**Spiritual Gifts Week #3 – Discovering your Spiritual Gift**

**How to discover your Spiritual Gift shape**

[Alternative Sermon Series Title ~ ‘A new view for a new you’]

**9.30a.m. Sunday 29 January, 2017**

**Key Bible Passages ~ Matthew 6:33; Ephesians 4: 7-16 (or 11-16); Romans 12: 3-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 4-12, 18, 27-31.**

Delivered by Senior Pastor Marshall Muller @ the Laidley Baptist Church (Qld).

**What have we learned so far about Spiritual gifts?**

It’s been a really busy week in my life, so I’m not going to do everything today. I’m going to get you to help out. What have you learned about Spiritual gifts over the past few weeks?

A recap of what we have learned over the past 2 weeks. What has God been saying to you?  *(Ask people to share out loud)*

**What Shape are you in?**

What sort of shape are you in? Yesterday I saw a lot of fit people doing tasks around the Church property at the Church house. Some of the younger kids shoveling rocks – sweating! They looked in pretty great shape. Sabina & Jacob came to help. Jacob not only helped, he went away to Soccer trials, and then came back and kept working. Now, that’s fit.
Ernie, Pete, Colin, Wayne & Simon were out digging holes and putting up our new front fence in the sun. Straining and bending wire. Lifting posts etc. Fit blokes!!

Wayne & Julie had mowed the whole block earlier this week – hot work in the sun for a few hours. They must be in pretty good shape.

Bronwyn & Lynette up on the roof cleaning out the gutters on their hands and knees. Ripping pants and skin!!! You’ve got to be in good shape (or just plain crazy) to be doing that sort of work on a hot Saturday morning (and then it bucketed down rain).

John on the Gerni – gernied the whole house down in about 5 minutes! Wow – really fit.

Bill and Trevor chainsawed down about 400 trees on the fence line. Then loaded them all onto trailers and utes. In the hot sun – fit (or once again, crazy) blokes. Meanwhile Ty whipper snipped all of Laidley while they were doing that. Gotta be some of the fittest guys on the planet to do what they did!

Annaliese and the Armstrong boys swinging hammers and fixing the hole in the back deck. Found some timber and replace it so that our ramp is now working fine. Great shape.

Ladies (Desley, Jackie, Rosemary, Jeanne, Karen, Sheila) inside cleaning, doing morning tea, (Karen, Joanne, Megan, Marlene) sorting out boxes in the store room. Lifting things, cleaning fridges, sorting out cupboards. Not only are they are in pretty great shape, but also the Church house is now in great shape.

Carissa, Yvonne & Jackie sorting and labelling and combining all of the songs & the music in the worship draw. Whipping them into shape so that we can find them easier. You might not think that’s an important job, but you ask the musicians and Worship Leaders how good this will be when they are finished. By the way, they had the best job – an airconditioned room, sitting down, cashews, drinks, chatting. Great job though!
Jared, Mack, Ross and others fixing lots of difficult things around the site. Just got into it and made it happen in the heat of the day. Mack, you can come around to my place any time you want. I got lots of those little jobs to get through. So if you get bored, I’ll even pick you up and drop you back down to Beenleigh.

Kim disinfecting all of the kids toys and sorting them all out in the Play Room, and then stacking them into sealable boxes that she went and purchased. The Play Room – the hottest room in the Church House. Kim – didn’t even bat an eyelid. Tough as old boots. Just got in there and got the job done, until it was finished. Gotta be in the right shape to do all that.

Carl, Jared, Louisa-May & all the Livingstone & Armstrong kids (all 342 of them! only joking) shoveling large rocks in the hot midday sun. Wow, they build them tough out here in Laidley. All of you are in great shape to get through what we did yesterday.

I took a few pictures yesterday, so for those who weren’t able to be there, I want to show you a quick pictorial (a visual image) of what took place at the working bee.

(Funny Pictorial PowerPoint)

I now know what sort of shape some of you are in. I saw it all yesterday. I was impressed with what I saw. I saw a Church working together to achieve a greater cause... a bigger picture. I was taken by the health of this Church as I observed you yesterday. And then great fellowship around the food tables as well.

We can get a bit funny and bag each other out but I saw soooo much potential for the sake of the Kingdom and what God has in store for us this year. LBC ... we are getting there!

You thought Marshall was just organizing a working bee. Oh No ... I was trying to get the Church to work together (as brothers and sisters in Christ) and to see what we can achieve together when we put our selfish agendas aside and work towards a greater goal.
You might be sore & sorry this morning and a bit sunburnt, beat up and scratched, but it was worth it. (This too will pass).

I can’t help but think what the neighbours thought and saw at the end of the day as a result of the LBC working together yesterday. Because that’s what it’s all about. The witness of the action & ministry & love of Jesus for the sake of others.

