

**“Do You Know How to Do What You Are Supposed to Be Doing?”  
Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:4-8**

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**12** to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up  
**13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature,  
attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.  
**14** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves,  
and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and  
by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.  
**15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect  
the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.  
**16** From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament,  
grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

**Introduction**

Langdon Gilkey was a young American teacher at Yenching University near Peking, China, when the wartime Japanese military rounded up all foreigners into interment camps. Business men, missionaries, lawyers, doctors were among them along with junkies, prostitutes, little children to the elderly. His camp became a miniature society with 2,000 men, women, and children who experienced the human condition and moral dilemmas under difficult conditions for two and a half years.

In Gilkey’s memoir (*Shantung Compound*), he wrote: “The most important lesson I learned is that there are no cut-and-dried categories of human life, no easily recognizable brand names by which we can estimate our fellows. Over and over ‘respectable people’ turned out to be uncooperative, irritable, and worse, dishonest. Conversely, many who were neither respectable nor pious were in fact, valiant.”

Speaking of “Chariots of fire” gold medalist Eric Liddell, Gilkey wrote: “It is rare indeed when a person has the good fortune to meet a saint, but he came as close to it as anyone I have ever known... overflowing with good humor and love of life... Eric’s enthusiasm and charm carried the day... Shortly before camp ended, he was stricken with a brain tumor and died the same day. The entire camp, especially its youth, was stunned for days, so great was the vacuum that Eric’s death had left.”

Eric Liddell knew what he was supposed to do. He was a missionary in China. He also knew how to do what he was supposed to do. “There was a quality seemingly unique to the missionary group... to respond to a need... Much of this went unnoticed, but our camp could scarcely have survived as well as it did without it. If there were any evidences of the grace of God observable on the surface of our camp existence, they were to be found here.”

**I. What We Are Supposed to Do**

Last week, the sermon asked the first question: “Do you know what you are supposed to do?” The Bible passages this morning give us a good starting point. “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

When you think of your life or someone else’s, when you think of 1<sup>st</sup> Pres, this church, are there observable evidences of the grace of God? Faithful prophecy? Serving? Teaching? Encouragement? Generous giving? Diligent leading? Cheerful mercy?

I noticed that Paul writes how God’s gifts listed in Romans 12 are distributed by God the Father. He says how the gifts in Ephesians 4 are given by Christ, God the Son. In I Corinthians 12, they are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is thoroughly Trinitarian identifying, connecting, incorporating the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as the one true and ever-living God.

Also, the word for gifts is *charismata*. We get our word charismatic. And it comes from the word for grace, *charis*. What we’re supposed to do and how to do it all comes from the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.”

So, what are the gifts the Lord has given you? If you don’t know, ask someone who knows you. They can tell you. Do you have a disposition to be kind and forgiving or do you understand the suffering of others and want to do something about it? You probably have the gift of mercy.

When you decide to go one step beyond what’s expected of you, you’re being generous. A generous teacher is one who volunteers to stay after school to help you with your homework. A generous donation is bighearted, bountiful, openhanded. Giving disregards your own advantages and welfare over those of others. Someone said, “Don’t forget the letter o when you spell the word generous. Just think of it as a generous act, throwing that extra letter in there.” Some people have the spiritual gift of giving.

I just saw a Facebook post saying that my high school music teacher Raymond Kohere passed away last Sunday at 87 years old. Mr. K had more influence on my life than any other teacher. Just think of the track: he worked with the high school choral program, encouraged me to sing, conduct, and perform. I majored in music education, became a Christian at college, taught high school music, became a church musician, went to seminary, and have been a pastor for 3 congregations over 34 years. Much of this all started with a high school music teacher using his God-given gifts.

When you use your gifts, the Lord will do amazing things through your life and faith. You will get to see some of the effects, but probably won't see most of them. But, know this: God is at work in the lives of others through you – family members, friends, neighbors, even among strangers. The first question asked, “Do you know what you’re supposed to do?” Of next importance, “Do you know HOW to do what you’re supposed to do?”

## **II. How to Do What We Are Supposed to Do**

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers.” For what purpose? “To equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature.”

In the annual report and in the bi-monthly newsletter, you will find dozens of opportunities to use your God-given gifts so that “the body of Christ may be built up.”

Sermons, Bible studies, small groups, men’s and women’s ministry afford you ways of being equipped for “works of service.” The church in Ephesus, the church in Rome, the church in Salt Lake City are pretty much the same. God’s word shapes who we are and what we do. The needs in church and society are pretty much constant. The Lord wants his people to find a place bringing about Christian maturity.

Do you have a passion for children to love church and grow toward an authentic faith in Christ? The children’s ministry is always in need of teachers on a rotating Sunday schedule. The “how to” is mostly learned by giving it a try. Christin Abbott has user-friendly curriculum that anyone can enjoy with our children.

Maybe you feel a burden for people caught between a rock and a hard place. Economic, social, racial injustice has always and will always make life difficult for many people. There are any number of church or civic organizations that try to address these problems. As a Christian, you have a unique perspective that you can lend to others to help bring about solutions. The “how to” is readily available through Crossroads Urban Center, the NAACP of Utah, or Family Promise Salt Lake. Look into a way you can help.

I was mildly shocked saw this Youtube post of VR Church. (Google “virtual church d j soto”).

Virtual Reality Church. They had their first baptism in a 3D house with an underground pool. Forty-six-year-old Alina Delp was portrayed as a purple, robot-like avatar, a computer-generated body with the mind of a remote human. She (it) stood submerged in the water while Pastor D. J. Soto proclaimed her new life in Christ and her sins washed away. When her avatar floated to the surface, dozens of congregants and family members cheered, sending heart and clap icons floating skyward. She believes it was a real experience, just like getting baptized in water. “It was powerful. As D. J. was speaking and I was under the water, I could feel this life I lived before being lifted away, and there was this new, amazing future for me,” she said, getting emotional. “I was there. It counts.”

Virtual Reality (VR) Church is just the newest in a series of digital church trends that have picked up steam in the past few decades—from livestreaming entire church services, to virtual campuses that stream a sermon, to fully digital churches.

I don't know about you, but I want a real flesh and blood church with all the real joys and struggles we can share in sight, sound, and real touch. And frankly, that's what the world needs. There is a growing number of on-line "communities." Some may have some value, but they make human life less human. "God so loved the world that he didn't send an emoji or avatar. He sent his one and only Son, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, so that who ever received him, believed in his name, should have eternal life, he gave the right to become children of God."

When you know what you're supposed to do and learn how to do what you're supposed to do, God will accomplish his creative and redemptive purposes. If you or I don't use the gifts God has given us, he will accomplish his will without us. You may remember on the first Palm Sunday, "the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!' Jesus said, 'I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.' As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it."

Clearly, the Lord invites you and me, wants us to participate in the work of his kingdom, his rule, his reign for the well-being, the redemption of human beings. But, if we keep quiet, "the stones will cry out." God will accomplish his purposes.

### **Conclusion**

You may remember Eric Liddell of "Chariots of Fire," but not the Eric Liddell who served as a missionary in China. You hadn't heard of Raymond Kohere, an historically obscure high school music teacher. Put your name in the sentence: "Unbeknownst to people anywhere, the Lord Jesus put people in my life who made all the difference for me. And now he chose to use me in the lives of others."

Let's pray with and for each other.

Romans 12:4-8

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and these members do not all have the same function,  
So in Christ we, though many, form one body,

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