

SERMON: HOLY HELPERS

1ST Corinthians 12:27-28

(27) Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (28) And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then the gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Introduction

Before I get into the meat of my sermon, there are a few preliminary thoughts that will give additional clarity and contextual information.

A well-crafted sermon or song is about “one thing.” The one thing must be developed and explained logically. If one deviates temporarily or parenthetically, he or she must still come back to the one thing. This is why preachers sometimes say in their delivery, “That’s another sermon for another day.” It may sound strange, but one of the best examples of a well-crafted artistic work, which is about one thing, is the well-known juvenile song, Old McDonald Had A Farm. It is only about one thing, his farm. It is not even about him – it is about his farm. It has become part of American folklore and remains in the cultural repertoire because, believe it or not, by accident or by design, it is so well-crafted. (It is used frequently in songwriting classes and seminars.)

These two verses of Scripture could easily spawn multiple sermons or Bible lessons. However, we are concentrating on the one word, which the King James Version translates as, “helps.” We could say today, helpers or assistants. Yes, helping is a spiritual gift and there are many members of Antioch who possess it. A spiritual gift, is the ability to do something that produces extraordinary or supernatural benefits to others. The key to spiritual gifts is the extraordinary impact on others. We all sing, but some have the ability to impact others in a

supernatural way as they sing. They may not have perfect diction or intonation, yet when they sing, the church is moved in a special way. Likewise, we all help, but there are some who just know how to assist others in a very special way. I say again: We all help, but some members have the spiritual gift of helping. They are pleasant as they help, and they have the right balance between following directions and working without the necessity of having someone to constantly look over their shoulders. It is easy to forget that helping is a spiritual gift because it is not spectacular or exotic, and helpers do not draw attention to themselves.

I was inspired to preach, or should I say teach, about the holy helpers because I have seen so many of our members who have this spiritual gift. This was reinforced in the last few weeks as we had multiple activities, from Mother's Day Brunch, to Mother/Daughter Brunch, to Father's Day Lunch, and to Vacation Bible School. Let us not forget the men who unload the 18-wheelers from the Food Bank and the members who distribute the food, the ushers, the greeters, the nursery workers, the nurses, the parking attendants, the custodians, the sound techs, the publication committee members, and the receptionists. Many have no official title, but serve because it is a labor of love and dedication. I could go on and on, but I will stop.

What are some of the traits of individuals who have the spiritual gift of helping? Let's look at three of these attributes.

Exposition

1. They Are More Comfortable In The Background Than In The Limelight

(Caleb Is A Great Example.)

(He Served Moses, Then He Served Joshua.)

(He Never Became The Head Person, And He Was Okay With It.)

2. They Are Not Envious Of The People Who Are In The Limelight.

(They Are Not In Competition With Others.)

(They Applaud The Success Of Others.)

3. Their Self-Esteem Is Not Diminished Because They Are Not In The Limelight Or In Charge.

(They Have Strong Egos - Not Big Egos.)

(Their Egos Do Not Have To Be Stroked All The Time.)

Closing Thoughts

Even though helpers are more concerned about results than about recognition, it is our duty – and Antioch does it - to let them know that we appreciate their support and we do not take them for granted. We need generals, but no general has won a war all by himself. We need quarterbacks, but no quarterback has won a game, let alone the Super Bowl, all by himself. Likewise, we need church leaders, but they cannot be successful all by themselves. The assistance of the holy helpers is tantamount to the successful worship, witnessing, and work of any church congregation.

I can't resist closing with the words of the Black gospel hymn, If I Can Help Somebody. It was composed by Alma Bazel Androzzo and made famous by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ,and Mahalia Jackson. It has been recorded by many artists, and there are many arrangements and variations of the lyrics. In the fifties and sixties, this was a staple in the collective repertoire of all Black churches. When someone sang this song, the ushers knew they had to bring out the tissue boxes because the handkerchiefs were not sufficient to dry the tears. No matter their lot or status in life, everyone wanted their life to have

significance and meaning, and this song told them how to achieve it and produce lasting positive consequences. (These are the lyrics of Andre' Thomas' choral arrangement.)

**“If I can help somebody as I pass along,
If I can cheer somebody with a word or song,
If I can show somebody he is traveling wrong,
Then my living shall not be in vain.**

**If I can do my duty as a Christian ought,
If I can bring back beauty to a world up wrought,
If I can spread love's message that the master taught,
Then my living shall not be in vain.**

**Then my living shall not be in vain.
Then my living shall not be in vain.
If I can help somebody as I pass along,
Then my living shall not be in vain.”**

Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

End Note

Sometimes, Paul would mix church offices and functions with spiritual gifts on the same lists, because he knew if you were truly called to an office or function, it was implied that God have given you the gift to be successful. Our God-given gifts must be discovered, developed, and deployed.

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