

Sermon by Pastor Bob Brown on 10/5/03 SUN AM  
Entitled: "My Ministry" from Scripture Luke 10:38-41

This is an absolutely fascinating passage of Scripture. Jesus is traveling with His disciples and they stop in the village of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. As always, Jesus teaches those around him and many sit at his feet and listen. But there is a very interesting element added to this story of Jesus.

We don't often think of it but we know Jesus and his disciples ate, we just never think about who fed them. Martha, apparently had this gift of hospitality, but didn't feel very secure about it. Mary was caught up in the moment of being with Jesus. That's what Mary did, she was waiting to see if she could use her gift, she was a servant.

When we have spiritual gifts, and we all do, we are to use them to the best of our ability to serve the Lord and others. In Eph. 6: 7,8 we read, **"Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free."** This admonition is not just about serving Jesus, it's about serving others as if you were serving Jesus!

It really doesn't matter what our gift is, we are to use it in the body of Christ so that others are served and God gets the glory. Here Martha wants Mary to help her with her gift, which is hospitality, and even seems offended, hurt, or maybe jealous that she has to do all the work and Mary just sits there.

But Mary is not just sitting there, she is waiting for the opportunity to serve Jesus. Last week we saw how Mary, when the time was right, poured expensive oil on Jesus to anoint Him. She is a servant, and like all servants, waits for her time to minister.

To really understand our gifts and abilities to minister, we must get past some things in our lives. We need to get past being offended, by what others do or don't do. In Prov. we read:

**"He who covers an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends."** (17:9) (This is also known as gossiping about an offense).

**"A man's wisdom gives him patience, it is to his glory to overlook an offense."** (19:11)

We need to get past being offended by another's gifts, or even the lack of them, and concentrate on being who God intended us to be. See your gifts, and the gifts of others as a means to bless someone and give God glory.

To really understand our gifts and ability to minister, we must get past the jealousy in our lives. We get jealous because someone may seem to have a gift that is more visible than ours. In the story of Martha and Mary, who had the most visible gift? Was it Martha who went in and out among the crowd, serving and cleaning, or Mary who just sat and waited for an opportunity to minister?

Jealousy is a bad thing. In 2 Cor. 12: 20 it is seen in a group of bad stuff, like anger, factions, slander, gossip and arrogance. In Gal. 5:19, 20, we see jealousy listed as a part of our sinful nature along with witchcraft, hatred, rage, selfish ambition and dissensions.

Let's all agree to get rid of the negative things we hold on to and change our thinking. Read with me from Col 3: 12-17.

Another area that we must remove in our lives if we are going to understand our gifts and be able to minister is fear.

We have to get past the fear of using our gifts, of being afraid of other's gifts, and of not having any gifts!

Rom. 8:15 tells us: **“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.”**

Don't be afraid of the gifts that others have received. Don't talk about spiritual gifts that are listed in the Scripture as no longer valid or of the devil! That is exactly the fear that the enemy wants you to have. We have been set free in Jesus. We are no longer to live in fear.

John wrote in 1 Jn. 1: 18, 19: **“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.”**

We are designed to be overcomers in Jesus, but the only way to do that is, together. We need each other, and we need each other's gifts, just like others need our gifts, to effectively minister to each other and reach the lost world for Jesus.

As we go before the Lord's Table this morning, take the time to ask God to allow you to use your gifts, to encourage others to use theirs, and to build each other up, so that this church becomes a safe place to be Christians, who love the Lord.