

I. Introduction

- A. I have a “magic” tool drawer in my garage where I keep all my screwdrivers.
1. Somehow it magically makes sure that the screwdriver I need is never in tool drawer
 - a. If I need a COMMON screwdriver, the drawer has only PHILLIPS screwdrivers
 - b. If I need a PHILLIPS screwdriver, only thing in the drawer is COMMON
 - c. I’m not sure exactly how this phenomenon works, but it does seem pretty consistent
 2. It’s pretty frustrating. Because you need the right tool for the right job, right!
 - a. And you can never have enough of the tools, right? At least that what they tell me
 - b. I sometimes like to watch *This Old House* or *New Yankee Workshop* on PBS
 - 1) I never do any of the projects on those shows—I can’t afford the tools
 - 2) Before you make a \$50 shelf, you attach a \$500 gizmo to a big \$5000 gizmo
 - c. Can’t have just ONE tool. Or a toolbox with all SAME tool.
 3. You need a lot of different tools— the right tool for the right job.
 - a. That’s as true about God’s work in the church as it is with screwdrivers
 - b. Church can’t have just one or two of its members carrying the load
 - c. Everyone must working together, using their gift as a useful tool in kingdom
- B. We continue today our look at Unashamed: The Message of Romans for today
1. **Last Week:** Paul has now turned to a practical application of grace (**12:1-2**)
 - a. In the first part Romans, Paul built a meticulous case that we are saved by grace
 - b. So what? So we must offer ourselves to God as living sacrifices back to God
 - c. And that means that we can no longer salute the values and standards of the world
 2. That was **Roman 12:1-2**, his introduction summary of this last section of the book
 - a. But what will be the very first practical thing he will stress that they need to do?
 - b. Here it is: “*Get over yourself!*” That’s it! “*It’s not about you; This is about us*”
 - 1) He strikes at the basic arrogance that led to their disputing... and to ours
 - 2) He reminds them of grace and tells them use their grace gifts to serve other
 - 3) The antidote for fussing and fighting is to use their tools to serve each other
- C. Paul will give us three different lens through which to see ourselves in this text.

II. Three Ways We Are to Look at Ourselves

A. First, there is the lens of God's grace (Romans 12:3)

1. We might not like to admit it, but we do tend to “*think of ourselves more highly...*”
 - a. We've already seen Paul warn the Gentile Christians not to arrogant (Rom 11:20)
 - 1) Both Jewish and Roman Christians saw themselves smarter and more spiritual
 - 2) They dismissed one another; Paul comes back to pride later in chapter (12:16)
 - b. Anytime a church finds itself at odds with itself, no matter the issue—issue is pride!
 - c. Note to myself: I need to get over myself! It's not about ME; it's always about US!
2. So how are we supposed to see that? Paul starts in Rom 12:3 with **GOD'S GRACE**
 - a. Remember Paul's “*Popeye*” statement, as we called it in small group (1 Cor 15:10)
 - b. Paul said, “*By the grace of God I am what I am.*” How's that for solid self-image?
 - 1) Paul says if there's anything good in him, who is it that will get the credit?
 - 2) If there's anything bad in him (and there is), then grace is working on that too!
3. Paul sees this self-image as “*sober judgment*” or “*sober discernment*” (12:3, NET)
 - a. The word “*sober judgment*” is literally “*sound mind*” or “*clear-headed*” or “*sane*”
 - b. Tues's reading, demoniac was freed of demons and in “*his right mind*” (Lk 8:35)
 - c. Same word! NLT translates text, “*be honest in your evaluation of yourselves.*”
4. Notice it's “*by the faith God has given us,*” NOT comparing ourselves to next guy!
 - a. This isn't, “*I'm not as talented, as gifted, as creative, as next guy, so let him do it*”
 - 1) That's not sober judgment! That's just an excuse for not getting involved!
 - 2) Like Moses (Exo 3), “*I don't know enough; I can't speak well enough...*”
 - b. Paul says if we use FAITH to make sober judgment about ourselves, then...
 - 1) We won't think of ourselves too highly, putting ourselves first all the time
 - 2) We won't sell yourself short; think that you have nothing to offer others
5. The first lens through which we must see ourselves is the lens of God's grace

