

Sermon Notes for April 30, 2017

Encouraging Words From Your Pastor
“The Biblical Call Of The Christian
To Be A Servant”
Romans 12:1-8

Introduction

A. My Last Sermon Series To Be Preached At Christ Covenant.

1. Before my last time to preach at Christ Covenant on May 21st, I want to spend three Sundays encouraging you in three areas
 - a. last Sunday, I encouraged you to make a commitment to walk daily with Jesus
 - b. today, I am going to encourage you to continue to serve Jesus and His church
2. I don't want to leave here without encouraging you in some critical areas as individuals as well as a church body

B. My Experience With Equipping You To Serve Jesus Here At Christ Covenant

1. In **August of 1994**, I sat alone in my office in the chapel of Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church; our mother church.
 - a. I had been called to plant a church in West Knoxville but, I had no idea “how” to plant a church
 1. although I had been in ministry for 17 years
 2. the two churches that I had served, each were about **150 years old** and, obviously had their own buildings
 - b. as I sat in that office and sought the Lord's guidance, I became convinced that the church that I was to plant would be built on a Biblical model
 1. I would seek God's Word to see how **God** started His church
 2. I would **not** look to other churches and the way that **THEY** did it.
 - c. in my study of God's Word, I was overwhelmed to see in God's Word that the church of Jesus Christ **is called** to be a serving church.
 1. Jesus served
 2. God gave Christians spiritual gifts to serve
 3. so, Christ Covenant **would** be a Biblically serving church.
 4. **AND, THAT IS WHAT HAS HAPPENED!**
 - a. from the beginning, every single person who has attended one of our Inquirers' Class has taken the spiritual gifts inventory and has met with me to find out their spiritual gift. (show box)
 - b. we then placed them in a place of ministry, **ACCORDING TO THEIR SPIRITUAL GIFTS!**

2. Today, we are going to look at God's calling **TO EVERY CHRISTIAN TO SERVE HIM!**
 - a. **not just preachers**
 - b. **not just missionaries**
 - c. **not just staff**
 - d. **not just elders and deacons**

C. We, We At Christ Covenant, Are Committed To Serving As A Way Of Life

1. Let me read to you our core values as a church:
 - a. Glorifying and enjoying God forever
 - b. The preeminence of Christ in all things
 - c. Dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit
 - d. The authority of Scripture
 - e. The under-girding of prayer
 - f. Living in an environment of grace
 - g. The importance of family
 - h. Every member in ministry**
 - i. Missions and outreach
2. This was perhaps **THE CORE VALUE** that we built this church upon.
 - a. that the Pastor was not the only one who was to be involved in ministry
 - b. but that we believed in the teaching of the Word of God in this most important matter of **EVERY MEMBER IN MINISTRY. THIS IS WHAT THE SCRIPTURES TEACH:**
 1. **Ephesians 4:11-12 (RSV)** – “The gifts He gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, **to equip the saints for the work of ministry**, for building up the body of Christ.”
 2. **I Corinthians 12:27** – “Now you are the body of Christ, and **each one of you is a part of it.**”
 3. **I Peter 2:9** – “But you are a chosen people, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”
3. After all, **WASN'T THIS A CARDINAL BELIEF OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION . . . something the Reformers called THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS!**
 - a. **Martin Luther** – “**Everyone** who trusts in Jesus Christ is a **priest.**”
 - b. **John Calvin** – “Christ, once for all offered a sacrifice of eternal expiation and reconciliation; now having also entered the sanctuary of heaven, He intercedes for us. **In Him, we are all priests.**”
 - c. So, we ought to be, **AT THE VERY LEAST, PROTESTANTS!**
 1. **IF YOU STUDY THE NEW TESTAMENT, THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS THE CLERGY-LAITY DISTINCTION!**