I wonder whether we are getting a picture of what LBC can achieve as we look to getting our building built so that ministry for the sake of others can occur (change in people’s lives/salvations etc.) We might get a bit beat up, scratched, stretched and challenged but God’s kingdom will be built, it will prevail, even the Gates of Hell can’t touch it. So, what are you afraid of, Church?

Do you want to see God’s Kingdom come here on earth, as it is in Heaven? (Absolutely)

We need to get into shape. Spiritual shape. We need to get dressed in spiritual armour. We need to know our Spiritual gifts and we have to deploy them into ministry for the sake of others. The Body of Christ, as healthy as can be, serving the Lord. You & me, spiritually fit and able to handle anything that the evil one can dish out.

Now how important do you think our Spiritual gifts will be in the battles and work that we will face in the coming few years?

That’s why we’re looking at it. We need to be sharp and ready. Not tired, lazy & comfortable.

Let’s pray and then we’ll talk a bit more about our shape as followers of Christ.

Father, Thank you for the gift of your son Jesus into our lives and for our lives. Without his righteousness, we are nothing. We thank you that Jesus is our hope, and we look forward to one day being together.

And we also say thank you for the gifts of your Holy Spirit into our lives. Show us more of our gift and show us how to use it effectively for you. We earnestly desire to know more from you. Speak now into our hearts. Change us forever because of your Word & your
love. You are a good God, the Giver of all good things to us. Thank you for going ahead of us in our lives and for seeing the potential in us, your living stones, so that you may be glorified. Teach us now. Fine tune our hearts and minds as we listen. Quicken your spirit inside us. Show us new things, reveal new mysteries that can only be understood by the help of your Spirit that dwells inside us. Fashion your Bride (the Church) to be all she needs to be in your Kingdom. May we desire to be without spot or wrinkle. Grow us and show us. In the name of Christ, our King and Saviour, and eternal hope.

Amen

S.H.A.P.E. – Helping to Discover your Spiritual Gift

So let’s talk about our shape. What do I mean when I talk about our SHAPE as followers of Christ as we think about Spiritual gifts? Well, let’s unpack that for a minute. We all want to discover our Spiritual gift that God given to us through his Holy Spirit.

God created each of us individually with a purpose in mind - to love him. He intends for us to be fulfilled as we serve Him and the needs of others in ministry. Job 10:8 speaks of "God forming me and shaping me".

Our shape is a blend of five factors that makes us wonderfully complex. Encouraging God to reveal that shape can change your life as you see how God has prepared you for a unique ministry that only you can fulfil. (Say that again – that ONLY YOU CAN FULFIL).

SHAPE is an easy way to understand the five factors that God uses in his plan for each of our lives.

1. Spiritual Gifts

A spiritual gift is a special ability, given by the Holy Spirit to every believer, to be used to minister to others and therefore build up the Body of Christ. We may have more than one spiritual gift, and they are different from natural talents. They are always used for the benefit of others to build the kingdom of God. We’ve looked at a range of 28 gifts in all sorts of categories:

- Gifts that communicate God's Word – e.g. Preaching, Evangelism, Missions, Apostle
• Gifts that educate God's people – e.g. Teaching, Encouragement, Wisdom, Discernment, Knowledge

• Gifts that demonstrate God's love – e.g. Service, Mercy, Hospitality, Pastoring, Giving

• Gifts that celebrate God's presence – e.g. Music, Arts and Crafts, Intercession, Healing, Miracles, Praying with the Spirit

• Gifts that support others – e.g. Leadership, Administration, Faith

A tool is available to help you see what God is doing or wanting to do through your life. You may have a spiritual gift that is not yet developed, and need to "unwrap it" by studying, requesting responses from others, training, but especially helpful is to experiment. It is easiest to discover your gift by doing it, not just from looking at a list. Your primary ministry commitment will hopefully be in the area where you are gifted.

2. Heart

Your heart is the real you, what you love to do, your passion.

Your heart determines why you say, feel and act the way you do. Our unique emotional heartbeat races when it encounters activities, subjects or circumstances that interest us. We can choose to use this internal guidance system as a tool for ministry. Effective and enthusiastic people work in their passion area and have discovered the joy of being fulfilled. Look at your past accomplishments in order to identify those things in which you did well and enjoyed.

3. Abilities

These are the abilities and knowledge we all have, but may not be aware of. We were born with some natural abilities that can be discovered by looking at our past accomplishments.

The vocational skills we have are also usable in God's work for the benefit of the body. When God gives us a divine assignment, he equips us with his Spirit and abilities to carry it out. God places people with abilities he wants to minister in a church.
4. Personality

God has wired each of our temperaments in a unique way. There are many ways to look at personality, but these are five factors that show how God made us each differently:

- Extroverted/Introverted - Do we get energy from being with people or being alone?
- Thinker/Feeler - how do we make decisions, using objective facts or intuition?
- What kind of tasks do we prefer - routine (predictable) or variety?
- Self-controlled/self-expressive - are we more open or controlled in our moods, words and reactions.
- Relating to other people - are we more cooperative or competitive?

