

Introduction:

- Have you ever been given a gift that you've simply failed to use? Did you know that millions have—every day! “People are letting cash slip away that they could be using,” says John Kiernan, a senior analyst with CardHub. Kiernan, citing CardHub numbers, estimates that some \$44 billion in unredeemed gift-card value has been accumulating since 2008. “I’m not surprised by that number at all,” adds Bill Hardekopf, CEO of LowCards. “People get these cards and often put them away in a drawer and then forget about them. And that’s too bad.” **Application:** yet every day people with spiritual gifts fail to use them. They bury them in drawer, a glove box etc. and never use them.
- "A ship in port is safe, but this is not what ships are built for." - Grace Hopper (she was a US Naval officer) **Application:** To hide in the safety of a pew when the Holy Spirit is calling you to use your gifts for the Kingdom, is as ludicrous as a battle ship perpetually sitting in the harbor.
- In 1 Cor 12:1 Paul writes, “*Now concerning spiritual gifts brothers I do not want you to be ignorant/uninformed.*” I do not want us to be that way either. So I am teaching to today about your spiritual giftedness and how it effects the Freedom Christian Center.
- Mt 25:14 reveals what happens when you bury your gift (the resource given to you by God) and do not use it to increase faith in others. The words of Jesus are severe: “You wicked and lazy servant...Get him out of my sight and leave him in everlasting darkness.”

I. Spiritual Gifts Strengthens Faith in Others

- A. “*For I long to visit you so I can bring you some spiritual gift that will help you grow strong in the Lord. When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours.*” (Romans 1:11–12, NLT)
 1. Gift-Gr. *Charisma*- root word *charis/grace*. Grace is God’s ability in me to do the things I cannot do in and of myself.
 2. grow strong- Gr. *sterizo*- means to strengthen, to support, to establish, to cause to rest upon.
- B. Romans 1:11 is the first place that you run into the words “spiritual gift” in the NT. Paul says, I long to see you that I may impart/give to you some spiritual gift. It sounds like Paul wants to give them a spiritual gift but it literally reads:
 1. “*I long to see you that I may use my gifts to strengthen you!*”
 2. Therefore one of the first things we learn from this text is that spiritual gifts are for strengthening others! Because it is a spiritual gift/grace...it is God’s ability in you! And that ability working through you actually strengthens others.
 3. The strength that Paul refers to is not actually a physical strength but a strengthening of another’s faith. It is the same word used in 1 Thes. 3:2:
 - a) “*we sent Timothy to visit you. He is our brother and God’s co-worker...We sent him to strengthen you, to encourage you in your faith,*” (1 Thessalonians 3:2, NLT)
 - b) to strengthen someone by a spiritual gift means to help their faith no give way easily when trouble enters their life. Ie. Spiritual water mark of grace in a local church increases as people use their gifts.
 - c) We have and use our spiritual gifts to encourage and strengthen others in the body of Christ and to administer the grace of God to those who do not know Jesus. Ie. Do you know that we have people every Sunday who are in nursing homes administering the grace of God?
- C. Desire Spiritual Gifts but more importantly desire to strengthen others with your gifts.

1. 1 Cor 14:1 says we are to *earnestly desire spiritual gifts* but remember they are ministered from a heart of love not pride in the gift.
2. We are hosting the DYMI class next weekend. If you have not signed up it is too late now, but I can help you with this thought concerning spiritual gifts: If you do not know your spiritual gift, think of ways that you can strengthen someone's faith. Maybe it is hospitality, verbal encouragement, service, etc.
3. So the greatest question for us all this morning is this: "Am I doing what I can to strengthen other people's faith around me?" Human nature is more prone to tearing down rather than building up. Grace/gifts strengthens other people's faith!
4. Therefore, let's all apply ourselves to becoming the kind of people who more and more long to strengthen other people's faith!
5. Romans 1 not only shows Paul longing to strengthen their faith but he longs to be strengthened by their faith as well. The power of reciprocity!