2. **Philip Schaff** – The History of the Church – “The **entire body of Christians are called clergy (kleroi)**, a peculiar people, the heritage of God. The church could not long occupy the ideal height of the apostolic age and as the Pentecostal illumination passed away with the death of the apostles, the old reminiscences began to reassert themselves.”
3. This very accurately describes the typical ministry in today’s church: **Coach Bud Wilkinson**, the one-time coach of the University of Oklahoma football team, was once asked; “What contribution does professional sports make to the physical fitness of Americans?” His answer was unsurprisingly “very little.” He added, “**A professional football game occurs when 50,000 spectators, desperately needing exercise, sit in the stands, watching 22 men on the field desperately needing rest!**”

D. BUT. . . We Must BE CAUTIOUS OF THIS BIBLICAL TEACHING OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. DESPITE the fact the EVERY BELIEVER **SHOULD** be involved in ministry. NOT EVERY BELIEVER IS **READY** TO BE INVOLVED IN MINISTRY
 - a. when a person comes to Christ, he is “born again” – therefore, the new Christian is like a newborn baby – what they need first in their new lives is to “grow up”
 - b. but, just as we desire our own physical children to grow up and take their place in society, so WE DESIRE that our spiritual babies grow up and take their place in the church by finding their place of ministry.
2. In today’s text, we will see that there is “**an order**” to becoming involved in spiritual ministry.

I. FIRST, We Must Understand THE PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY.

A. DYING To Self.

Vs. 1 – “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, **in view of God's mercy**, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.”

1. The **evaluation** of dying to self.
 - a. NOTICE what Paul says is the **FIRST** step toward ministry – **TO EVALUATE, LOOK AT, CONSIDER, AND MEDITATE ON THE MERCY OF GOD**
 - b. Paul is saying that God’s mercy to us should be the **FOUNDATION and MOTIVATION** for all that we do as Christians
 1. if you truly realize what God has done for you in Christ, you must serve Him!

2. **“Saving Private Ryan”** – “You know the story, **eight set out to save the one**. The ethics of at least 6 and probably seven men dying to save one life. As the story unfolds we see various scenes where they argue amongst themselves as to the morality of risking so many for one man. At one stage one of the men says, “He better be a brain surgeon or something.”

Finally, after the death of many of the men, there is a scene where Tom Hanks (who plays Captain Colin Miller) lays dying on a bridge. His last action is to grab Private Ryan and pull him in close . . . with his dying breath he says **“EARN IT.”**

The closing scene of the movie is of **an old man with his family in tow at the American Cemetery in Normandy. As Ryan came close to the grave of Captain Miller, he asked his wife a question: “Tell me I’m a good man.”** His concern was to have lived a life “worthy” of the sacrifice that others made for Him.

- c. now, what is this mercy?
 1. notice that we, as saved people, **DID NOT RECEIVE GOD’S JUSTICE**
 - a. we weren’t held accountable to pay for our own sins
 - b. we will not have to stand before God at judgment and defend ourselves on our own merit
 2. instead God sent Jesus Christ to take the punishment for our sins
 - a. and **He** took the fall
 - b. **He** took the beating
 - c. **He** died in our place
 3. and, then He pursued us and saved us!
 - a. **THAT IS GOD’S MERCY**
 - b. **HE DID IT ALL FOR US!**
- d. when I moved to Knoxville, I wanted to name this church Grace Presbyterian Church
 1. I wanted grace to be in the name
 2. I wanted grace to be our overall attitude as a church.

