

TTT - Talents May 8th 2016
Exodus 17:8-16 Romans 12:3-8 Matthew 25:31-46

Intro

I wonder if this morning you know what SHAPE you are? That's right... do you know your own SHAPE?

According to Trinny & Susannah you could be any one of 12 body shapes including Goblet! Lollipop! or even Cello !!

Or maybe when I ask what SHAPE you are you think about physical fitness... WE sometimes say something like - what sort of shape are you in? Meaning could you manage a 10 mile walk round Virginia Water or 5 miles or maybe sadly no longer either.

Do you know what SHAPE you are?

Ponder that as I speak this morning.

If you weren't here last week, we started a 3 week mini series on TTT - our Time Talents and Treasures. Thinking about the words of the prayer we say each week

Everything in heaven and on earth is yours

All things do we give you

You can read up on what I shared about using our Time on our web site

This week we are thinking about our Talents. What Talents God has given us and how we use them to serve God

We all have different talents: different gifts and abilities

This morning when I talk about talents, I am talking about the gifts, the abilities that each of us have. And each one of us has a unique combination of those things.

Lets think about the reading we had this morning from Exodus.

The people of Israel, under Moses leadership, were in battle with their enemies. In this account the battle was with the Amalekites and Moses told Joshua to go out and fight.

Moses was the man who God had appointed as leader of His people at that time.

Joshua was the young man who lead the army.

Alongside Moses were Aaron - literally Moses right hand man, and Hur

As we read the passage we see that each of them had different roles to play according to their gifts
Joshua lead the me out in to battle

Moses, holding the staff of God in his hand, went up to the top of the hill

Aaron & Hur went with him

When Moses held up his hand the Joshua and the Israelite army succeeded. When Moses arms grew tired and he lowered them they started to be defeated.

So what did they do? Aaron & Hur found a stone for Moses to perch on and held up his hands to support Moses

Each of these 4 men had different gifts. I suspect that Hur would have been no good at leading the army... that wasn't where his skills and abilities lay. But he was presumably an encourager with a servant heart who could support Moses well

Different gifts and abilities and each of the 4 men worked together accordingly.

We all have those talents to work together for the good of the whole

Romans 12:4

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

In several of his letters Paul talks about the group of people who believed Jesus to be the Lord & Saviour and who followed His teachings as a body. In this mornings reading from Romans he alludes to it And it is a good illustration because we can all understand the basis of what he is saying. If we think of our own bodies - some of which may be aching this morning :-)

stomach : thumb

eye : heart

blood : big toe

We don't need to be doctors to understand that each of these parts of our body do very different jobs... VERY different jobs

We also know that if any of these parts of our body are not working properly then we know about it... even our big toe!

Every part of our body is needed, no matter how big or small, seen or unseen

Just as that is true for our physical bodies, so it is true for us as Christ's body - His church here in Owlsmoor

EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US has skills and abilities that are needed for the good of Christ's church here in this place.... and across the world... but lets focus on here for now! :-)

In the Romans passage Paul talks about prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading and compassion

But these are just some of the gifts that God through His Holy Spirit may have given us

But these are NOT an exhaustive list

ALL OF US have skills and abilities that are given by God and that He wants us to use. In fact He expects us to use.... come to that in a minute

You see the gifts and abilities that God has given us are not simply to be used for our own good. If you think that your talents are simply for you to make a lot of money, retire, and die, you've missed the point of your life. God gave you talents to benefit others, not yourself. And God gave other people talents that benefit you.

We're all a part of the body of Christ, and each part matters. There are no insignificant people in the family of God. You are shaped to serve God

"Each of you should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10 NIV).

I heard a brilliant story a few years ago

I cannot remember who told me, or the exact details but you will get the point

Someone had been called in to one of the big space centres in America - Kennedy Space Station or Nasa to look at peoples work patterns and morale etc.

He went round the station talking to different people about what each of them did, their duties and responsibilities and how they viewed their work.