II. God Gives Both The Gifts and The Faith to Administer The Grace

A. Romans 12:3-8 (read).

1. vs 3 Paul states immediately that He was given the grace to minister. vs 3. I believe that we all have been given a spiritual gift(s).
2. vs 3 Paul states that each one has been given a measure of faith. And we are to measure ourselves according to that measure.
3. We are not to get proud in that gifting because it is God's ability and it is God's given measure of faith to us. Therefore we can't boast except to boast in the Lord! It is like what Moses said, "*He did all this so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth with my own strength and energy.'*" (Deuteronomy 8:17, NLT)

B. God through Paul is warning us not to get proud (this is not to scare us) but to cause us in humility to get all the more hungry for both gifts and great faith so that it cause Him to get all the more glory!!!

1. "*Therefore, as the Scriptures say, 'If you want to boast, boast only about the Lord.'*" (1 Corinthians 1:31, NLT)
2. So if we stay 'sober' minded and not proud; and we live to strengthen other people's faith the church should be (in John Piper's words) "the humblest and happiest fellowship on earth!"

III. Everyone Has Received A Gift

A. "*God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.*" (1 Peter 4:10–11, NLT)

1. Note: each of you has a gift. Gifts are not just for a few people they are for all. Every believer has been given some ability of the Holy Spirit to use to strengthen others. Your greatest joy in life will be understanding what those gifts/graces are and then pour yourself out for the purpose of strengthening others. That will really happen if you desire to bring about faith and joy in other people.
2. Grace is the currency of the church.
 - a) We have all been given a gift/grace.

- b) We are to invest it in others.
 - c) The investing or administration of that currency is when we use our gifting. We are called to be stewards of that grace much like the servants in Mt. 25:14-ff. We are the recipients of grace and it is our duty to disburse this grace for others. When we do they are strengthened in their faith, that in turn strengthen the church/body of Christ. Heb 13:9 says we are strengthened by grace.
 - d) Faith is what the House Owner wants in all of his stewards and grace is what makes it possible. FCC should be waking up more to the grace that is at work in us and seeking to administer that grace to one another for the mutual strengthen of our faith.
3. Grace is disbursed by word gifts and by action gifts.
- a) 1 Peter 4:11 refers to gift of speaking and the gift of serving. Another way of saying this is that there exist verbal gifts (you will hear God by what I say) and there are serving gifts (You will see God by what I do.)
 - b) Verbal gifts impart grace (God's ability) if we give them a word from God, or a thought from the throne as we say in the prophetic classes.
 - c) Serving gifts impart grace (God's ability) by what you do. Do not 'do' out of your own strength because at that point it ceases to be a spiritual gift/same with verbal gifts. It must come from faith (your measure of faith) to be a spiritual gift.
4. Final point from, 1 Peter 4:10,11 is this: the aim of all spiritual gifts is that God might be glorified through Christ Jesus!
- a) God gives us the gifts and He gives us the faith to exercise them so that His glory might be displayed.
 - b) He wants us and the world to marvel at Him, to revel in His glory.
 - c) Ro 11:36 "*For from Him and through Him and to him are all things.*"
 - (1) Your gift may appear small, but in the economy of God it is vital!
 - (2) You are a member of the body of Christ and every member of the body has a function.

Conclusion:

- There is saying in the body of Christ we often use when witnessing. "God has a plan and a purpose for you life." You are not a mistake. God knew you before you were fashioned in your mother's womb. Your life has purpose and you will find it when you make Jesus the Lord of your life.
- There are so many places to serve at FCC. Part of the reason we do DYMI is so that you can find out how God has made you and move into service of others (desiring to increase their faith) through the grace you have been given by God.
- Across the board: Growing church have three things up front to offer:
 - Great worship-three deep on every instrument, and vocal.
 - Great children ministry - teachers, servant in nursery, childrens' worship, sound person,
 - great youth ministry -
 - great body life - small groups
 - Dream with the people...