2. The **essence** of dying to self.

Vs. 1 – “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, **to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.**”

- a. **AND DUE TO GOD’S MERCY . . .** Paul believes that Christians should respond **IN KIND** to His mercy by taking a very important spiritual step
- b. and yet, that step is **NOT to ministry, but to surrender.**
 1. Paul is using an Old Testament practice of the sacrificial system in which an animal was brought to the altar and totally sacrificed
 2. this sacrifice was to be given to appease God for that person’s sins

3. the obvious difference here was that the Old Testament sacrifice was a “dead sacrifice”
- c. Paul uses the term “living sacrifice,” meaning one who is living has the option and decision **NOT** to go to the altar and die.
 1. so, **BEFORE** you consider your ministry
 2. **BEFORE** you think about how much you know Biblically and theologically
 3. you must **FIRST** face your own altar, your own cross, and **your own spiritual death**
- d. those of you who have never been involved in ministry may think that what you need most is training and education
 1. I would agree with you that education, training and equipping is necessary in any ministry
 2. **HOWEVER, WHAT YOU NEED TO DO FIRST IS TO TOTALLY SURRENDER TO JESUS!**
- e. You will never desire to do ministry:
 1. until you get off of the throne of your life and die to self
 2. and see your calling as not to build your own kingdom, but to help build God’s Kingdom
3. The **elements** of dying to self.
 - a. God wants your **body**

Vs. 1 – “to offer your bodies as living sacrifices.”

 1. it all starts with the **TOTAL COMMITMENT OF YOUR BODY**
 - a. the word offer in verse one is **to present**; to stand beside; to place a person at one’s disposal
 - b. the verb tense is the **aoist tense** –
 1. meaning that it is to be a **one-time event** - it is **not a present tense verb** – but a **past tense verb**
 2. it is a one-time decision that will affect the rest of your life
 2. your body is the “house” of your soul, your heart, your mind
 - a. **you can’t say that you have given God everything in your mind while your body does not indicate it**
 - b. so, it is quite easy to see just **WHO** has given their bodies to God.
 1. for they will not merely “say” that they want to serve Christ . . .
 2. **THEY ARE, IN FACT, SERVING CHRIST!**
 - a. because you **SEE** their bodies doing so!
 1. serving in the nursery
 2. teaching young people
 3. praying for the ministry
 4. finishing out a basement so that we can add Sunday school classes

**b. SO, TAKE A LOOK AROUND AND
SEE THOSE BODIES WHO ARE
SERVING HERE AT CHRIST
COVENANT!**

b. God wants your **mind**.

Vs. 2a – “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed **by the renewing of your mind.**”

1. now, there is **NO** way that you can say that you have surrendered your life to Christ, **while your MIND remains unaffected**
2. if a person has offered Christ his mind, then he will have the mind of Christ
 - a. he **will think of life as Christ thinks of life**
 - b. he will have the **priorities of Christ**
 - c. he will **think of those things that are important that Christ thinks are important**
 - d. **AND, HE WILL THINK LIKE JESUS WHO CAME TO THIS EARTH TO SERVE!**
3. **HOW** can we have the “mind of Christ” and **NOT** read His Word – **STOP KIDDING YOURSELF!**
 - a. you see, there is a “ministry cycle” here
 1. as you spend time in God’s word, He encourages and empowers you to serve
 2. and then you go and serve and have to go back to God’s Word to get “refueled”
 - b. for those who are not in God’s Word, you will not want to serve others.

c. God wants your **will**.

Vs. 2b – “Then you **will be able** to test and approve **what God’s will is** – His good, pleasing and **perfect will.**”

1. **THIS** is where you will see a person’s total commitment
 - a. although they will say that Christ lives and rules in their body
 - b. although they say that Christ’s priorities are my priorities
 - c. **ARE THEY ACTUALLY DOING GOD’S WILL?**
2. **YOUR WILL IS THE INDICATOR OF YOUR “ACTUAL” SPIRITUAL CONDITION!**
 - a. Are your **spending time with Christ daily?**
 - b. Are you **praying to God each day?**
 - c. Do you **struggle with sin and desire to be Godly?**
 - d. Do you **reconcile with others** when you’ve had a disagreement?
 - e. Are you **serving Christ** and His church?

