



“We ALL Contribute to the Cause”

Various Scriptures

November 11th, 2018

This morning we continue the series we are in the midst of called *Timeless Truths from the Early Church*. So far, we have considered the facts that we are a family of believers and that we are a household of grace.

Today we continue, and we are going to think about God’s vision for each and every local church. We are going to think about the fact that we all, every one of us in Christ, contribute to the cause—the cause of God’s work through the church to spread the Gospel and to build up Spirit-filled disciples.

It Friday night, July 27, that we got to go to an Angel’s game. Somebody from the neighborhood had two great seats to that game and dropped them off at the church for anybody who might want to use them. It was my day off, so Jami called me from the office. She was so excited and panting. I wondered what had happened. She then told me about the two great tickets that had been dropped off. We were so pumped up! However, Kristy and I had a dilemma because there are two grown-ups and three kids in our family that really like the Angles. We went back and forth on what to do. I said that my dad would understand and babysit, so we can go by ourselves. Kirsty said no to that, so we took the boys and bought three more seats that fit in to our budget. We had a rotation system worked out, so we could all sit in the great seats part of the time. It was a great game! The Angles had the lead, then in the eighth or ninth inning they blew the lead as the Mariners tied it up. That meant extra innings. It was late, and I had a lot to do the next day, so I said that we had to go. We got up to leave, but it was the bottom of the tenth, we were down on the field level, so decided to stay to see what happened. Then Cole Calhoun stepped up to the plate and he launched a walk-off homerun into the right field bleachers. The place went nuts, and Pastor Jeff went bananas!!

I like sports. I get excited about sports. I like the Angels, the L.A. Rams, and the L.A. Lakers. I get pumped up about my teams. Sometimes in my living room, I will get so emotional and pumped up about the games I am watching.

Sometimes I will think to myself *I’m sitting here so worked up about this and I am not a part of that game at all. I don’t take one single swing of the bat. I don’t throw a single pitch in a baseball game. I don’t attempt one jump shot for the Lakers.* Yet, I get so pumped up. I am what you might call a passionate onlooker to some sports teams.

Bringing that into our walk with the Lord and with our participation with the church, it is good for us to gather on Sundays and to be enthusiastic and responsive about what’s going on. But if all we are, are passionate onlookers, that is not God’s will for us.

Yes, we are to be engaged during Sunday worship, but we are not to be people who are spectators to the activity of the church. God's will's and design is that every single follower of Christ be in the game. As we walk through the week, as we think about things that happen here on Sundays and through the week, as we think about how God would use us in the neighborhood, every single Christian is to be in the game.

It is not a spectator sport. None of us belongs on the bench. If our Christian experience is a matter of coming to church on a Sunday and sitting in the service for ninety minutes then going home and not thinking about the things of the Lord and being active in the Kingdom of God, we are falling short. Every single Christian is to be in the game.

You might say that we are a team, and everybody has a part. We are a platoon. We are in an orchestra and everybody plays an instrument. Or if we want to get very closely connected as we ought to with biblical imagery, we are a body, and this body is comprised diverse parts.

Every single part of the body has a function for the purposes of God in and through the church. Some are hands. Some are the mouth. Some are the eyes. Some are the ears. Some are the heartbeats. Some are the feet. But every one of us has a role.

What I want us to do this morning is to think again about the early Christians, those early communities of faith in the First Century. They understood this. They were taught this, and they practiced this. These are timeless truths that come to us from the early church, as they obeyed what was taught to them through apostolic teaching.

This morning I want us to consider four ways that each and every one of us is to contribute to the cause. Once again, the cause of God's work in and through the local church is to spread the Gospel and make Spirit-filled disciples. First:

1. We all make use of our spiritual gifts (Romans 12:3-8)

Each and every Christian who has been born again and who has received the gift of the Holy Spirit, has been given some capacity to build up the church and advance the purposes of God. Every single Christian has a spiritual gift given to them by the Holy Spirit. They are to put it in to practice. They are to use it.