Our personality can indicate the type of job and ministry God wants me to have. God also wants us to appreciate other people's personality differences; he seems to like variety! After all, He created all of the personalities, so all of them must be GOOD.

5. Experience

God uses our experiences to teach us to trust him, to build our character, and to accomplish his purposes as we allow him to use our experiences to minister to others.

Since our greatest life message comes out of our weakness, not our strengths, we need to take a good look at our painful experiences and what our trials have taught us. God never wastes a hurt or bad experience.

Along with these tough times are other experiences to draw on: spiritual experiences (meaningful times with God), educational experiences, and ways we have ministered in the past.

Gideon’s Story (Judges 6-7)

Gideon was no minister. Gideon was no king. Gideon was no judge. Gideon was no hero. Or so he thought.

Until one day, beating out wheat in the winepress, the Spirit of God overwhelms him with a simple thought: "The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior. Go, in this might of yours, and deliver Israel from the hand of the Midianites. I hereby commission you." (Judges 6:12, 14). The rest, as they say, is history.
This unlikely candidate for ‘president’ gets empowered and equipped to free his people. The story even has a happy ending. Against far superior forces, Gideon, with only 300 comrades and a pretty clever strategy, routs the Midianites from the land of Israel.

That's the way it is with the Spirit of God. Lifting us out of despair into the fullness of faith. That's how it was with Gideon. That's how it was with the Apostle Paul. And that's how it is with you and me.

Knock us down, and the Spirit will pick us back up - like one of those big clown balloons with a weight in the bottom. No matter how hard you hit it, it always stands back up. Not even death itself can keep us down, for we serve a risen Saviour who sits at the right hand of God to judge both the quick and the dead. Amen

God gives people like you and me, (not just the Pastors/Ministers/Reverends, but all people), spiritual gifts that make life worth living.

Although we may withdraw from it and run from it and fight against it and deny it, there is something inside that won't let us go until we find the full measure of our calling. Call it an inner hunger, call it angst, call it emptiness or loneliness, call it what you will, but our spirits, in the words of Augustine, are restless until they find their rest in God.

Let me give you an example.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

Years ago Dr. Louis Evans served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Hollywood, California. In his congregation was a gifted surgeon. For all his talent, however, this surgeon found himself increasingly restless and unfulfilled. One day he came to his senses and admitted that the problem wasn't surgery, the problem was Hollywood.

God had given him the gift of missionary, the ability to minister in a second culture, and he had turned his back on that gift - at great personal expense - for the sake of his career. After much inner struggle, he finally accepted the gift and agreed to set up a medical missionary practice in rural Korea.

Dr. Evans visited this friend some years later and came upon him just as the doctor was preparing himself for surgery on an eight-year-old child. Dr. Evans observed through a window in the small hut where the operation took place. The minutes turned into hours, and the hours turned into a total of three. Finally he stepped back from the
operating table of the makeshift surgery room and said, "She will be all right, now," leaving the child in the care of the medical staff. He went outside and joined his pastor.

As they walked along Dr. Evans asked, "How much would you have received for that operation back in the States?"

"Oh, thousands of dollars was the reply."

As they talked, his pastor observed that his lips were purple from the strain and his hands were shaking from the exacting labour and tension related to this delicate surgery.

He then asked, "How much did you get for this one?"

"Oh, a few cents--a few cents and a smile from God." Then the surgeon put his hand on Pastor Evans' shoulder, shook it slightly, and added, "But man this is living."

"A few cents and a smile from God." - That is the purpose of spiritual gifts. To makes us come alive.

To fill us with the smile of God. To encourage us with the grace of God.

To empower us with the knowledge of God. To equip us for the work of ministry, that we might build up the body of Christ, that we might free the people, that we might mature into the full stature of Christ, that we might clothe ourselves with love.

Satan’s major plan is to cripple us, immobilize us, destroy us, and if possible, kill us & drag us down into the dark realms of Hell.

Now contrast this with God’s plan – to give us gifts that make us come alive, to have purpose, to be contributors into the greatest, most impactful, healing ministry & kingdom that has ever been in mankind’s history.

I want you to really get this, so I want to show you a clip that speaks about God’s Kingdom through the Church. The guy in this clip is a Reverend in a Church in Nottingham in England. His name is Jay John and he is an international speaker and author as well, and has a passion to see the Church expand.

**Media Clip** - How to explain what you do when you’re a Pastor (Jay John 2m20s)
OK Church, are you getting an idea of what the Church can become? What God is attempting to do in the LBC? Can you glimpse the impossible? Because, it’s only God who can do the impossible among us.