Talking with the astronauts there was a lot of excitement and passion for what they were doing

Talking with those who monitored the computers and communication systems there was some camaraderie and a sense that they were a link between those in space and those back on earth

Talking to talking to the cleaner there was the sense that he was just cleaning floors and his morale was low and it was just a job that paid some of the bills

The visitor chatted to lots more people and got mixed messages about what they did and their job satisfaction

After chatting to all the various people and then considering his findings he fed back to the management team and then left saying that he would come back 6 months later to see how things were.

When the 6 months had passed and he returned to the Space Station the first person he sought out to talk to was the cleaner.

He went and found him working down one of the corridors and almost didn't need to speak to him about how he was finding the job. He was whistling to himself and had a different energy and purpose about him.

When he did ask him about his role and what he was doing the cleaner replied "I am helping put people in to space" !

During the 6 months the management team had helped the cleaner to see that although he had different gifts and abilities, although his role was different, it was equally important. He too was needed, as were ALL those working at the station, in order to put people into space.

And that is sooo true for us as Christians too. We are one body with many members and not all have the same function but we are all important and needed. You are a manager of the talents God has given to you. They may be great or small in your eyes, but they ALL matter to God.

So - we all have different talents and they are needed for the good of everyone, not just ourselves And when God gives us a talent... He expects us to use it. In fact we are going to have to explain to him one day how we have used it!

Skills and Abilities (Talents) we are expected to use

Matthew 25

God is going to hold us to account for how we use all that He has given us ! Read the first part of Matthew 25 for the parable of the talents later, which precedes the reading for today. It is a reading that we could have used for any of our 3 weeks of TTT

There is an expectation that we use the gifts and abilities that God has given us for the good of others. For the good of our world and God's Kingdom.

In the verses we read it is clear that a) God notices what we do with them and b) that he will hold us accountable for how we use them

When the Son of Man comes in his glory he will separate the people one from another... how? according to how we have used our talents in serving one another

Feeding the hungry
giving drink to the thirsty
welcoming the stranger
clothing the naked
caring for the sick
visiting those in prison

And in serving one another serving God

vs 40 Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it for me.

Maybe we don't like to think of being accountable to God But that is what this gospel reading is about. It mentions just a few ways that we can serve Him and if we had more time we could look at others too. Just so you know though... those of us who teach God's word are going to be held strictly to account by God!

I believe that God loves each and every person who lives here in Owlsmoor & College Town He loves each of them so much that He died on the cross for them, to show His love for them and to give them a hope for their life here and now and in the future

I believe that He wants to use us, each and every one of us to show that love to them and to tell them of the hope He offers

I believe that the local church is called to be an agent of change for God - we are His hands and feet and mouth piece and big toe! :-)

He has given us, between us all the Talents - gifts and abilities that we need to do just that! To not just be the cleaner - but to put a man in space!

Saw the new film Jungle Book last week - brilliant

Know the story.... Mowgli is a baby boy found in the jungle and brought up by a pack of wolves. He lives with them and learns to run like them

Bagheera is the wise black panther who oversees Mowgli, sometimes from afar and sometimes up close

There is lots of tension at the end as the tiger Shere Khan tries to kill Mowgli to get 'man' out of the forest once and for all

right near the end Bagheera says these words to Mowgli

You cant fight like a wolf. You are NOT a wolf!

Fight like a man cub!

I cant play the organ like Adrian I am not Adrian I am Catherine

I cant lead a choir like Margaret I am not Margaret I am Catherine

I cant cook meals for 20+ people like Angie I am not Angie I am Catherine

I cant organise files and documents for an inspection like Brian - thank you those who prayed for Wednesday - the Inspection went well I am not Brian I am Catherine

I havent got the love & care for this building like Tim has I am not Tim I am Catherine

I'm going to stop there because it will take too long to go round everyone

But all of you have God given talents

Talents that God wants and expects you to use for the good of His body and His Kingdom

Please spend some time praying and thinking this week about the skills and abilities that God has given you and stretch those talent muscles this week.