This timeless truth can come from any number portions of Scripture, but to start off this morning, we are going to go to the great metropolis of Rome in the First Century, the great capital city of the Empire.

Once again, the good news about Jesus spread all the way up there from the Holy Land. The community of believers was being established. There was a church that was being built strong and healthy. They were being taught to understand that every single one of them was gifted by God's grace to benefit the body of Christ. The young and the old in Christ. The slave and the free. The Jew and the Gentile. All of them, each and every one, was being gifted by the Lord.

This comes to us in to Southern California as well. Romans Chapter 12 and Verses 3 through 8:

³For by grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

In this text we see that every single follower of Christ has a gift of grace that comes into their lives with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Starting Verse 3 off, Paul said *I say to everyone among you*. Then this passage goes on to lay out seven of the primary spiritual gifts. There are four passages in the New Testament that you can look to in order to get the full sampling of the gifts of the Spirit.

I remember those passages as 12 - 12 and 4 – 4. There is Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 and I Peter 4. This is where you find the discussions of spiritual gifts. There are about twenty or more gifts that are laid out.

However, in this passage we have what many regards as primary spiritual gifts. There is a lot of discussion about which were assigned gifts, which were there just in the First Century and ceased or did not cease after that. But these seven gifts are active in every local church. There is no doubt about it. The Holy Spirit is gifting in these ways.

We want to be people who are not sitting on the bench, but active. We first need to identify what the Lord is doing in us. So, I want to run through this list of seven gifts and do my best to give a brief explanation of each one. There is so much here, so I can't dig out every detail of interpretation now.

If you are a follower of Christ, as I walk through these gifts you need to be asking the Lord which gifts yours are. First, we see the gift of:

Prophecy: When we think of prophecy, we tend to think that means to predict future events. Sure enough, if you look in the pages of Scripture, God did in fact give prophets the ability to foretell the future at times. But more commonly, prophecy is a matter of forthtelling God's relevant truth right now to the people that are in front of them.

Prophecy is all about the child of God being filled with the Holy Spirit that they might proclaim the truth of God to the people of God. So often, this prophetic spirit comes with a burning desire that people repent and be lined up with the will of God.

So, those given the gift of prophecy, they will often be aware of the state of the church in the current affairs of the day. They will be given wisdom to speak into these issues and bring the church in line with the will of God through the call to repentance.

What you will find is that those anointed with the gift of prophecy are often very bold, and they sometimes come off as confrontational. Reading through the pages of Scripture, we see that the prophets were always getting themselves in trouble—right up to John the Baptist.

So, prophets can come on bold saying that this is God's will. This is what we do. We need to repent of sin and we need to get in line. That is the spirit of prophecy. We need to pray that the spirit of prophecy is active in and through Bethel Grace.

When you are in the middle of prophets, somebody who speaks bold like this, just be ready for jolts of electricity to go through you, because they come on strong. Prophecy is speaking God's will into the heart of the church.

Next is the gift of:

Service: If you have the gift of service, you attach spiritual value to physical tasks. There is spiritual value to physical tasks because the Holy Spirit is the One who is inspiring you to do those tasks.

You express love by handling the more routine, everyday things that are needed for the church to be strong. These are very practical tasks, so the person with gift of service will love stacking chairs, handing out programs, and doing whatever practical things that needs to be done.

The person who is gifted with service is going to tend to not want to stand out in front of people and teach and lead and organize the effort. However, they will be there early and see through whatever physical things need to be done. They will keep their hands on that plow! This is the gift of service.

The third gift mentioned is the gift of:

Teaching: Some of you will love to study Scripture and you will want to study it with precision and accuracy. You love to research theology. You savor the content of the Bible, the Living Word of God.

God has given you a desire, whether in written or oral form, to make the Bible's content crystal clear. That is the gift of teaching. We need teachers because God brings life through His Word. So, the gift of teaching is active in the church.

Fourth, there is the gift of:

Exhortation: Exhortation also sometimes translates in to encouragement. It is *parakaleo* in the Greek. It is to come along side somebody—para and reminding them of the goodness and the power and grace of God. That is exhortation.

