

Covenant UMC Bible Study Notes—January 22, 2018

for the Scripture readings for January 28

Romans 12:1-8—Take My Life & Let It Be

Do you know your spiritual gifts? How do you use them as an offering to God?

Romans 12:1-8

Luke 24:13-35

Romans 12:1-8 read in the New English Bible, and verses 12:1-2 read in the J. B. Phillips translation.

“With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within...” (Philips)

“Intelligent worship”--worship is not just Sunday morning. Live it out. What does it mean? A journey to discover your gifts and talents, and weaknesses.

Luke 24:25: On the walk to Emmaus, Jesus rebuked the two disciples as being foolish and “slow of heart to believe.” The Lord had outlined what he would do. The disciples heard it but it didn’t penetrate. It was not “intelligent worship.”

Then their minds were transformed.

On the road to Emmaus, the two disciples were blinded by grief. People often listen with the intent of replying, not the intent to understand. The two disciples wanted to talk, not listen. By not listening, they were not recognizing Jesus. They were overcome with grief. This ties into spiritual gifts—the gift of being able to listen is one of the greatest gifts.

You need to hear without reading in your own experience.

Jesus’ rebuke got them out of their grief mood and got them hearing and thinking, bringing them into the present. “Intelligent worship” means engagement. How does intelligent worship call us to be engaged?

You have to be intentional about the gifts in Romans 12 that you have.

In Hospice work, your presence with the family is vital.

You do a lot of listening.

Some people are strong in one gift and that’s enough. Each of the disciples Jesus chose had his own gift. In the case of the two on the road to Emmaus, Jesus let them get their grief out first. You must let whatever has hurt someone get out before you move forward. Get down to the bottom, then rebuild. Intelligent worship and gifts revolve around this.

As to digging down, we need to become aware of what we’ve buried because we were focused on something else.

We are called to walk out to the edge, helping others walk to the edge.

“You look like you need a hug.” “If you want to talk, go ahead, I’ll listen.” Then, “Can I tell you my story?”

These things can happen in God’s community. You have to allow them to happen.

It's God's grace.

These gifts can happen in a Christian community. Know the gifts you have, nurture them in yourself.

God provides the people to affirm your gifts.

Do we approach our neighbors in a way that we can set ourselves aside and be there for them in the way they need? That is the core gift. We pass on evil or we pass on good. Do we pass on fatigue and ill temper, or graciousness and patience and love? Love as Jesus loved.

In a recent sermon, Pastor Ann referred to the question asked of people joining a United Methodist church: will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness? We are all capable of these. Other gifts might be selective. But these five are common among us all.

There is a church within the church. Some know their gifts. In the case of others, you don't see them. They are not fully functioning.

There are different levels of engagement.

We need to present opportunities to do more than come and listen.

We need to recognize what people are able and willing to do.

How do we recognize and value gifts in each other, and receive them?

Spiritual gifts inventories can help us discern our gifts. The Annual Conference has encouraged each church to explore spiritual gifts.

It is not only our abilities, but our limitations, that bind us to one another.

Gifts may be expressed outside of church.

A spiritual gifts inventory identifies gifts, but some place other than Covenant UMC might benefit more.

We need to acknowledge gifts exercised outside the church. People bear witness outside.

If we are to be the salt of the earth, we can't always be in the saltshaker.

In the United Methodist Church there is clarity about acknowledging how we live out the gospel.

It has to be organic. We must grow and be fertilized. We need to be mindful of gifts and recognize them.