

“Help”

Shepherding Series 5/8

July 28, 2013

1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

¹ If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Here we are at week five in our series on SHEPHERDing. We each week are delving a little bit more into the Shepherd and Sheep relationship that God calls us into as believers. We have moved from Show Up, to Hear Them, to Encourage, to Pray, and today we are to Help.

As a part of that help I am asking our Deacons to come up here and pass out these assessment sheets to everyone. We as a church need your Help making sure we have the most up to date information on all who are in our congregation. You see we can not help if we do not know so these assessment sheets help us get to know one another better. I ask that everyone individually fill them out and if you have young ones fill out the back sheet which is our Youth/Child side for them. In a couple of minutes the Deacons will begin to collect them.

Thank you all for your Help in making this Ministry a success! One part of the survey as you probably noticed was the part of Spiritual Gifts. Like those mentioned in our scripture today we are all gifted in various ways and those gifts help us serve the God whom we love. Our scripture reminds us that we are the body of Christ as a whole and yet each of us individual members are called to various parts of the body.

Paul in this text applies a familiar argument that we are each called to different things within the Body. We have heard this argument in various forms all leading to that as individual members we all play different roles in the body of believers. As we have been talking about and been immersed in discussing Shepherding, Sheep, and the Shepherding Minister at Hooker many have asked is it okay if I do not feel called to do this, is it okay if I am unsure?

Paul reminds us this answer as he asks us through some simple questions in this text. “Are all apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?”

The answer is that not all of us can do everything, we are not all called to do everything and we can not do everything. It is 100% okay to look at yourself and realize that you are not gifted with what it takes to be a Shepherd as we are asking those to take on the role of Shepherd here at HMCC. But there is also the amazing power of God who pushes us and compels us to look at ourselves through different eyes and encourages us to be the best that we can be in light of God and help God in God's work in this world.

But how to help as a Shepherd, that is the crux of our sermon today. How to help and how to be a part of the body of believers in our own unique ways? You see no two Shepherds are alike in how they Shepherd. I mean let us be honest; no two people are alike so it makes sense that no two Shepherds are alike. We each have various gifts that uniquely call us to fulfill our role as a Shepherd differently. We can each help in various ways out of those gifts. Some of us are better at visiting, some of us are better at calling, emailing, speaking, sending a card or note, showing up at a ball game or play. Our gifts give us the ability to uniquely help others in a way that works for us and for them.

Our scripture does not end with our gifts though, our scripture continues and it asks us to use our gifts out of Love. 1 Corinthians 13 also referred to as the love text. It is a text frequently used in weddings but I bet many of us do not hear it with the earlier verses from Chapter 12. The wonderful editing of our scriptures sometimes throws us curveballs to when a particular perichopee begins or ends and Paulian letters tend to flow from topic to topic and jump back again and around in a particular theme anyway.

In Greek love is expressed using four different terms. There is Storge defined as affection that occurs naturally for example the love of ones family. Philia, is defined as the friendship love. Eros is defined as physical passionate love. And finally there is Agape love, the love that is the most important to us in the church. Agape love is love understood through the spiritual and sacrificial sense. It is how we love God and how God loves us.

Love is a powerful motivator for why we do what we do, why we believe what we believe and why we choose to help others. As a Shepherd we begin our service out of love for God. We are called by God to fulfill this particular role and to love as God loves with a love that is patient, kind, not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. We love as God loves with a love does not insist on its own way, with a love that is not irritable or resentful with a love that does not rejoice in others wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. We love as God loves with a love that bears all things, believes all things hopes all things and endures all things. We love as God loves with a love that never ends. (1 Cor. 13:1-7, paraphrase)

Yet as God loves us and as we help others initially out of our love for God we find that our love transforms as we are in relationship with others. We no longer help just out of our love for God but as we get to know one another and build our relationships as Shepherd and Sheep we begin to do it out of love for one another AND our love for God. We help one another first out of our love for God and then in the most amazing and transformative of loves God asks us to help out of our love for each other.