

Mutual Grace (Week 1) - Gifts of Grace

Yesterday's Sermon Summary

1. In our English translations Romans 12.6 reads "Each of us has gifts that differ according to the grace given to us." That rendering lacks one important nuance – the terms in Greek for "gifts" and "grace" are, in fact, near synonyms, sharing the same root. So a paraphrase of this verse that picks up the intentional overlap might

be, "Each of us has different graces given to us by God that should be given to others as an act of grace." So the throughline of Romans 12.6 is grace.

2. God has bestowed upon each of us with regularity experiences, spiritual passions, Kingdom aspirations, personal strengths, accumulated skills, and hard-earned life lessons. These the apostle Paul calls divine "graces" or "gifts."

3. Moreover, if we look backward attentively we find that these gifts were fanned and fostered in us by key, timely figures - for example, by mentors in the faith, friends who stood by us and stuck with us, teachers or bosses who spotted our potential long before we spotted it in ourselves, and so on. In other words, God's graces to us were named, buoyed, affirmed, and refined by the grace of others.

4. And the last link in the chain of grace described in Romans 12.6 is this - the divine graces that have been poured out upon us and that have been reinforced and cultivated by the grace of crucial persons along the way are now to be given away as an act of grace to others. Who we are, who others have helped us become, and the person we give to others in love and service are all the same thing – "grace."

5. Thus to live like a Christian is to live a life of mutual grace. We were not created to be self-contained reservoirs of grace, in part because over time that's a surefire route to grow tepid and stagnate. Rather, we were meant to be open channels that flow in and out of each other's lives. To be incomplete on our own is not a design flaw; it is by divine intent and it is a divine invitation...it is God's way of ensuring that we will always need one another.

6. So take stock this week of the hands, head, and heart God has given to you and to no one else. How can you be a more responsible and generous steward of the person God has made you to be? What has God invested in you that God hasn't in others?



7. Likewise, open your arms wide and be ready to receive grace from those around you. Allow yourself to admit and know your own deep need, need of what someone else can provide that you cannot for yourself. Don't shrink back from dependence, for without dependence you will always be less than – less than your full self, less than appreciative of how able and benevolent other people can be, and less than grateful for the way that, like many candles gathered and grouped together, we can only shine brightest together.

8. Only when we offer our unique gifts and humbly take in the gifts of others will we stop being a collection of solitary individuals and become in reality and practice "the body of Christ." Only together and not on our own can we be a living, breathing expression of all that Jesus was and set out to do. Only together – that's the mantra of mutual grace.

Exploring More this Week

- If you've never seriously examined what your "spiritual gifts" might be, what Paul calls your gifts of grace in Romans 12.6, here's a free online assessment from The United Methodist Church. We'd love to help you find a way to express these aptitudes here within the ministry and mission of KirkWood!: [Spiritual Gifts Inventory](#)

- It might be worth some good conversation or reflection this week to consider what your own "gifts of grace" from God are, for these are the ones that God wants you to invest in others and in God's great Kingdom. Here are a few questions to help you do that:

1. What makes you feel most alive? Notice the activities or moments that bring you the deepest joy and a sense of true fulfillment for the sake of others.
2. What breaks your heart? Look at the frustrations, needs, or problems in the world that evoke a strong desire in you to provide a solution.
3. How are you gifted? Identify your natural talents, acquired skills, and life lessons that you can use to serve others.
4. What does your past teach you? What have you overcome that might help others? How has God used you before to support and build up others?
5. What legacy do you want to leave? How do you want people to remember your character, love, and contributions, here at KirkWood and, more broadly, in your life in general?

Helping with Mission and Welcome & Communications

Yesterday, you heard from two of the committees that guide and lead our ministry here at KirkWood.

1. Our Mission Committee offers a bevy of ways to be engaged in local outreach and care, such as:

- KirkWood Pumpkin Patch
- KirkWood Food KupBoard
- LINK (Living Interfaith Network)
- P.O.R.T. (People Offering Resources Together)
- Holiday meals for vets
- H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Eat)
- PEVA Migrant Worker Program
- THRIVE Peninsula
- 1st Presbyterian Hampton 5th Thursday lunches
- Mission Trips
- St. Luke's Food Pantry
- Virginia Peninsula Food Bank
- Furniture moves on behalf of York Co./Poquoson Social Services

If you're interested in learning more about any of these opportunities, contact Toni Fisher or Lisa Nickerson: fishermd1@gmail.com and lanickers62@gmail.com.

2. Our Welcome & Communications Committee covers two major aspects of our church's life:

- You could serve on an usher team (1 Sunday every 2-3 months). Our ushers greet folks in the narthex and at the parking lot entry door, help visitors find seats, count attendance, and hand out bulletins.
- You could man the Welcome Center in the narthex (1 Sunday every 2-3 months). You are the primary point of contact for guests, answering their questions, giving them a gift bag, etc.
- You can volunteer for events, such as Pumpkin Palooza coming up on October 24th, or the spring Craft Fair.
- You could be part of our website team, updating its content.
- You could join the KW Photo Team
- You could help us with our social media posts.

If you'd like to learn more about any of these opportunities, contact Kerry Gough - kerryg969@gmail.com.