4. The **extent** of dying to self.
 - a. God wants all of you - **NOTHING HELD BACK.**
 - b. this verse, this commitment, separates the “spiritual men from the boys”
 - c. **Have you ever given the Lord ALL of your body, mind and will?**
 - d. **I HAVE NEVER MET A PERSON WHO HAS EVER MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR CHRIST THAT HAS NOT GIVEN HIS WHOLE LIFE TO HIM FIRST.**

B. DEALING With Self.

1. External conformation.

Vs. 2 – “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

- a. the way to know whether you have made this commitment is look at **your view of the world and your view of the Word**
- b. Paul encourages us not to be “conformed” to the world
 1. the word conformed means **to press, or to mold into a shape**
 2. the easiest way to know this is to see if the world’s will is more important to you than God’s will
 - a. Is **money** more important to you than ministry?
 - b. Is **pleasure** more important to you than prayer?
 - c. Is your **career** more important to you than Christ?
 - d. Are you more concerned about your **reputation** than your relationship with Christ?
 3. If the world has already “sucked” you into its mold, you will look, act, taste and feel like the world. You will “belong” in the world
 4. the verb conformed is in the **passive voice**
 - a. something is done “to you”
 - b. the world has “conformed” you because you have done nothing to stop the conforming

2. Internal transformation.

Vs. 2 – “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

- a. instead of confirming to the “world,” Paul calls believers to be transformed by the “Word”
 1. interestingly, this word transformed in the Greek has two meanings:
 - a. it is the Greek word metamorphoo (metamorphosis)
 - b. it is also the exact word that was used in Jesus’ change on the **Mount of Transfiguration**
 1. as Jesus was “transformed/transfigured” on the mountain by His heavenly Father
 2. both meanings suggest a change of behavior in our lives

2. believers become transformed when we “go to the mountain” and spend time in God’s Word
- b. but notice also the Greek tense for transformed:
 1. **the verb transformed (Greek)**
 - a. a **present tense**
 1. on going
 2. continual action
 - b. a **passive voice**
 1. passive means something is done to you
 2. you can’t change yourself – God’s Word does that
 - c. an **imperative mood**
 1. it is not “optional” for the Christian
 2. it is a command!
 2. once we are transformed, we must continue to be “renewed”
 - a. the word renew is actually not a verb but a noun –
 - b. the **sense of this noun** is that it is like an **event** that takes place, like the construction of a building
 - c. each day, if we are to be transformed, there must be an event, a time of transformation, a time of construction, of renewal

II. SECOND, We Must Understand THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MINISTRY.

A. Your View Of SELF.

Vs. 3 – “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment.”

1. Paul continues to instruct us about being involved in ministry; to be effective in ministry you need to “see yourself as you really are”
 - a. yes, I know that you “look and act spiritually”
 - b. but you and I are still sinners
 1. you and God fully know that
 2. even though you have your spiritual moments, you embarrass yourself with your acts of sin
 - c. as sinners, Paul says that we are to think of ourselves with “**sober judgment.**”
 1. these words in the Greek mean to be of a “sane mind”
 2. **in other words, when you see yourself as you “truly are,” as God sees you, you are of a sane mind**
 3. **however, when you think of yourself in more lofty terms, as super-spiritual, as extraordinarily gifted, you are, from God’s perspective, “insane” . . .**
2. To be Godly, and spiritual - IS TO BE SPIRITUALLY HONEST ABOUT WHO YOU REALLY ARE!
 - a. you are **NOT** truly holy
 - b. you are actually self-focused
 - c. **BUT, YOU HAVE GIVEN YOUR HEART TO JESUS AND YOU NOW “WANT TO SERVE OTHERS.”**

3. That is why I spend so much time asking you to take me off of a pedestal
 - a. I am a sinner saved by grace
 - b. when God has graciously used in ministry

B. Your View of OTHERS.

Vs. 4 – “Just as each of us has **one body with many members, and **these members do not all have the same function.**”**

1. Paul uses the human body to make a point of the church about where we are to serve.
 - a. inasmuch as all parts of the body are not equal and visible, **so are all of the parts of the spiritual body**
 1. I’ve never seen my heart, but I can’t live without it
 2. I have seen my hand, but I can live without it
 3. **and although the hand is more visible than the heart, it is not more important**
 - b. so, Paul says that in the body of Christ
 1. some of us are more visible – like me
 2. but some of you are the “liver, kidneys or heart” of this church - you may not be visible but you are critical to the life of this church
2. So . . . now that you have a correct view of yourself and others . . . we can “finally” talk about being involved in ministry.