The person with this gift has eyes to see people who are struggling. They have the ability to discern when somebody's faith is lagging, or they are having a hard time in some area of life. The person with the gift of exhortation has the heart to come along side people to help them figure out the situation in order to get things worked out and getting them back on the right track.

I think that so often those who are counselors are given the gift of exhortation with the mix of wisdom as is spoken of in I Corinthians Chapter 12. It is that personal encouragement.

We continue, and we see that there is the gift of:

Generosity: All Christians are called to give. We will get in to that on the final point.

I don't know if these two words are related but it seems like they are—generate and generous. Those words sound similar, don't they? I did not do the etymology and look them up but generate and generous sounds similar.

But the one who has the gift of generosity has the ability to generate resources and channel them to good purposes of God in generous ways. It may be that it comes from their own ability to build wealth and to stream it to the things God is doing in this world.

Or it just may be that the person with the gift of generosity may not have a big savings account, but that person can do fund raising and is eager to coordinate that effort. So, there is the ability to generate resources and get it to where it needs to go. That is generosity.

We continue and see that there is the gift of:

Leadership: Some of you have eyes to see what needs to be done at the organizational level. You discern ministries that need to be developed. You detect when things go adrift.

Not only do you have the ability to see what needs to be done to keep the church strong and going in the right direction, but you also have the ability to speak hope in to the people of God. You have the ability to gather the people together and move them in a certain direction. Leadership is where you step out in front and tell people what needs to be done, then encourage them to do and do it.

The last gift that is mentioned is certainly not the least. It is the gift of:

Mercy: People with the gift of mercy are those who have a heart for people who are suffering. They are aware of the sick, those who are in rest homes, those who are in the middle of grief and bereavement.

People with the gift of mercy, they have a heart for the people who are suffering, even the person who is suffering as the result of their own foolish choices. They have a sense of mercy for those who blow it in sin, desiring to help them and see them through it. There is just such great mercy in their hearts. The gift of mercy is so important and prevalent to the church as well.

These are the seven gifts that are listed here. There are more throughout the pages of Scripture, but as we see what is here in Paul's heart, there is one big point that he made. That is that every single one of us has a gift and we need to use our gifts.

Christians need to be active in the purposes of God with the abilities He has given us. We can't pull back and be lethargic about our gifts. I love how Paul laid it out in Verse 6:

6Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...

Use them! This is the body metaphor. We have all these different parts of the body and if one part of the body gets injured, everything else is affected. Have you ever had a part of your body not working, or not working properly? It affects everything else.

Last year on Christmas Eve I broke a molar. A filling came out when I was munching a bowl of cereal two hours before the Christmas Eve Service. The wall of the tooth broke off when I crunched on that cereal.

Thankfully it did not touch the nerve, so it was not painful, but it was so, so irritating. It was maddening. I went to the dentist and they put in a temporary filling, a rubbery and obnoxious thing that is not built to last.

I had to deal with that for a full month before I could get my crown in. I had to compensate because I could not chew on that side of my mouth. I had to chew everything on the other side of my mouth for that whole month, and it was getting so sore.

But Paul was saying here that we are all a part of the body and every single part of the body needs to be active. We need to be pitching in. We need to be contributing to the cause. If your experience in the Christian faith is attending services once a week and that's it, you are outside of the will of God.

God has plans for us. He intends to use us. He intends to benefit the church through us, and to benefit people outside of the church through the coordinated efforts of the church with things we might do out there too.

So, we must be active. This is the will of the Lord for us. Not only does this speak to how we provide ministry, but it also speaks to how we receive ministry. Every church is going to have pastors and shepherds. Those men better be active.

But what if there is somebody anointed in this church with a greater endowment of mercy than one of the people on the staff? Maybe God will intend to work in that person's life even more powerfully through them. What if there are administrators, leaders, that are more effective in the gifts of coordinating causes than the people on staff?

