



8/9/24

*I was so excited about the topic of the Chosen and Cherished podcast this week. The priceless gift of the Holy Spirit. There are so many reasons why He IS such a wonderful gift. If you'd like to check out some of those reasons, here's a link..*

<https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

*Romans 12:3-9*

*Before jumping into vs. 3, I have to go back to vs. 1-2 because everything hinges on the truths given in those two verses...In everything I do, I am called to be a living sacrifice to God because of His mercy to me. He doesn't call me to be a dying sacrifice, but a living one...because Jesus was the dying sacrifice so that I could live. It is my "spiritual worship" which also means "reasonable service" to God to be wholly surrendered to Him. In light of all He's done for me, it makes sense that I would give my everything to Him.*

*As a living sacrifice to God, my purpose is NOT to be like the world who seeks to define life without God, but to let the Holy Spirit transform me by renewing my mind so that I understand what God's good, pleasing, and perfect will is.*

*Now jumping into vs. 3...What is God's good, pleasing, and perfect will for me? To be humble. Don't think more highly of myself than I should. If I do, I'm like a drunk person who has no ability to think straight. I need to think with sober mind...understanding truth. I need to think according to the faith God has given me. So...I need to filter all my thoughts through faith in Jesus...faith in the truth of who He is. What happens when I don't filter my thoughts through faith? I doubt God. I get fearful. I get proud. I make choices that I regret. God has given me this gift of faith for a purpose. Knowing that purpose starts with humility.*

*Vs. 4-5 ~ My purpose goes far beyond just being humble. And being humble doesn't mean I have nothing to offer. It does mean that I recognize that I'm part of a much bigger picture. I am one member...one body part...of the body of Christ...all believers.*

*I think Satan has done a very effective job starting in the Garden of Eden...he made us believe that we each individually are the center of our world, that I just have to take care of #1, myself. It was never supposed to be that way. Even God Himself is THREE members of the ONE Trinity...each having their specific roles...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...together making up the ONE GOD. Amazing.*

*I am one member of the body of Christ. I have a specific role that God wants me to use in order to help build up the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:15-16 says that we grow up with Jesus as the Head of the body, and when each part is working properly, our body together is built up in love. That's what I get to be part of. I am not the Head. I'm a member...a humble servant blessed with faith so that I can serve the Lord and be part of building His body.*

*Vs. 6-8 ~ Each part of the body is given gifts so that we have something to offer. This is God's grace to us. He didn't have to give us anything. But He wants to help us to have purpose. So we're called to use these gifts with the humble understanding of His generosity in giving us these abilities to serve. We need to USE them to serve.*

*Not one believer in Jesus Christ is without gifts from the Lord. Some people think they have nothing to offer...not true. Some people think they should get special recognition for what they have to offer...but since the gift is from God's grace, we have no reason to boast about our gifts...only to praise the Lord for His generosity.*

*What are these gifts?*

- *Prophecy...making God's word clear...a forthtelling of truth...never to be spoken by my own authority but only by the faith that God supplies. In the Old Testament, if a prophet ever foretold words that didn't come true, he could be stoned to death...because he would be called a "false prophet."*
- *Service...see a need and meet the need. Serve with God's grace in faith...not resenting that I have to do it.*
- *Teaching...teach the word of God humbly, in faith, by God's grace. In John 7:18, Jesus said, "The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory." I think teachers have to be so careful because they can use teaching as a platform to manipulate. O Lord, please help me not to be guilty of that!!!*
- *Exhortations...encouraging and admonishing others with discernment...humbly recognizing that we ALL need a Savior*
- *Contributing...giving of financial means with cheerfulness and generosity...not treating others as though they owe me for what I give...but being thankful that I can give with the means God provides*
- *Leading...with zeal, not resentment or frustration...understanding that any leadership I have is NOT to draw attention to myself but to point to the glory of God*
- *Acts of mercy...not enabling people in their sin but helping them in their weakness...with cheerfulness...not resentment or arrogance, but in humility and faith.*

*I can see how all of these gifts are used together to build up the body of Christ. I don't choose the gifts God gives me. He chooses. But I have the responsibility to carry them out as He desires...and I get to be part of seeing God do amazing work. He provides all I need. He leads me in the way to use my gifts. He grows me so that I can be more effective for Him. He gives me purpose.*

*Vs. 9 ~ As God uses me as His living sacrifice to be a member of His body...HIS body...the way to be transformed by the renewal of my mind and not to be conformed to the selfish individuality of the world is to LET His love in me be genuine. Hate the evil...cling to the good AS HOW GOD DEFINES IT. It is not enough to hate the evil. I can hate it and still do it. I have to replace the evil by clinging to what's good.*

*O Lord, I praise You for Your mercy that brings me to salvation so that I can be a member of Your body. I praise You for the grace that allows me to serve Your body and help build it up in love. I pray that I will be a faithful, living sacrifice...humble and eager to serve in whatever way You choose for me.*