



REFLECTIONS

February 16, 2020

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:10-11

Do What You Do Best

And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. (Acts 8:1)

Just doing my job Saul might have thought while watching Stephen die a brutal death. Trained by Gamaliel, the renowned Pharisee, Saul (whom we come to know better as Paul,) became a zealous law enforcer callously [*persecuting*] *the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison. (Acts 22:4)*

Saul's misguided aspirations led him to a common human failing—trying to be someone he was not using gifts he did not have. Only when *a bright light from heaven flashed around [him and he] fell to the ground and heard a voice say, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'* (Acts 22:6-7) did he begin to search for his sweet spot—speaking and teaching, not policing.

He later wrote to the Romans, *"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."* (Romans 12:6-8)

Peter condensed those gifts down to two: *If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.*

To his own surprise, Paul discovered his role. He described to Timothy: *...For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle — I am telling the truth, I am not lying — and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles. (1 Timothy 2:5-7)*

In their writings to you and me, Peter and Paul are sending us a message, the same message Jesus sent to Paul with that *bright light from heaven*—

Be who God made you to be with no pretense and do what you do best for the glory of God.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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