

Readings:  
1 Corinthians 12:4-21

## **You are a Gift**

### **Introduction:**

I don't know about you. But if you are anything like me it is often hard for me to believe I have any gifts. I can give you a list of people that I know that are gifted. I mean there are the people we all know like Oprah, Barak Obama, Madonna, Lady gaga, Bono, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Theresa, and the list goes on. We may not like all of those people, and some of them we may worship but we can't deny that they are all good at what they do - they are all gifted.

And then there are the people in my immediate life that I know are gifted. Amazing ministers like Robin and Dan, great athletes like Tim and Erica, perfect friends like Shannon and Debra. I'm sure you have your own list.

But it has taken a bit of convincing, and well to be honest some serious counseling to convince me that I too have gifts. Now that could be a part of my personality and life experience. As a three on the enegram scale I am labeled an achiever - which means I'm never quite convinced I've done enough. If I don't make everyone in the room, or on the team, or in my family happy than I have failed. And believe me that's exhausting.

What is funny about my personality however is I have no trouble believing absolutely everyone else is gifted. There is no question in my mind that you are a child of God - well loved, beautiful, and capable of great things. My faith and belief assures me that when I look into your eyes, I look into the eyes of someone wholly loved. My faith and belief convinces me that you are created in God's image and that when I see you I see God. Now you may not always embrace your gifts, and your wholeness but I know and God knows you have it within you.

So, Today we are going to spend some time reaffirming our giftedness, reaffirming that we are children created in the deep love of the most holy. "Talents, abilities, skills, gifts – all of these are important in our lives, and in our community of faith. Sometimes we look at another's abilities and wish that they were our own. Sometimes we look at our own skills and can't see anything! We sometimes forget how important each and every person is in this world. Sometimes even in church we forget how important each one in this place and in this congregation of God's people is. We sometimes forget that God has given this community wonderful and exciting possibilities – and that many of these possibilities will come alive as we care for and nurture one another.

So as you hear the scripture reading this morning I invite you to close your eyes and listen as a meditation of gifts and possibilities.

Reading of 1 Corinthians 12: 1, 4-11

I have invited a few people to come and share with us some of the gifts they have discovered as they have been in touch with God's love, healing and gifts.

### THE GIFTS WE BRING

Healing Pathways - Walter and Glen to share

Now, I confessed to you as we began that for a long time I found it hard to find my gifts and worthiness. Maybe it's partly because if something didn't go perfect I thought that meant I was not good at what I was doing. In the last years I have come to believe that as I deny gifts that have been given me, and ignore that I am deeply loved by the holy I do not live into my fullness. And in doing that I dishonor my God and my creator, and I ignore the person I am meant to be. Now it's not that every day I feel gifted and I never feel like I've got it all together, but what I have come to discover is that as I spend time with God in prayer, meditation, and acknowledgment of who I am created to be I become more alive, more full, more real, more me. And because I know Jesus said "I have come that you might live abundantly" I know that is how I am to live. To the fullest, in the fullness of God. I know now that it is okay to acknowledge...no wait that it is essential that I acknowledge the gifts I have been given and live into them.

I want to take a moment now to invite you to do just that. Each of you has been given a note card. The first thing I want you to do is write your name on the card. Now that you I have done that I invite you to listen to the rest of the scripture reading.

Now take a moment and think about yourself - our past, your present, some of the possibilities you see in your future. Think about all of the internal strengths and abilities that have helped you to reach this place in your life. Think about the various skills that you have - there might be some public skills, like speaking or singing. There might be some private skills, like offering hospitality or praying or baking wonderful butter-tarts! When you are ready, write down as many of your gifts as you can think of on your card. Don't be shy, don't deny. I find when I am considering the gifts are God-given it is a little easier for me to acknowledge them.

As you do that I invite you to listen to another gift offered by Jim. As he shares and sings for us now.

Special Music - Jim "Make me a channel of your peace"

Take another few moments to pray over and reflect upon your gifts and write them down.

Frederick Beauchner writes “The word spirit has come to mean something pale and shapeless, like an unmade bed. School Spirit... Christmas spirit, the Holy spirit - each of these points to something that you know is supposed to get you to your feet cheering, but that you somehow can't rise to...

Like its counterparts in Hebrew and Greek, the Latin word *spiritus* originally meant ‘breath’ and breath is what you have when you're alive and don't have when you're dead. Thus spirit = breath = life, the aliveness and power of your life, and to speak of your spirit is to speak of the power of life that is in you. When your spirit is unusually strong, the life in you unusually alive, you can breathe it out into other lives, become literally in-spiring.

Spirit is highly contagious. When people are very excited, very happy, or very sad, you can catch it from them as easily as measles or a yawn. You can catch it from what they say or from what they do or just from what happens to the air of a room when they enter it without saying or doing anything. Groups also have a spirit, as anybody can testify who has ever been caught up in the spirit of a *hockey game*, a political rally, or a mob....

God also has a spirit - is spirit. Thus God is the power of the power of life itself, has breathed and continues to breathe life into creation. In-spires it.”

God has given us a spirit and gifts of the spirit to breathe life into that we and all around us might live more fully inspired. As we sing together this prayer now I invite you to recognize gifts that you have forgotten in yourself and perhaps look around at your friends and church family and open your eyes to see the gifts they have to offer. I would encourage you to share with one another after the service the gifts you see in one another. Let us pray.

Holy spirit come into our Lives      Mv 6