

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: TO EVERY MAN IS GIVEN A GIFT

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 46:4

Wherefore, beware, lest ye be deceived, and that ye may not be deceived, seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given; for verily I say unto you, They are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do, that all may be benefitted, that seeketh or asketh of me, that asketh and not for a sign that he may consume it upon his lusts.

All have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

Do you have a spiritual gift which you should be exercising in the church and kingdom of God? And if not, why not? Some denominations no longer believe in the exercise of such spiritual gifts as the gift of tongues, prophecy, miracles, or divine healing. They deny these gifts, but accept the gifts of faith, wisdom, and knowledge. Some other peoples accept the more spectacular gifts of prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles, and healings, but are reluctant to admit that such things as faith, wisdom, and knowledge are truly spiritual gifts.

What is a spiritual gift? Any gift, talent, aptitude, capacity, or faculty, exercised by a spiritual man or woman, for spiritual ends and purposes, is a spiritual gift. Every good and perfect gift comes from God. Every talent, aptitude, and capacity is a gift of God. All things to God are spiritual. To a spiritual man all things are spiritual also. Therefore any gift exercised by spiritual persons for spiritual ends is a spiritual gift. "Deny not the gifts of Christ, for they are many, and they come from the same God," says a book of Mormon prophet.

"All have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God; to some it is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby." Everybody has some gift or gifts. There are several scriptures touching on this point. "All are called according to the gifts of God unto them," implies that all have some gift. Paul wrote to the Corinthians "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to

every man to profit withal," and in another chapter of the same letter, "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that!" In the Book of Mormon, Moroni writes of spiritual gifts: "And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ, and they come unto every man severally, according as he will." There is no man, however humble, who does not have some gift which he may exercise for the edification of the church, which is the body of Christ.

Let us consider for a moment this analogy of the church as the body of Christ. The human body is a marvel of intricacy and efficiency in structure and function. There are over 200 bones in the human skeleton; and in the body there are innumerable members, organs, tissues, cartilages, muscles, glands, and cells, all closely and inseparably related to each other both structurally and functionally. In this organization or organism, no two cells are situated exactly alike, or perform exactly the same functions. Every individual cell depends on its very life and existence not only on its own proper functioning, but on the proper functioning of every other cell in the body. There is no cell that does not have some function, however lowly or seemingly insignificant; and there is no cell whose function is unimportant. When any one member, organ, gland, muscle, bone, or cell of the body is unable or unwilling to perform its function, the whole body suffers. Other cells must work overtime to make up the lack. The health of the body deteriorates, and with that deterioration, the lazy or rebellious or ailing cell or member finds its own well being impaired. In the case of some

vital processes, failure may be fatal. If the heart gets tired of pumping blood and quits, the body dies; and inevitably the heart dies with it because of its own failure. The same principle would apply to a failure of stomach, lungs, liver, spleen, pancreas, kidneys, bone marrow, or any number of other parts of the body.

The body needs the functioning, the peculiar gift and service, which comes from every part, no matter how insignificant. The church needs the contribution, the talent, gift, aptitude, training, skill, experience, or capacity, of every member, no matter how young, how weak, or how seemingly insignificant. Without that contribution, the church is impoverished; and as the church is impoverished, each individual member is also impoverished.

We are commanded in both ancient and modern revelation to "covet earnestly the best gifts." What are the "best" gifts? What is best for one may not be best for another. The best gift for me to covet, to earnestly seek after, to develop and to devote to the edification of the body of Christ, is the one God gave to me, not the one he gave to somebody else. The gifts I should not covet are those granted to others, but not to me. A great many gifts lie dormant, undeveloped, unused, because the people to whom they were given do not covet them, do not place any value upon them, do not recognize them as spiritual gifts, do not make any attempt to use them spiritually for the edification of the body of Christ. And thus the body suffers, and others must labor to supply what might have been supplied much more easily and much more efficiently by those specifically gifted and endowed to do that thing.

We owe a debt to each other. In the church, in the nation, in the world, no man can exist to himself alone. We depend upon each other in countless ways. No one can supply all his needs with no help from anyone else, any more than the stomach can carry on all the marvelously intricate processes of the body alone. We need diversity of function in the body; we need diversity of function in the church. All the needs of all the people can be supplied only if all will carry out their individual functions, will covet, seek out, improve, and develop the particular and peculiar spiritual gifts

which each one is called upon to exercise for the good of the body. The only way we can discharge the debt we owe to others is by performing our own job well, by making a maximum contribution of our own gift.

Coveting earnestly the gift which is best for you because it is the one God gave to you to exercise in the body of Christ will guard you from being deceived. It is when we begin to covet the gift given to someone else, to wish that we had that one instead of our own, to imagine how much better we could use that gift than the one who has it, to day dream about what good people we might have been if the gifts had been distributed differently -- it is then that we lay ourselves wide open to every deceit, and temptations to pride, inordinate ambition, envy, greed, and lust. The man who is so busy developing, improving, and using his own gift that he has no time to be wishing that he had someone else's, is not going to be deceived or tempted.

As we use and develop our spiritual gifts, we should always remember for what they are given. Our scripture reading says "They are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do, that all may be benefitted that seeketh or asketh of me" Only those members of the body of Christ who are in harmonious relationship with the body, who are working with all the other members of the body for the common benefit of all, can use their gifts to maximum advantage, or can receive maximum advantage from the gifts of others. A member who is in rebellion against the body, who is out of harmony with the purposes of the body, can make no worth-while contribution to the body, and can receive no worth-while benefits from the body. He who seeks for a gift in order to prove his own pre-eminence, his own importance, will destroy himself, and his gift with him.

"All have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God." Covet earnestly your own gift--the gift God gave you to exercise in the body of Christ; then use it in humility for the edification of the whole body, and you and the church will be blessed, nourished, edified, strengthened, and built up in love.