

Gifts Are Given to All

Tonight we will explore God's antiseptic for these thinking distortions.

Think About God's Gift

Romans 12

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.
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.

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, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

4. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5. so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8. if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Romans 12:3-8 KJV

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.
4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:
5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.
6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;
7 Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;
8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Gifts - measure of faith, gift of grace

I. God Says You are Important

“**Many Members**” *Each has a function. Each is unique. Each is gifted by God. Each has been given a holy trust and a high calling. What is your spiritual vocation? What is you calling?*

You are unique in the body.

Function: 4234 *praxis prax'-is* from 4238; AV-deed 4, work 1, office 1; 6
4238 *Prasso* = *undertaking, business, art, performance, deed, debt to manage*

II. God Has a Purpose for Your Life

1. To Everyone He Gives An Ability

Matthew 25:24 "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.'

2. To Everyone He Gives A Work

Mark 13:34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

3. To Everyone He Gives A Command

Luke 19:13 So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. (Employ) Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

4. To Everyone He Gives A Function

Romans 12: 4-6 Do not all have the same function, We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

No Man is an Island

(ie) No man is an Island - John Dunne // Contrast Paul Simon “I am a rock”

(ie) Hebrews 10:24-25 “**One Another Passages**”

III. God Gave Gifts to Every One - You are a gift to the body

IV. Find God Has A Purpose for You.

(ie) Life with Purpose - God gave gifts to use for a purpose

Present Your Body, Mind, Gift to God.

Closing: I Surrender All

What We are To Do With One Another
These are commands... not suggestions!

1. Accept ... (Romans 15:5-7)
2. Be kind ... (Eph 4:32)
3. Lay down your life ... (1 John 3:16)
4. Put up with ... (Eph 4:2)
5. Honor ... (Romans 12:10)
6. Love ... (John 13:34)
7. Serve ... (Gal 5:13)
8. Submit to ... (Eph 5:21)
9. Wash feet ... (John 13:14)
10. Bear burdens ... (Gal 6:2)

11. Greet ... (Romans 16:16)
12. Admonish ... (Romans 15:14)
13. Confess faults ... (James 5:16)
14. Comfort ... (1 Thess 4:18)
15. Edify ... (1 Thess 4:18)
16. Exhort ... (Heb 3:13)
17. Forgive ... (Eph 4:32)
18. Sing to ... (Eph 5:19)
19. Pray for ... (James 5:16)
20. Spur on ... (Heb 10:24)

Hebrews 10:24. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

ILLUSTRATIONS

No Man Is An Island

No man is an island, entire of itself
every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main
if a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were,
as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were
any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind
and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls
it tolls for thee. -- John Donne

I Am A Rock – Paul Simon

A winter's day- in a deep and dark December
I am alone- Gazing from my window to the streets below
On a freshly fallen silent shroud of snow.
I am a rock, I am an island.

I've built walls, A fortress deep and mity
That none may penetrate
I have no need of friendship
friendship causes pain
It's laughter and loving I disdain
I am a rock, I am an island

Don't talk of love. but I've heard the word before
It's sleeping in my memory
I won't disturb the slumber of the feelings that have died
If I never loved I never would have cried
I am a rock, I am an island

I have my books, and my poetry to protect me
I am shielded in my armor
Hiding in my room, safe within my womb,
I touch no one and no one touches me.

I am a rock, I am an island, And a rock feels no pain, and an island never cries.

Hostage Ashley Smith

Posted on Sat, Mar. 19, 2005 The Associated Press

“After we began to talk, he said he thought that I was an angel sent from God,” Ashley Smith said of her conversation with Atlanta courthouse shooting suspect Brian Nichols. Smith talked about God with Nichols and convinced him to let her go.

By ERIN CURRY Baptist Press

Ashley Smith, the Atlanta woman taken hostage by the subject of one of the largest manhunts in Georgia history, calmed the alleged killer by reading an excerpt from *The Purpose-Driven Life* and talking with him about God.

