

Romans part 55

“the power of the mind”

So good morning, I want to remind you that we have a couple of big things coming in the next few weeks, we have a big party on the last Sunday of this month, then we have Easter. By the way, we need candy, we need to have you go to Walmart or Costco and buy candy. If you don't want to go get the candy, come give me \$100.00 and we will go get it for you. And, we gave you the find, tell, bring cards...

And then, on April 12th, we are having Tim and Maddie's installation service. Steve Mickel, the district supervisor will be here and it is going to be such an incredible time of praying over our new pastors...

So, we have been looking at Romans 12 for a couple of weeks and we are digging in deep, and today we are going to look at verses 3-9, so let's get started.

In verses 1-2 we talked a lot about the need to change our thinking, to allow the word to permeate our minds as well as our hearts.

Don't become so well-adjusted (shaped by this age) to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. Romans 12:1-2 MSG

In Romans 8, Paul talked about the two minds;

1. *The mind of the flesh--- defined as our natural human reasoning that is not submitted to God's law.*
2. *The mind of the Spirit--- guidance and revelation given to us by the Holy Spirit.*

This is followed by a promise, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Romans 12:2 NKJV

So it is interesting to me that Paul starts off Romans 12 with the instruction to “think about yourself” now everything may not be about me, but there is a time to think about yourself, am I fooling myself? Am I not getting an accurate picture of my own life and who is influencing me?

But then he turns to focus on not just me,

³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; ⁷ or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:3-8

So, can I just break this down?

a. Don't think so highly of yourself.

The truth is we have all been given a measure of faith, we are not all that something something. In the 17th chapter of Luke we are reminded that everything we do is still just the minimum, at our best we are “unprofitable servants”.

Verse 3 uses the Greek word “metron” for measure, it means a small part of the real thing.

b. God designed the church to be like our bodies, not where some are more important than others.

⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function.

c. We are designed to be a team.

So, as you are aware, Laury and I are stepping out as the senior leaders here at LCF, we were working on a video to you and it has made us do a lot of thinking and remembering, we have been in ministry for 44 years and we have been helped a long the way by so many people...

The people who have prayed for us, worked with us, the staff we have had the pleasure of working with, council members we have served with, what a blast it has been to walk down memory lane, but put simply, we could not have done all we did without all the others that have been with us on this crazy journey...

We are designed by God to function as a team, we have parts that we all play, we are not all the same, and the fact that we have to remember none of us have earned the right or deserve to be used by God. I think one of the things that Laury and I have been reminded of as we walk through this process is that we have never deserved to be used by God in any capacity especially not as pastors.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; vs. 6

Though God is the one who decides what we are called to do, it is our responsibility to function in that calling growing deeper and deeper in our faith, God gives us a measure of faith, but it is our job to grow that faith. He gives to us a measure of faith to do what He has called us to...

Now Paul will give a list, I do not believe this is the only the only list, but he gives out a list of gifts used for and in the church,

- Prophecy
- Service
- Teaching

- Exhortation
- Giving
- Leading
- Mercy.

All of these gifts are given by God to you and I, each of us are gifted, it is not that God needs us, it is He chooses to use us...

So, I want to go back, I want to stress some things that make all of this work,

1. **It is God who gives.**

as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

As Laury and I have reflected over the last years of serving Jesus, one big thing has stood out, if it were not for Jesus and other people, we could not have done this.

It is not because we were so talented, or capable, it was and is because Jesus invited us to come with Him on a journey, an adventure and a fruitful journey...

I heard a story this week from one of our district supervisors and as he told his story I was reminded that serving Jesus costs. We pastors want to remove the cost, the fear of living for Jesus and serving Him. We tell people that all fear is from the enemy, and I want to say that most is, we want to help people believe that living for Jesus will remove all pain and we will have peace and prosperity and anything but that is not from God. But the truth is, living for Jesus costs. You will have to leave some things behind, there will be loss, there will be pain, but I am here to tell you that after years of serving Him, I would do it all over again!