That happens, brothers and sisters. That happens! This is the beauty of body-life. There is nobody who has all these gifts, but we become harmonious when we understand that God is empowering people to serve all throughout the church. So, we need to be active both in how we contribute ministry, and we must be thoughtful that God is going to be ministering to us through the whole body of Christ.

Bethel Grace is an active church. We have people that are serving two times over, some three times over, some four times over in different ways. There are a lot people who are serving, and they are serving sacrificially.

If you are here this morning and you have the sense that you need to get on the ball and plug in more than you are, I would encourage you to look through this list of seven gifts. Then take a registration card and write on it: I think I might have one or more of these gifts. On the way out, you can drop the card in the offering plate in the back of the church. One of the church leaders will then contact you to talk about how you might serve at Bethel Grace.

We all make use of our spiritual gifts. This is one timeless truth that rings forth to us. One aspect of this truth is that we all contribute to the cause. Let's look at another way that we contribute to the cause as we continue.

2. We all pray to the Lord with all prayer (Ephesians 6:16-20)

Every single follower of Christ ought to be a prayer warrior, calling on the Name of the Lord.

The early Christians knew that prayer was a crucial part of their ministry and their strength and their health as a church. I think that the people of the early church were very much attuned to the realities of spiritual warfare. They were perceptive of the demonic realm.

They knew that there were always false deities surrounding them. They knew that they were living on a battleground. So, they would be those hearing the teaching the instruction they received, and they were calling upon the Name of the Lord that the Lord would elevate their vision of who He is, that they would see God in all of His clarity to see who He is as revealed in Scripture.

They would pray that God would make their hearts thankful. They would pray that God would keep their minds alert. They would pray that God would give them power that they were lacking to make a difference for Christ for the world. They were prayer warriors. Every church and every person who is a part of a church needs to be calling on the Name of the Lord, asking Him to move His strength into His people.

If any church knew this back in the First Century, it would be in Ephesus where there was a massive statute to the false god Diana, also known Artemis. There were people immigrating into that city with all their pagan deities. There were shrines everywhere. Many of the Ephesians had been a part of these things.

So, the Ephesians knew the realities of spiritual warfare, and they would have been very responsive to Paul's call to them to be prayer warriors, to pray. So, to close his letter to them in the book of Ephesians, Paul told them that their struggle was not against flesh and blood, but it was against the cosmic powers of this present darkness.

He told them that they needed to take their stand in the Lord and in the strength of His might and to adorn themselves in the full armor of God. Paul then told them that as they did this, they needed to pray and to pray a lot.

We will pick this up in Ephesians Chapter 6 and Verse 16, where the sentence starts, to see the point we are receiving, especially in Verse 18:

¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Verse 18 is a verse that a whole theology of prayer could be drawn from, but I want us to notice the repetition of the word *all* throughout that verse. Prayer is to be all encompassing in the Christian life. Paul talked about the fact that we need to be:

¹⁸praying at *all* times in the Spirit, with *all* prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with *all* perseverance, making supplication for *all* the saints

Do you see how all-encompassing prayer is to be? Reading this, we understand that there are public prayers, there are private prayers. There are personal prayers, there are corporate prayers. There are long prayers, there are short prayers. There are sitting up prayers, there are standing up prayers. There are on your knee's prayers, there are on your face prayers. There are prayers for the battle. There are prayers for keeping us from sinking.

There are so many different ways that the people of God are called to pray and call upon the Lord. The acronym ACTS is good guide to prayer. You adore the Lord. You praise Him in your prayer. Then there is confession. Lord, I fall short every day in so many ways. Help me. I confess my sin. Let it not be a hindrance. Help me to repent and get past it.

There is thanksgiving. God, your gifts are all around me. Let me see them and let me have a glad heart them. Then there is supplication. Supplication is all about requests and asking God to fill up and provide that which is lacking. There is a sense of need for a person who goes to the Lord with supplication. Humble people will pray a lot.

