

Message Main Idea

God desires His people to live on mission for His glory. The church is empowered to be God's instrument to meet physical and spiritual needs in the church body and as a witness to the lost. How are you serving the Kingdom?

Explanation & Discussion

Summary: The gospel was spreading through Judea and Samaria. The persecution of Saul had ended, and Luke turned the story back to Peter and his role in fulfilling Acts 1:8. While Peter was serving in Samaria and Judea, he had two divine appointments to perform miracles that turned people to Christ in faith.

How can the expectations of organized church distract us from living on the mission that Jesus has planned for us? What does the parable of the Good Samaritan teach us about the ability of religion to blind us to the needs around us?

In Mark 14:7, Jesus implied that we will never alleviate poverty. When we see a need, how can we know if it is one that the Lord wants us to attend to? Why do we need to be discerning as we respond to perceived needs? Can helping ever be hurtful?

What is the benefit of being aware that the Lord may want to use you on any day, at any random time or during any mundane activity? How can we prepare for those seeming random encounters?

Read 1st Corinthians 12:4-7. What is the source and purpose of gifts of the Spirit? How does this increase our understanding of what service in the church body looks like?

Is there anything we need to do to use our spiritual gifts? Do we receive spiritual gifts fully developed, or do we have to train in them? What light does Jesus' method of making disciples shed on the discussion?

What is the difference between a spiritual gift, a talent, and a passion? What place do each of these have in building up the church?

Discuss what is required for a church ministry to be a blessing that promotes unity, makes disciples and glorifies God. Discuss some ways that church ministries can get off track and miss their purpose of fostering unity, ministry, and outreach?

Is most of the effort of our church members being used to maintain the organization of church or the organic church? Why do you think that is? How does our focus define and affect the church's mission?

How might the church be different if all believers saw their time, wealth, and abilities as God's gifts for the benefit of others? Why are we so inclined to spend our blessings on ourselves? What might we do to change that individually and corporately?

How are the programs/services of our church being used to further the gospel? How might we be more effective in evaluating the focus and fruit of our church activities?

When you talk about your area of ministry service, do people hear more about what you are doing for God and the church, or the glorious ways God is using you for His church?

Additional References

John 20:20-21 ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

Ephesians 2:10 ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

1st Peter 4:10-11 ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

John 12:26 ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Romans 12:1 ¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Psalms 32:8 ⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. ⁹ Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.

Luke 10:40 ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

Romans 12:11 ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

1st Corinthians 12:4-7 ⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Mark 14:7 ⁷ For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me.

Philippians 2:29-30 ²⁹ So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, ³⁰ for Epaphroditus nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

Martin Luther "If there is anything in us, it is not our own; it is a gift of God. But if it is a gift of God, then it is entirely a debt one owes to love, that is, to the law of Christ. And if it is a debt owed to love, then I must serve others with it, not myself."

John Stott "The astonishing paradox of Christ's teaching and of Christian experience is this: if we lose ourselves in following Christ, we actually find ourselves. True self-denial is self-discovery. To live for ourselves is insanity and suicide; to live for God and for man is wisdom and life indeed. We do not begin to find ourselves until we have become willing to lose ourselves in the service of Christ and of our fellows."

Warren Wiersbe "The difference between spiritual fruit and human religious activity is that the fruit brings glory to Jesus Christ. Whenever we do anything in our own strength, we have a tendency to boast about it. True spiritual fruit is so beautiful and wonderful that no human can claim credit for it; the glory must go to God alone."

Francis Chan "While many pastors boast of how many children sit under their care, doesn't it make more sense to boast of how many have graduated from their care? Isn't it more a sign of failure when children are unable to leave the house? Raising thousands of consumers is not success."