

The Gift of Mourning and Reproof

Change, in any of man's institutions, has been a curious thing throughout history. It usually begins with some maverick who for one reason or another comes up with a concept so bizarre as to seem ludicrous to the educated of that day. It seems to be insulting to the middle-class and unintelligible to the masses. But as time passes, those parts of the concept which have veracity come to be accepted and eventually are implemented into everyday life. Even then someone else is birthing other as yet an un-received premises, destined to shake and stir again.

The same process is no less true in the Body of Christ. Equally there are those with messages applicable to the present need, both palatable and unpalatable to leaders, and those with messages applicable to a future course of action, usually unpalatable to leaders.

The Word refers to these Hearts (that are so intense in their individual message) in two places; one is in Romans 12:1-15, especially verses 6-8, and the other in I Corinthians 12:1-31. The former deals with the primary motivational gifts of the Spirit to which Christ gives each believer at least one. The word motivational is used because the nature of the gift is in the deep recesses of our spirit. It motivates us. It drives us. It influences us as to what we read, listen, think, and speak. It influences how we feel towards groups, individuals, with whom we identify, where we find comfort, satisfaction, and peace. It motivates us in how we respond to people, groups as well as individuals and their situations. The extent to which we allow that gift to grow and be expressed determines the extent to which it affects people and effects change in ways pleasing to God.

The seven motivational gifts are there to bring about change through balance. No single one can stand alone any more than can an arm, a kidney or a heart. This theme is further developed in the latter, I Corinthians 12:1-31, wherein the Gifts of the Spirit are given to individuals of the Body as needed to effect change, balance, healing, restoration and growth.

The importance of each of these gifts, just as in Romans 12, is interdependent unto and upon one another; none is to be rejected because it has a less *desirable* function in the Body or is *less attractive*. The *eyes* are universally received as attractive, as well as the mouth, arms, torso, legs, etc. The *less desirable* parts, usually covered, are not generally received. But let those undesirable parts clog up and then the once-beautiful eyes begin to fill up with poison; once-virile arms and legs lose their strength and wither; the once beautiful mouth strangles in its own food.

Throughout the Body you see and remember young and old, wise and illiterate, rich and poor, serious and giddy, polite and crude, refined and rough, that have gifts that motivate them. These gifts, the messages of their hearts, that which drives them, relieves them, satisfies them, are manifested throughout: *helps* in nursery workers, bus drivers; *teaching* in teachers, both young and old, private and group; *exhortation* in encouragers, on the telephone, and supporting in general; *administrators* in getting things organized; *mercy-givers* in counseling situations, private and group, always able to see something good; *givers* in seeing people's needs met, both privately and publicly (though less so).

We see the evangelist's heart, wanting to save souls; the singers giving praise; the musicians supplying rhythm and harmony; preachers delivering the Word; apostles (fathers) and shepherds/elders keeping watch over the health of the Flock. We see people with a love for the youth, or the elderly, or singles, or divorcees or the oppressed. We see people with a drive for missionary work or those with single-mindedness wanting to help prisoners, vagrants, and aliens.

In each there is a driving force (the gift). It keeps them serving through thick and thin and furnishes them enthusiasm in the main and renewed strength in times of weariness.

Without the motivational gifts, there is no way the flesh could keep going, keep rebounding in defeat after defeat, or in the face of continued criticism. The shepherd's heart is a classic example. Without that gift within him and the supernatural strength released through a Divine Call, he could never survive the demands of his function.

It is equally so with a nursery worker, helper, manager, singer, teacher, counselor, and so on. They all continue because of the power of the indwelling motivating gift. As time passes from their rebirth, the driving force of each person gravitates them to a position where that gift may be utilized, thus bringing them joy and satisfaction.

Once in position, each Child with his or her gift being more or less perfectly utilized, the Church receives and appreciates the work. The shepherd's job is to aptly fit each part into its proper time and place, depending on the flow of things as he receives (hopefully) guidance from the Holy Spirit. And so things flow merrily along, more or less ideally, depending on the maturity and integrity of those involved.

