

Dear Emmaus family,

October 1, 2021

Paul wrote: *“The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some **pastors** and teachers,¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,¹³ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”* (Ephesians 4:11-13)

I love this passage of scripture because it tells me some important things about God, about the church, about the people of God, and about myself.

First of all, we are told that God gives gifts to each of us through the Holy Spirit. We don't all have the same gifts, but we all have some gifts. And even though we don't, individually, have all the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives out, Paul makes it clear that we are to use the gifts we have for a common purpose – *“to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”* (vs. 12).

We learn, from Paul's words, that God is a beneficent God, giving gifts to all. We also learn that God has in mind that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. What this means to me is that God spreads the gifts around with the intent that those gifts are shared by all – and for all to make the body of Christ (i.e. the church) to be better and stronger for using those God-given gifts for God's good purpose.

As far as what I get out of this passage for myself is that I find words of affirmation and encouragement to use the gifts God has given me to their maximum potential. In other words, when I do my part, and when you do your part, the church is able to thrive on the gifts we use to build up the body of Christ and to come to maturity in our faith.

I chose this particular Bible passage because this weekend we are helping Pastor Kent Klophaus observe the 20th Anniversary of his Ordination. Pastor Kent will be preaching at all services and presiding at Holy Communion. He will share more with us about his Calling into the ministry and about the journey of faith that brought him to Ordained parish ministry.

Following through on the Hurricane Ida relief project, we have received \$3,350 from Emmaus members and friends. We have just this weekend left to donate, so if you have something to contribute to Hurricane Ida relief, now is the time to put it in the offering or send to the church.

Last week we received 16 new members. We are thankful to God for these new family members. Be sure to greet them when you see them in church.

COVID-19 numbers have been coming down. That doesn't mean we don't need to be super-diligent. The last 4 or 5 Emmaus members who passed away were related to COVID-19. The numbers aren't quite at the level one would consider 'safe' yet, but we are hopeful that soon the positivity rate will be down to the point where we can consider relaxing our Coronavirus cautions again in worship. Perhaps we will be singing next weekend?

This week at Emmaus:

Sat., Oct. 2

- 5 p.m. – Sanctuary Worship
- 6:30 p.m. – Portico Worship (outside)

Sun., Oct. 3

- 10 a.m. – Sanctuary Worship
- 11 a.m. – Adult Study (Fellowship Hall or via Zoom conferencing)

Mon., Oct. 4

- Noon – AA meeting
- 7 p.m. – Cub Scouts

Tue., Oct. 5

- 10 a.m. to noon – Food Pantry distribution
- Noon – AA meeting
- 6:30 p.m. – Boy Scouts

Wed., Oct. 6

- Noon – AA meeting
- 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. – Martha/Lydia Bible Study

Thur., Oct. 7

- Noon – AA meeting
- 6:30 p.m. – Stephen Ministry supervisory session

Fri., Oct. 8

- Noon – AA meeting

Each of us – you, me, all of us – have gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit. We may not know exactly what our particular gifts are without taking a course on spiritual gifts by a trained leader, but we can pay attention to certain things that help us to know what our particular gifts may be.

First of all, think of something you do that you really enjoy and that tends to empower you and get you really pumped up. This will most likely be an area of your giftedness. Also, think about things that others tell you, “Hey you do a really good job at that (whatever it is). This is also likely an area of your giftedness.

How will you use your God-given gifts this week? Will you use your gifts to help build up the body of Christ? Will you use your gifts to reach a maturity of faith in you? Will you help someone else to reach spiritual maturity?

Whatever you do with your gifts this week, I encourage you to be aware of your strengths and decide how you will use them this week to make a difference in someone’s life.

Grace upon grace,
~Pastor Mark

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