I mentioned a book that was and is very influential with my walk with Christ. It is by John Piper and it is called *Desiring God, The Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*. I just love the whole idea of a Christian hedonist. Hedonism is pleasure. Christians are pleasure seekers. Taste and see that the Lord is good. There is delight in the things of the Lord, much more than the fading things of this world. There is delight in the Lord.

Last week we talked about the chapter on worship. Worship is the feast of the Christian hedonist. Prayer is the power of the Christian hedonist. Understand that going to the Lord in prayer is like going to the gas station to fill up the tank with high octane gasoline that is going to fuel your life.

The illustration that Piper gives in his chapter on prayer has really stuck with me when it comes to supplication, asking God to provide what is needed. We must beware of the way of the prosperity heresy gospel. This is what Piper says about supplication:

We got to be careful that we don't view prayer as an intercom in the great mansion by which we ask the servant to bring an extra pillow to our sofa. Instead we must understand prayer as a walkie-talkie by which more resources are called in to the trenches in the midst of the battle.

That fits in very well with what Paul was talking about here with spiritual warfare. We need to be a gathering of people who pray that God will fill us with light and truth that we might stay strong in the Lord, and that we might have light to shed for this generation that is living in darkness.

I think the generation we are living in has lost the fear of the Lord, and I think that people want to be lord of their own lives. It is an age of personal autonomy. We have lost the fear of the Lord in Southern California and beyond.

We here in Christ need to say: Lord, fill our hearts with Gospel love and truth, that we might shed light so that it might reveal in us and through us that there is a God who created us. He is Lord. He loves us. He knows what is best!

We live to glorify Him and in Him we find that which is truly life. We pray that the Lord would fill us with the weapons of His warfare—love, grace, truth, boldness, and merciful hearts. We pray that the Lord would fill us with what is lacking that we might be effective as followers of Jesus Christ.

I think Timothy Keller was very wise in his excellent book on prayer when he said:

“Prayer should be done regularly, persistently, resolutely, and tenaciously, at least daily, whether we feel like it or not!”

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. We know we ought to pray. Once we begin praying, we are glad that we do, but, boy, can we be sluggish in it. So, we pray whether we feel like it or not. Prayer is interesting because we are speaking to the Lord, but we are breathing in grace as we do. We need to be a people of prayer.

There are four ways we all contribute to the cause. Here is third way:

3. We all speak grace into the people around us (Colossians 4:2-6)

We speak grace. We all use our capacity of speech to lead people to the knowledge of God’s grace in Christ Jesus and to build them up. God has been gracious to us, so we are gracious to others in the way that we use the lips, the tongue. We use our ability to communicate in order to spread the fragrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to spread the fragrance of Christ, and we are to do so in the way that we speak.

To receive this truth, we go back to the village of Colossae. They were a small church with a potential for a big impact because they had a Mighty Savior. Paul knew that gracious speech had a lot of power, so in Chapter 4 he spoke a little bit about himself and his use of the capacity to communicate. Then he stopped and talked about them (us).

So, let’s look at what it says in Colossians Chapter 4 and Verses 2 through 6:

²Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— ⁴that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

Now about you. Verse 5:

⁵Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Let your speech always be gracious. Always! How many of you have ever spoken to a person with a dialect or an accent? They are either from another part of the United States or from another country, and you can tell that they are from somewhere else.

I like surfing. I like riding waves. I ride waves every Friday, and I like watching other people ride waves as well, so I watch surfing contests on television. I love to listen to the Australians talk. I love listening to the South Africans and the Europeans talk. I love their language.

We are citizens of another territory. We are citizens of Heaven, and we are growing in the *language* of Heaven. Christians ought to be students of doctrine and they should love the language of Scripture.

I know we must stop and explain our theological terms every now and then, or probably more frequently than we do, but we should love the language of the Bible. They are God's words to us, especially the whole spirit of it—that it comes out with grace. That should be our dialect.

If we are being honest with people, it should be evident who we are and what God has done for us—that we are distinct and different in this world. We are peculiar. There is a little bit of a different flavor to the way we talk, gratitude to the Lord and our willingness to bless the Name of Jesus Christ.