III. THIRD, We Must Understand The PARTICULARS Of The Ministry.

A. We Will Have DIFFERENT SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

Vs. 6a – “We have **different gifts according to the grace given us.”**

1. Notice that within the body of Christ, **WE ALL HAVE SPIRITUAL GIFTS.**
2. **AND, THESE GIFTS ARE NOT BETTER THAN ONE ANOTHER; THEY ARE JUST DIFFERENT.**

B. We Will Have DIFFERENT MINISTRIES.

1. Prophecy

Vs. 6b – “If a man's gift is **prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.”**

- a. definition
 1. Paul **first** speaks of the **most visible gift of preaching** the Word of God. (forth telling)
 2. but this gift also speaks of those prophets through whom God told the future. (foretelling)
- b. application
 1. it is as if first Paul listed the most prominent, the **most visible of all gifts**
 2. and Paul tells the preacher, that if you are a preacher then preach and teach with all of the faith that God has given you
 - a. God has blessed you with a gift
 - b. you are filled with faith – **SO, USE YOUR GIFT!**
 3. Preaching is something that I have truly worked at

- a. Someone recently asked me, how much time I spend preparing for a sermon. I told him somewhere between 18 and 20 hours
- b. last week, I put a pedometer on my preparation time learning and preparing to preach, my sermon – I walked almost 5 miles!
- 4. let me say a word to your next Senior Pastor
 - a. Preaching is hard work
 - b. so, do the work of preaching and feed these people well

2. Service

Vs. 7a – “If it is **servicing**, let him serve;”

a. definition

1. **HOWEVER, PLEASE LOOK AT WHAT GIFT PAUL LISTS NEXT! – THE GIFT OF SERVICE!**
2. service is definitely a “behind the scenes” gift; a desire to do “whatever needs to be done”
3. it is the Greek word **diakonia** – from where we get the word deacon

b. application

1. now, **WHY** does Paul place the gift of service **RIGHT AFTER** the gift of prophecy – isn’t prophecy a more visible and more important gift?
2. **PAUL IS PLACING THE GIFT OF SERVICE BEHIND PROPHECY TO PROVE THAT THE GIFT OF PROPHECY AND THE GIFT OF SERVING ARE EQUAL GIFTS!**
3. do you remember in **Acts 6** where the early church grew so fast that they could not keep up with all of the people?
 - a. because of the overwhelming gravity, the Apostles appointed servants (diakonia) to serve the needy, while the Apostles returned to teaching and prayer

1. **Acts 6:2-4** – “So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “**It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables.** Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. **We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word.**”
2. **Acts 6:7** – “So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and **a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.**”

- b. These deacons in the early church “allowed” the Apostles to do what they were called to do; lead the church. Now which gift was more important?
- c. I remember the early years of our church
 - 1. we needed lots of people to help us set up the school each Sunday
 - 2. so, when people came to our church with the gift of helps, I WAS THRILLED!
- d. consider what happens every Sunday morning in our church by those with the gift of helps
 - 1. ushers, greeters
 - 2. sound, video
 - 3. parking
 - 4. setting up classrooms
 - 5. keeping the nursery