With this in mind, I cannot imagine anything more important than finding your spiritual gift.

Do not be afraid. Do not worry that you cannot do what someone else can do. (Hey, I am hopeless at building a fence. I tried not to go anywhere near the guys building the fence yesterday. If I built the fence, it would be crooked and probably blow down in the next storm) ... BUT ... I could encourage – so I took water out to the guys.

Do not minimize or trivialize your gift, just because it may not be the same as someone you envy or admire. The body needs every part doing its part. Ego gets in the way here. We get in trouble when a gall bladder wants to start acting like a kidney. And there's no point feeling guilty about the fact that you've never taught Sunday or helped at Youth Group if that's not your gift.

But if you've been running from teaching or service or anything else while God has been calling and equipping you for the same, then it's time to stop running. It's time to come home. It's time to put on the mantle of spiritual leadership, so that each of us, given grace, can extend grace - so that our body, this Body of Christ, will be grace-full in all our dealings with another and with the world.

Grace is given according to the measure of our gifts, building us up in love, bringing us into all that Christ would have us be.

**Closing Illustration:**

In the mid 1970s, Ed Roberts created the world's first commercially successful personal computer. Roberts then hired a 19-year-old college dropout to create software for him. In 1977, Roberts sold his computer business to this same 19-year old young man, Bill Gates. At the age of forty-one Roberts entered medical school. Today he is a physician in a small rural Georgia town. Many say that his creation of the PC is the most important thing he ever did, but Roberts takes issue with that judgment. "I don't think that's true," he writes. "Everyday I deal with things that are equally if not more important here with my patients."

Only God can tell what is most important.
Remember, Jesus says, “Your greatness is measured by how much you serve all others” (Mark 10:43):

“Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Conclusion:

The well-known English preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon, visiting an elderly lady in an almshouse, noticed on the wall a frame encasing a piece of paper with some writing on it, so he asked about it. The lady replied that it reminded her of an aged invalid man she had nursed many years before, who, appreciative of her kind care, had written his name on it in his final days. So she had framed it and hung it on her wall.

After much persuasion Spurgeon was able to borrow the paper. When he took it to the bank, they exclaimed, “We’ve been wondering to whom the old gentlemen left his money.” Thousands of pounds were standing idle to his credit, which now were transferred to her name. Living in poverty for years, she had actually been worth a great deal.

It’s possible for believers (you & me) to live many years unconscious of their wealth of spiritual gifts. No wonder so much Christian service remains undone. If sufficient qualified workers seem to “be missing from the Lord’s work, blame cannot be attributed to the Holy Spirit, but to those who neglect His gifts. How much hidden treasure might there not be in every one of our Churches?

I don’t know about you, but I don’t want to be known in heaven (or anywhere) as one who has neglected their Spiritual gift resulting in Christian service remaining undone. I wonder how much Christian service remains undone her in the Lockyer Valley, in Laidley or Plainland, or even in our street, because we have chosen to live in poverty instead of riches.

So, can I encourage you to Discover, Develop & Deploy your Spiritual gift? It was given to you so that you might expand it like the 2 guys in the Parable of the Talents – gaining spiritual riches for the Master.
Steven Curtis Chapman, Christian songwriter wrote a song a few years back called 'Whatever' (Speechless CD Track#8)

Question: Have we made a list of the gifts we want? That’s the temptation!

Better Way → Maybe we need to tear it up and say to God, “Whatever”!!

Whatever you want to give me, let me be obedient and faithful to your decision. I think that’s a decision that’s made with a much humbler heart, recognizing our rightful place is this transaction – remember I said last week, seeking the Giver, not the gift!

The whole of Laidley & this area, our neighbours, our communities, our leaders, our schools, our businesses, would be impacted forever if you & I, the living stones of the LBC chose to say “Whatever”. Whatever it is, have your way God. I’m ready for anything you want to give me, do through me, expect of me, want me to do, want me to say, want me go. Whatever! It’s your kingdom, use me for your purposes.

**Let’s pray …**

_Loving Father God, Whatever you want O God, use each of us to bring forward your Kingdom in this area. Today, as you have spoken to us about our SHAPE, we ask that your Holy Spirit would continue to reveal more of you to us, and encourage us to seek out your gift. Allow us to understand that it is for your divine purposes. In recognizing this, we give you all of us in the great plan of salvation you have for our town and our area this coming week.

_Show us that anything else is not really living. Thank you for the abundant life we have in Christ. Bring your purposes to bear in each of us today and tomorrow. Shape us and mold us, use us for your glory. In Jesus’ name we humbly give ourselves afresh. Amen_

**Closing Song ~ I Give you my Heart**

**Major Scripture passages on Spiritual Gifts:**

- 1 Corinthians 12
- 1 Peter 4: 10,11
- Ephesians 4: 7-16 (or 11-16)
- Romans 12: 3-8