Ideally, each in his or her position eventually bears fruit, and as that occurs, there is joyfulness for having been used of God for His glory. Any recognition from others should be accepted with great humility, for the talent and ability used all came from the heart and purposes of God in the first place. There is simply great satisfaction in knowing God has used his or her humble efforts to be a blessing in His Body

Each of the gifts being spiritual, they obviously are of the Spirit of God. In essence, each is a reflection, a sharing, a co-participator of a part of the heart of God Himself. This is why there is a driving force, a power extraordinaire that enables a pastor to stand in the face of strife, pettiness, exhaustion, criticism, misunderstanding, recalcitrance, a stiff-necked people and still come back renewed. It is what empowers a nursery worker to work from one service to another with whining, complaining, crying, obnoxious, spoiled, runny-nosed children and rebound with fervor every week ready to greet them with a warm smile.

And so on with the other Romans 12 gifts. They individually and corporately are co-habitants of a particular recess of the Father's heart. The person with a heart for evangelism wants to see people saved, and will go out in all sorts of situations, undaunted and oblivious to anything in his way. By contrast, others without the indwelling nature of that particular gift have difficulty persevering in evangelism and hence are less effectual. Nonetheless, these are to receive and learn from him who does have the gift and thus be taken toward another step of completion unto the Image of Christ, who had all the gifts *in toto*, as we are to have also.

And so it is throughout the Body with the individual gifts; they are used, bear fruit, and received by the Body. All, except one, are desirable parts and welcomed into the whole.

There is one gift that is rarely received or welcomed, seldom seen in its true light and shunned because of its initial effects.

This is the gift that reflects a recess of God's heart that mourns because of the destruction as a result of sin. Destruction in the New Testament means loss, ruin, a fading away of strength, crops, hope, wisdom, knowledge, and wealth. It connotes an aimless wandering, without orientation, both physically and morally. This particular recess of His heart seems to be composed of two parts: one that hurts and weeps at the loss (of fellowship, blessings, purity, etc.) and the other that originates out of Holiness Itself. It cannot and will not tolerate even the tiniest speck of evil. That part of His Heart is totally pure and holy, resulting in righteous indignation and anger and rage at evil. It demands justice and judgment towards the unrepentant and stiff-necked. If repentance and obedience comes, the other part of the recess of His Heart triggers a response of mercy and forgiveness. Then another person with the gift of mercy is used to administer that part of God to the repentant. Thus the Body is supposed to function.

But the person to whom is imparted the gift of mourning for the sin of His people, as well as its partner holiness, there is reserved a place of loneliness and misunderstanding. The gift within is equally of God as are the others, but it enjoys little else in common, reception by the Body being the difference.

The nature of the gift, though, does not need the reception of his brothers. The Word is a joy and a delight as he eats it; he needs no calling by men, no ordaining, no accolades, no reception; a word from the Father, regardless of its eventual effect, is sufficient for him to move. It burns within him such that he must release it though it pains him to do so. Integrity and obedience furnish the indwelling power that enables him or her to enter situations no one else would dare. It empowers him to deliver absurd and embarrassing messages, as well as dangerous warnings, to his own hurt.

Knowing he has obeyed the Father is the only thing that sustains him through persecution, rejection, anger, hatred, fear, accusations, threats and most of all tears. It has been said he is a *tragic figure* because he is caught between a loyalty to God and the mourning over the sins of His people. He must constantly stand under the awful specter of deceit, separating the precious from the vile. He cannot be inaccurate in the essence of his message, for certain death awaits a lie. He must ever be alert to the perversion of discernment of men's sins to the extent a judgmental motive or a condemning spirit is held in check. A spirit of arrogance attacks him because he has been allowed to see that which is concealed from the eyes of others.

Often he speaks what he doesn't know firsthand, and refers to the sin hidden to all except the person addressed.

Weeping, often with no identifiable reason, is a way of life that is bittersweet, but because the very presence of God accompanies the weeping, it becomes succor to his soul. In the person with the gift of mourning, the Presence of the Almighty, pure and Holy God is enough to satisfy; His presence communicates approval as an obedient son or daughter, overriding the pain and causing it to fade in comparison.

The Kingdom to him is as a walled fortress, within which a feast is taking place, encompassing all the *desirable* activities of the Gospel: evangelism, healing, singing, praying, service, visiting, teaching, counseling and the like. Safety and joy and happiness are pervasive within the camp.