3. Teaching

Vs. 7b – “if it is **teaching**, let him teach;”

a. definition

- 1. Paul then, returned to a **more visible gift, that of teaching**
- 2. not only does the church need Preachers, it needs teachers!
- 3. **teachers** are those of you who love to learn
 - a. one of the things that I love about our church is the abundance of teaching opportunities that we have here
 - 1. many churches have few places for teachers to teach; for most churches have only Sunday School for teachers to teach
 - 2. however, here at Christ Covenant you can teach in:
 - a. Sunday School classes
 - b. Small group Bible Studies for:
 - 1. youth groups
 - 2. women’s groups
 - 3. men’s groups
 - c. Discipleship
 - b. Teaching does not only happen in a pulpit or a classroom! When “one” is teaching another “one” that is teaching.

b. application

- 1. however, lest you think that teaching is one of the most important spiritual gifts in the church;
- 2. **look at what spiritual gift Paul mentions next after teaching**

4. Encouragement

Vs. 8a – “if it is **encouraging**, let him encourage;”

a. definition

- 1. **Paul, once again, refers to another “behind the scenes” gift, that of exhortation or encouragement**
- 2. a great gift that God has given to some believers to build up and encourage those who need encouragement

3. the word actually speaks of an advocate; when one is in trouble, there is someone there to help you
- b. application
 1. now, why does Paul follow the gift of teaching with the gift exhortation?
 2. **you can teach your heart out, but if hearts are broken, teaching may fall on deaf ears**
 - a. so, God has gifted some of you as encouragers
 - b. **because so many of God's people are discouraged**
 - c. **Steve Brown** was once told about the needs of people in the church. "Learn to love people Steve, because 4 out of 5 people in the pew have a broken heart."
 3. now . . . which gift is "more important;" teaching or encouragement?
 4. my two spiritual gifts are teaching and exhortation
 - a. I love to teach
 - b. **and** . . . I love to encourage believers
 - c. If you listen carefully to my preaching, I combine **BOTH** of my spiritual gifts of teaching and exhortation each time I preach. I am like a "theological cheerleader."

5. Giving

- a. Definition

Vs. 8b – "if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously;"

 1. next, Paul lists the spiritual gift of giving
 2. this is the calling that God has placed on some believers to give financially to the ministry of Christ
- b. application
 1. most people would say that you have to be wealthy to have the gift of giving
 - a. no; if God gives you the gift of giving,
 - b. then, He will call you to give and will replace the money you gave so that you can give some more
 2. **PLEASE REALIZE WHY GOD HAS GIVEN SOME BELIEVERS THE GIFT OF GIVING**
 - a. because a church cannot be run without money
 - b. you cannot "live on love" in a marriage and you cannot "live on love" to run a church
 3. how many days has Andy Halbert, our administrator, sat and wondered how we were going to pay the bills?
 4. our general budget for this year is 1.5 million dollars; two million dollars will go through this church this year, including our missions budget and building fund!
 5. story of 140K "walking in off of the street"

6. Leadership

Vs. 8c – “if it is **leadership**, let him govern diligently;”

a. definition

1. then, Paul goes **right back to talking about a very visible gift** – that of leadership.
2. Paul is referring to the calling of Pastors, elders, deacons, and teachers

b. application

1. **do you realize the tremendous part that leaders play in any organization?**
2. where does a physical body go without a brain?
3. leaders are to lead diligently; to work hard because leading is hard work
4. **WHY DOES GOD GIVE THE GIFT OF LEADERSHIP TO SOME?**
 - a. **BECAUSE PEOPLE NEED TO BE LED!**
 1. Christians can be “so spiritual” that we may say; **“God will lead us.”**
 2. **ALL THROUGH THE BIBLE, GOD HAS USED LEADERS TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE!**
 - b. sometimes, I see churches that are struggling\
 1. very often, the Pastor is spending more of his time in sermon preparation and is not leading the church
 2. I want to walk up to him and say; **“PLEASE LEAD YOUR PEOPLE OR GET OUT OF THE PASTORATE!**

7. Mercy

Vs. 8d – “if it is **showing mercy**, let him do it cheerfully.”