B. Second, there is the lens of others; *see ourselves as part of one body* (Rom 12:4-5)

1. “*The body*” is one of Paul's favorite metaphors for church (1 Cor 12:12, Eph 4:16)
 - a. Our body had different parts with different functions; all of those are important
 - b. Church is one body (UNITY) with many different parts (DIVERSITY)
 - 1) The fact we are ONE BODY does not mean that the PARTS are all the SAME
 - 2) The whole point of having different parts is that they must remain all different

2. The fact that we remain DIFFERENT parts doesn't we're INDEPENDANT
 - a. We don't struggle with Christ as head; we do struggle with ideas we're connected
 - b. We approach most things at church totally with a "*What's in it for me?*" attitude
 - c. Why not come Wednesdays? Small Groups? Sunday School? *Or even to potlucks?*
 - 1) "*I don't get anything out of it.*" I deny the allegation & challenge the alligator!
 - 2) Might someone else benefit by you being here? *Is it about you or about us?*
 3. What would Paul think is a "sober judgment" way of thinking about this?
 - a. He says we "...form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."
 - b. We belong to Christ. But that means that we belong to one another as well!
- C. **Third**, we look through the **lens of our gifts** to that we use to bless others (**Rom 13:6-8**)
1. The word "*gifts*" here is another form of the word "*grace*" that appears in the text.
 - a. So Paul starts with God's grace (**v. 3**); now he tells us that we are to grace others.
 - 1) We are part of the same body; thus, we have been given the same grace
 - 2) We are different parts of body; thus, have been given different types of gifts
 - b. The gifts we have are from God, "*according to the grace given to each of us*"
 - c. This isn't a complete of spiritual gifts; Paul has another list in **1 Cor 12:28f**
 2. When we read this list, we immediately want to start grouping and categorizing
 - a. Which of these gifts are **miraculous** and which ones are **non-miraculous** gifts?
 - 1) Most of the gifts in the list 1 Corinthians 12 would seem to be miraculous
 - 2) Only "prophesy" here would seem so; the rest seem like "ordinary gifts"
 - 3) Though some missionaries tend to believe "giving generously" is close!
 - b. Some divide this into **gifts of prophecy** (*speaking*) and **gifts of service** (*ministry*).
 - 1) That also happen seems to be what Peter has in mind in **1 Peter 4:11**
 - 2) Think about that way of categorizing—which category do we value the most?
 - 3) Some churches really put the preacher on the pedestal; shouldn't be a pedestal!
 - c. Ben Witherington suggests prophesy would've been particularly valued in Rome
 - 1) Romans saw prophesy as how you determine which way political winds blew
 - 2) So someone recognized as a prophet would've had juice in the Roman church
 - a) Remember in Corinth, prophets and tongue-speakers competed for time/attention
 - b) The point of any spiritual gifts were to "*build up the church*" (**1 Cor 14:12**)
 - 3) Sometimes the best thing a prophets (or tongue speaker) could do was be quiet!

