

Sunday February 11th Sermon Notes: Looking Ahead - looking to use our gifts like Jesus

We are encouraged to look after our bodies and minds.

What does a healthy body of Christ look like? **Romans 12 : 3-8**

How does the metaphor of the body of Christ help us to understand how the church functions?

What is the attitude we are to have towards ourselves and the use of our gifts? (Verse 3).

There are natural gifts or some talents we have been trained to use. When we become Christians, God blesses and enhances them by the Holy Spirit. Then there are gifts of grace, freely given by God through the Holy Spirit for which we had no natural talent.



What are your gifts whether in the Bible or not?

Mike shared his own personal story about his preaching gift and how it came about. He said: Discovering or using our gifts often comes by having a desire to serve Jesus and others. Sometimes it means stepping out of our comfort zone. Trying something different and seeing it as an adventure. Is God prompting you to do something different?

Someone has said at a football match there are 20,000 spectators in need of

exercise watching 22 players in need of rest. The church is made up of participators. Hence Paul encourages us to use our gifts - 'if your gift is serving, then serve...' verses 6-8 Which of your gifts are you using? Is there a gift you are not using but would like to use? Why not share this with someone.

A healthy church is where all the people in the church are fully committed to God and each other, has a heart to serve and use their gifts, such a church flourishes. The people are strengthened by the spiritual gifts of the church whether by the gift of helps, or a word of prophecy or some act of service. Not only that, but the blessing extends to the town and beyond. A church like this shines brightly in a dark world of individualism and self-centredness and draws people in who don't know Jesus, to come and know Him. What do you think?

Sometimes we find serving and using our gifts very hard. There were times when even Jesus found it very difficult. What did Jesus do? He looked to the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, scorning the shame and ultimately sat at the right hand of the Father. He knew where He was headed.

We know where we are headed - glory! Never lose sight of that. Also, on his journey to the cross he looked to His Father for affirmation. It is like wind in our sails to be affirmed and encouraged by others for what we do, and we need that, but we can't rely on it. Like Jesus we need to know the Heavenly Father's affirmation it is that which keeps us going.

We hear the affirmation of the Father of Jesus at His Baptism. The Holy Spirit came on Him and the voice of the Father was heard saying: **"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well**

pleased." Then again on the Mount of Transfiguration in the presence of Peter, John and James the Father said: **'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!'** Jesus needed to hear these words from the Father - **"You are my beloved Son with you I am well pleased."** We also can come to the Father and hear his voice saying to us: "You are my beloved son/daughter with you I am well pleased". It is making time to be with Him and listening to Him which helps to make this possible. I

In the film Chariots of Fire, Jenny, Eric Liddle's sister, is concerned that his running may stop him serving God in China. In a private conversation he says to her: **"Jenny, Jenny I believe God made me for a purpose - for China, he also made me fast and when I run, I feel his pleasure. And when I win, I honour Him."**

Jenny failed to see that God had made Eric fast. She could not see how running had anything to do with God, or that it could be a gift of God which he could use to glorify Him. Eric saw it as God's gift and wanted to glorify God through it. God does not separate our life up into secular and sacred as if one part is more pleasing to him than another - being an administrator at work is meant to be as honouring to God as being an administrator at church, that goes for being a good mother at home is as pleasing to God as is being a good children's worker in church. It is using our gifts in all of our lives that glorifies God and blesses other people. We see this in the life of Jesus!

In the 1924 Olympics he refused to run the metres 100 sprint because it was on the Sunday, the Lord's Day, he ran in the 400 metres instead. Against all the odds he won the 400 metres. Here is what he said: "The secret of my success over the 400 metres is I ran the first 200 metres as fast as I can. Then, for the second 200 metres, with God's help I ran faster."

With the Holy Spirit's help we can use the gifts He has given us, like Jesus, to glorify Him and bless others in the body of Christ and wherever we find ourselves.

'And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.' Heb. 12: 1-3