She escaped by persuading him to let her pick up her daughter from a children's program at a Southern Baptist church.

“I asked him if I could read,” Smith, 26, said in recounting the March 12 ordeal to reporters outside her attorney's office the next day. “He said, ‘What do you want to read?’

“ ‘Well, I have a book in my room.’ So I went and got it. I got my Bible, and I got a book called *The Purpose-Driven Life*. I turned it to the chapter that I was on that day. It was Chapter 33. And I started to read the first paragraph of it. After I read it, he said, ‘Stop. Will you read it again?’

“So I read it again to him,” Smith said.

On Day 33 of the book, author Rick Warren, a Southern Baptist pastor in California, writes, “We serve God by serving others. The world defines greatness in terms of power, possessions, prestige and position. If you can demand service from others, you've arrived. In our self-serving culture with its me-first mentality, acting like a servant is not a popular concept.”

The alleged gunman, Brian Nichols, 33, had overpowered an Atlanta courthouse deputy as he was being escorted to court for a rape trial March 11. Authorities think he then shot and killed the presiding judge and a court reporter before killing another deputy as he left the courthouse.

Later, authorities think, he killed a federal officer.

Smith was seized at gunpoint outside her apartment around 2:30 a.m. March 12, apparently having been chosen at random as she returned from a trip to a nearby store.

Once the gunman removed his hat, Smith said, she recognized him as the man wanted for the killing spree. He tied her up and then began to converse with her.

Smith asked Nichols not to kill her because she was scheduled to pick up her 5-year-old daughter the next morning. Four years ago, Smith's husband died in her arms after being stabbed in a knife fight, according to *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and Smith was concerned that her daughter would become an orphan.

As time passed during the early morning hours at the apartment, Smith said she and Nichols talked about God, family and life experiences while the fugitive apparently became more comfortable with the hostage. She began to help the gunman consider the families of the victims he had shot that day and asked him if he thought about how they might be feeling.

“After we began to talk, he said he thought that I was an angel sent from God and that I was his sister and he was my brother in Christ and that he was lost and God led him right to me to tell him that he had hurt a lot of people,” Smith told reporters. “And the families — the people — to let him know how they felt because I had gone through it myself.”

Nichols held photographs of Smith's family in his hands and said repeatedly that he did not want to hurt anyone else, according to a CNN transcript of Smith's statements to reporters.

“He said, ‘Can I stay here for a few days? I just want to eat some real food and watch some TV and sleep and just do normal things that normal people do,’” Smith said.

As they continued to talk, Nichols mentioned that he considered his life to be over.

“He needed hope for his life. He told me that he was already dead,” Smith told reporters. “He said, ‘Look at me. Look at my eyes. I am already dead.’ And I said, ‘You are not dead. You are standing right in front of me. If you want to die, you can. It's your choice.’”

“But after I started to read to him, he saw — I guess he saw my faith and what I really believed in. And I told him I was a child of God and that I wanted to do God's will. I guess he began to want to. That's what I think,” she said.

When he was hungry, Smith made pancakes for Nichols and they talked more about God.

“I said, ‘Do you believe in miracles? Because if you don't believe in miracles — you are here for a reason. You're here in my apartment for some reason. You got out of that courthouse with police everywhere, and you don't think that's a miracle? You don't think you're supposed to be sitting right here in front of me listening to me tell you, you know, your reason here?’”

“I said, ‘You know, your miracle could be that you need to — you need to be caught for this,’” Smith continued. “‘You need to go to prison and you need to share the Word of God with them, with all the prisoners there.’”

By 9:30 a.m., she said, Nichols agreed to let her leave to pick up her daughter. When she reached the first stop sign on her route, she dialed 911 and within minutes a SWAT team had surrounded the apartment with Nichols inside, according to the Journal-Constitution. Nichols waved a white piece of cloth to signal his surrender and was taken into custody.

“I believe God brought him to my door,” Smith said, “so he couldn't hurt anyone else.”