a. definition

1. **AND YET, LOOK AT THE LAST GIFT THAT PAUL MENTIONS IN THIS TEXT**
2. he mentions the **gift of mercy!**
3. mercy is the desire that some believers have to minister to the hurting, the bruised and the broken

b. application

1. the gift of mercy is definitely a **“behind the scenes”** gift of believers visiting in hospitals, nursing homes, the homeless
2. there is no fanfare, nobody in front and no accolades
3. **BUT**, the gift of mercy is a critical gift
 - a. yes, it is not the gift of preaching or teaching or leadership
 - b. **BUT, IT IS A MOST NECESSARY GIFT**
 1. because God’s people sometimes get sick and lose their spouse or get fired from their jobs
 2. **AND, THEY NEED SOMEONE TO COMFORT THEM!**

3. Author, **Anne LaMott** tells the story of a little boy who was afraid of the dark. He told his mother she needed to come in his bedroom with him, because he did not want to be alone in the dark.
“You are not alone,” she says, **“God is always with you.”**
 The little boys starts to cry, and said, **“I need somebody with skin on!”**
4. my experience in Mississippi: a picture of the gift of mercy

C. EVERY CHRISTIAN WHO HAS A S PIRITUAL GIFT SHOULD HAVE THE SAME PURPOSE;

1. **STOP THINKING THAT SOME SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE “MORE IMPORTANT” THAN OTHER SPIRITUAL GIFTS.**
2. If you have a spiritual gift, **GOD GAVE THAT GIFT TO YOU** so, don’t call what God gave inferior.
3. God gave you a spiritual gift to use it to bless His body, the church.

Conclusion:

1. **This church was founded on the fact that God’s Word teaches that EVERY BELIEVER has at least one spiritual gift**
 - a. these gifts are not only for preachers and for those in full-time ministry
 - b. the people to whom Paul wrote the letter to in Rome were “just people”
 - c. the early church was led by people who had no religious or seminary training
 - d. it was only after the church became “organized” around 300-500 A.D. that the man in the pew was replaced by “professional Christians.”
2. **If the last 22 years of this church’s existence has proven anything, it has PROVEN that Scripture is right about the use of spiritual gifts by EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH!**
 - a. the 20/80 rule
 - b. we are probably 70/30
 - c. various spiritual gifts:
 1. Beth McRee
 2. Wayne Steffey
 3. Steve Meisenheimer and Don Sokol
 4. Susan Hammett
 5. me
3. **MAY THIS CHURCH NEVER LOSE THE BIBLICAL TEACHING OF EVERYONE FINDING AND USING THEIR GOD-GIVEN SPIRITUAL GIFTS; THAT MEANS THAT:**
 - a. the Pastoral staff of Christ Covenant is called by God to help members of Christ Covenant find their spiritual gifts and use them

- b. and, the members of Christ Covenant are called **NOT** to sit in the pew and “watch the show” but to get involved in serving Jesus
4. The team nearest us is standing together, heads bowed in prayer, with the coach in the center. Suddenly, they give a great cheer, and the coach trots out onto the field **by himself and the players go sit on the bench.** “What’s going on?” we ask as we stick a microphone in front of a 250 pound guard. **“What’s the coach doing out there?”** **“Oh, he’s going to play today.”** “All by himself?” “Sure, why not? **He’s had a lot more experience and training than the rest of us. We’ve got a lot of rookies on this team, and we might make mistakes. Anyway, they pay the coach well.** We’re all here to c hear and support him—and look at the huge crowd that’s come to watch him play!” Bewildered, we watch as the opposing team kicks off. The coach catches the ball. He valiantly charges up field, but is buried under eleven opposing tacklers. He’s carried off half-conscious.

Your Pastor is meant to be a kind of playing coach. His main function is to help you, as a Christian, discover your spiritual gifts, develop them, and use them to build up the Body of Christ.