But outside the camp, beneath the reflection of the light from within bouncing off the night sky, is a narrow band in which the off-scourings of the Body lie, bloody and ravaged by wolves. Darkness is very near, and screams emanate from its depth. Being outside the camp is more home to him than inside the walled city. The tragedy of the figure is also a paradox in this one with an acute sense of holiness that he should feel more comfortable with the outcasts than with the *saints*. But, because he preaches and practices self-denial (denying self existence), the narrow lane of shadows outside the fortress is equally bittersweet as is his weeping. The one who mourns has an acute awareness of the wallflower, the oppressed, the wounded, the bloody, besieged, and battered.

Here the one who mourns sees the results of an impure and adulterous church, and what happens when repentance is not genuine, or worse, simply glossed over. Then the heart of mourning becomes indignant, angry, full of rage. He warns a message of impending doom with a motive of preventing destruction. He never whitewashes sin, but confronts and convicts of wasting time and for becoming earthly minded. He will point a finger in your face, discern sin, and cry out, "Thou art the man!" He is one who can discern hidden sin within a person, see its present and future effects and weep. He does not have the time to dilly-dally around with useless words and chitchat. Form and etiquette melt under the weightier matter of destructive sin.

The holiness of God is a consuming, driving force to him. Pomp and ceremony glide over his head as the gift within him sees through the glitter to the underlying motive, and if impure, revulsion rises up within him. He is the one who truly loves you and looks out for you now, and not when it is nearly too late. For *later* means your sin has been unattended, and has grown in its attachment to you, requiring more and more austere and traumatic efforts to dislodge it.

He is acutely aware of the nature of sin, as it progresses from its weakest form, faults, through unintentional, intentional, continuous, and immoral stages. He alone *sees* the end result of a fault or a *childlike* sin when glossed over and unattended according to scriptural principles. Of all the gifts, this one causes anguish to its bearer as an abhorrence of all evil, because of the eventual wages.

The other parts of the Body are equally engrossed in their own gifts, and unlike the Mourner, really would rather forget about sin, even more so about discipline, rebuke or reproof. They much prefer peace, prosperity, and the *cleaner* parts of the ministry of Christ, i.e., the *righteous* part of the kingdom.

But the Mourner knows that blood and gore, wounds and bandages, splints and surgery, pain and tears are just as bona fide parts of the kingdom as the *desirable* parts. John 16:8 speaks of the three equal parts of which the Holy Spirit will convict: sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Prosperity in America has been most hellish due to its anesthetic effects on the assemblies. She is so accustomed to *cleanliness* she couldn't even cut a chicken's neck off, pluck it, gut it and cut it up to keep from starving. That is exactly what the Father intends for us to do to sin in our lives!

The Mourner understands in part, how disgusted and full of rage the Father feels watching one of His babes slaughtered in the throes of accomplished sin, while His shepherds stand with perfectly coiffed and perfumed hair, speaking niceties to a prosperity-mesmerized and gullible audience! The Mourner cannot fathom why others don't love their children enough to warn and chasten them or care enough to deny them what will be harmful later on ("things," worldly attitudes, clothing, habits). Even less so the Mourner is flabbergasted at the Father's shepherds leaving out of the gospel the parts God intended as protection and safeguards. For this He speaks in Ezekiel of what He will do to the shepherds failing to warn His children.

The Mourner, now become a Reprover, sallies forth with his message of Warning, Reproof, Consequences, and Judgment. He is as a leper: unpleasant, feared, repulsive, misunderstood, accused as satanic, placated, ignored, scorned, and object of sneering, ostracized, even preached at through thinly veiled sermons, all by children of the Kingdom!

This one with a Gift of Mourning is not only tragic, but also a joint heir with Hannah, and as such, is sorely vexed and grieved. He lives under the reproach of the Peninnahs of the Church who bear children while he remains barren. He becomes more and more alone, but being alone is a delight and the wilderness a joy, for there is no pretense when you are totally alone with a Holy God.

But the Reprover continues to deliver and exhort as long as His Father bids. He hopes against hope there will be repentance and fruit in keeping with repentance, for the reprover loves what is good, but genuinely so.

If repentance does not come, which is the case the better part of the time, a sad resignation comes to him and the Father releases him for a season. His desire is for true and holy children of promise; for the long-term effect, lasting and unshakeable, stalwart warriors who, when all the props are removed and worldly crutches are broken, will stand. He knows that holiness is begotten only of true repentance, and that the wound must be thoroughly cleansed for healing to be lasting.

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