3. Most of the gifts here are MINISTRY gifts, not TEACHING gifts
 - a. **Servicing:** This is a “*generic word for a wide variety of ministries*” (Stott)
 - 1) Also form of word “*deacon.*” We see “deacon” as formal part of power chain
 - 2) Deacon was table server. Not about organization chart, but about washing feet
 - b. **Encouraging:** Barnabas was the “*Son Encouragement.*” Some have a special gift
 - c. **Giving:** Is it about **resources** (*wealth*) or **attitude** (*generosity*)? *Both are gifts!*
 - d. **To Lead:** Most of the major English translations render this as a gift of leadership
 - 1) Some have gift to lead people or to manage ministry (*not necessarily the same*)
 - 2) This same word can also be translated “*care for*” or “*take care of*”
 - 3) Many translations offer alternate note as “*to provide for others*” (NIV/ESV)
 - e. **Showing Mercy:** Message has “*Work with the disadvantaged...*” Spiritual gift?
 4. Paul’s point isn’t to describe each gift but stress we are to use our gift for each other
 - a. And not only that, we are to use our gift diligently, generously and cheerfully!
 - b. This is a representative list, not an exhaustive list; God gifts us in other ways too
 - 1) God gifts some to write music or lead worship or arrange flowers— not listed.
 - 2) God gifts some to take do church finances or write HTML code— not listed.
 - c. Paul’s REAL point is that we are to USE whatever we have to build other up
- D. Go back to last week’s lesson to the phrase “*true and proper worship*” (**Rom 12:1**)
1. We said “*worship*” here is word “*latría,*” the word “*ministry*” in **Hebrews 9:6**
 - a. What was the ministry of the priest? They were the ones who offer sacrifices, right?
 - 1) They were holy men in holy robes in holy place who offered holy sacrifices
 - 2) Priest who offered the sacrifice was expected to clean up after! (**Lev 16:27-28**)
 - b. That was every bit as much a part of their ministry or worship as the holy sacrifice
 2. Our “*spiritual act of worship*” is anything we do in service to God or to his body
 - a. Hayward hanging off the ladder in this room replacing bulbs— *act of worship*
 - b. When Lynn/Todd spend hours on memory verse pillows for middle school— *worship*
 - c. When Janet, Sara and Jen offer up time and creativity for MAGI boxes—*worship*
 - d. Tom Glaspell sacrifice his Saturdays on altar of camp septic system—*act of worship*
 - e. When Betty offers 3 mornings a week at *Five Loaves* to the poor— *act of worship*
 - f. When Renee and Richard go to city jails each week for CASA—*act of worship*
 3. All of these “acts of worship” both serve others and glorify God (**1 Peter 4:10-11**)

III. Conclusion

- A. “80-20 Rule” is familiar principle on which most volunteer organizations operate
1. **Principle:** is volunteer organization, 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people
 - a. For many members, church the place they go to worship God on Sundays
 - b. All that stuff that has to happen to make church possible— church elves!
 - c. But what happens if those church elves decides to take a Sunday off?
 - 1) Heat isn’t turned on when you get here? Or worse, coffee pot isn’t turned on?
 - 2) No one is there to teach your kid’s Sunday School class or Children’s Church?
 - 3) No one has paid any bills? No one’s replaced light bulbs? Or mowed the lawn?
 - d. Would anyone complain? Even if they’d never done those things themselves?
 2. More than 20 years ago, we started thinking about Sunday night small groups
 - a. It was a major change, and not everyone was on-board like every other change
 - b. We did a pretty detailed survey; it would be until years before we’d pull the pin
 - c. **Survey:** Guess what group most opposed changing to Sunday night small groups?
 - 1) It was members who only came for the Sunday morning worship service
 - 2) They didn’t come on Sunday nights and wouldn’t be personally impacted
 - a) If they didn’t come on Sunday night anyway, why did they care what we did
 - b) Knew they SHOULD. And knew they’d be personally challenged by new effort
- B. Let me personally challenge each of us to use our gifts to serve one another
1. We all can’t do everything—but we should all be doing something for church
 - a. What is it that you are doing to **PERSONLY** build up the body here
 - b. Some may be thinking, “*I give money.*” And that’s one of Paul’s gifts, right?
 - 1) By in large, the more money someone gives to the church, the more involved
 - 2) Someone said, “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” (**Matt 6:21**)
 - 3) So it’s not like giving money absolves us of being connected to the body
 2. Remember the **three different views** that Paul asks us to take here—
 - a. We see ourselves (*and therefore one another*) through the **lens of grace**
 - b. We must see ourselves as **part of the body** (*and therefore of one another*)
 - c. We must see ourselves as having a **gift** that is needed (*to build up others*)
 3. How do you see yourself today? Where is your place in the body?
- C. God is calling each of us to be Him in this world; the place to start is right here!