve like Jesus? We serve like Jesus when we serve, we serve like Jesus when we're humble, but finally we serve like Jesus when we love like Jesus Romans chapter 12, verse 9, let love be without hypocrisy.

Taylor is going to talk about this next week, about creating a culture of grace. Jesus said, the way that they'll know you belong to me and not to the world is by the way you love one another. And so if you can if you can do everything within your power to humbly, graciously lovingly orient yourself towards the body of Christ so that however he has gifted you are using it for the good of the church, then you will be a partner with us in building communities. Marked by Christ-like service, who serve building communities that serve in a Christ-like way.

And it takes every single person playing their part. And so as we get ready to receive the Lord's Supper this morning, I just want to challenge you to be thinking about how you can deploy your gift for the good of the body. Maybe you would just begin by saying, Lord, would you reveal to me where my gift is? And if it's not on this list, would you show me how I can uniquely contribute to what you're doing at Broadview. Others of you have been uniquely benefited by someone else's spiritual gift.

And you may just want to encourage them or bless them or say thank you for being a servant at Broadview Baptist church because of you doing what you did, I was, I received something good. I was benefited and helped. This is how we can build one another up in love and become who God is calling us to be. If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, there's an opportunity for you to give your life to Jesus this morning. As we take the Lord's Supper, we reflect on his body being broken for us and his blood being shed for us.

If his grace has not invaded your life because you haven't yet surrendered yourself to him as Lord and Master, you can have an opportunity to do that as the ushers make their way forward. I'll be here at the front and I'll be happy to talk with you about that. If there's anything else I can pray with you or for you about, you can you can come down to the front

during this time as well. But for now I'm going to ask our rushers to make their way forward and we're going to prepare ourselves to take the Lord's Supper.

As they're doing that, I invite you right there where you're seated to bow your heads and to close your eyes and to allow the Lord during this time to minister to your heart and to expose or reveal anything in your life that may need repentance or confession of sin. The scripture warns us against taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, but to rather let a man examine himself and then take and eat. And so would you allow the Holy Spirit to do that as we wait on the Lord?