We are to be those who are gracious and convey the grace of God through our capacity of speech. Verse 6 is very important. There is the will of God for our ability to communicate. Look at it and read it again. It's such an important statement.

⁶Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

I know this is set in the context of outreach to the unbelieving world, but it stretches further than that because our speech is always to be gracious. Brother in Christ, you are not to be known as Mr. Snarky. Sister in Christ, you are not to be known as Miss. Snippy.

⁶Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

That does not include gossiping, sniveling, complaining, and moaning and groaning. O boy, do I do that! But when we fail and talk this way, we need to own it and tell ourselves that is not how we are not to be speaking. Humility goes a long way.

God's will is that our speech always be gracious and seasoned with salt. Grace has that kind manner to it, and I think it also speaks to the content of it. We speak of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Seasoned with salt. The pages of Scripture teach us all about salt and how it is a metaphor for the Christian life. Salt has the ability to preserve, so the church ought to be those who prevent rapid moral decay in our society.

There is also a medicinal value to salt. We can put it on our wounds and sometimes it can be the stinging salt of righteousness for Christians. We speak the righteous standard of God, and not everybody is going to like that, even when we say it with grace. This verse says *seasoned with salt*, and that is talking about the fact that salt taste good.

In the way that we interact with people, they should notice that we have pondered life, the deep things of life and the most meaningful things about God and eternity. So, there should be a flavor about the way we speak that is unique. This is God's will for our speech. This is for all of us so that the Kingdom of God might expand.

One quick story as I wrap things up. Verse 6 tells us that we ought to be able to answer everybody. That means that we listen to people. I was reading some old notes that I took on this passage when I taught it at some point a long time ago. I had a conversation in my notes with a woman who was dying of cancer. This woman was like a second mother to me. She was the mom of one of my best friends growing up. I spent countless nights in that home. So many good things happened there. Cancer entered in to her body right when I began in pastoral ministry. I had this conversation with her more because I was a Christian and she was a part of my life, rather than as my pastoral role. I just had to go and talk with her. It was kind of a challenge because I could remember how sometimes she would not speak so kindly in relation to church people and the things that she saw among them, even though she was a very kind woman, giving and generous.

I had to go and be with her to see how she was doing and talk to her. I just let her talk to me about what she was going through. I spent a lot of time listening for two voices. I was listening for what she had to say, how she was doing, and listening for the voice of the Spirit to give me a word that might encourage her.

What came to me is a passage that I love. I asked her if I could share a verse in the Bible with her. It was Matthew Chapter 11 and Verses 28 and 29:

²⁸Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

I told her that we all have a burden that we get under primarily because of sin, but Jesus wants to take that burden away from us. I also told her that I think that He wants to comfort you amid your situation. This was in my notes, and I remember that

conversation very clearly. Then she went on talking more about what she was going through, then I said a brief prayer with her and left.

It is a little funny, because later she spoke to my mom, my mom was also encouraging her, and she spoke about how there was a breakthrough in her knowledge of Christ based on that conversation. She said that if she was feeling good enough, she would have come to church, but she was too weakened from the cancer to come.

By God's grace to her, I believe that just a few short utterances opened the Kingdom of God for her. I sat and listened for about an hour, and I spoke for maybe five minutes

‘Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

I can't wait to see her in Heaven. She went before mom, then mom got to see her when she got there. That is great! Stay tuned in to the Spirit and let Him speak through you.

The last and final point that we won't get into is:

4. We all give generously to the work of the Lord (II Corinthians 8-9)

We are to honor God with our wealth. This is out of Proverbs in the Old Testament and it is in the New Testament as well. We give proportionately. Some people have the ability to give more than others, but we all give sacrificially.

It is the calling of the Christian life to be generous to the purposes of God on the earth. You can read II Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9 for one of the richest portions of the New Testament on generosity.

I was talking to Kristy last night about my sermon points. She was my victim, talking to her about my sports illustration. I think that her closing words to me will be good closing words for this message. Kristy said, *Get in the game, baby!*

Let's close in a word of prayer.