

# **St Martins C3 – September 19, 2021**

## **Bringing out the best – Gifts and Calling**

### **Sermon Summary:**

Timely and appropriate encouragement can make a significant difference in our faith journey. Today we are looking at an example of this in the letters addressed to Timothy. Paul is encouraging Timothy to finish the task God has called him to do in Ephesus. However, Timothy is struggling to do what he has been asked to do, because of significant opposition in the church. Paul's letters are filled with specific instructions as well as personal encouragements to Timothy. So, what do we learn about encouragement from this correspondence?

### **Read: 1 Timothy 1:1-2**

#### **1) Encouragement is received best in the context of a supportive relationship.**

Paul is pretty direct in some of his encouragements to Timothy, but Timothy would have received it as support, because he had a trusting relationship with Paul. Likewise, we need to earn the right to speak into other people's lives through building supportive relationships with each other in the church. It is then that we will have the opportunity to speak the right encouraging words at the right time. This is especially true of encouraging someone who does a similar ministry to you. It is good to seek out those who are similar in gifting and calling and encourage each other.

### **Read: 1 Timothy 1:18**

## **2) Encourage the call of God that is on each other's lives.**

Paul knows that Timothy has been called by God to teach and lead others. However, Timothy is discouraged and ready to give up. So, Paul reminds Timothy of God's calling on his life.

We need to keep in mind that we have an enemy that wants us to doubt our calling, so let us encourage each other in what God has called us to do, so, like Timothy, we will be able to fight the good fight.

**Read: 1 Timothy 4:12-14 & 2 Timothy 1:6**

## **3) We need encouragement from mature Christians when there is resistance to what God has called us to do.**

We have to be careful who we listen to. There will be those who encourage us in our calling and others who will seek to derail us. Therefore, seek out encouragement from mature Christians who you can trust. Especially when there is resistance.

## **4) We need the insight and encouragement from others to fully utilize all that God has given us.**

Paul reminded Timothy of the passion, gifts and strengths that God had given him. We all have God-given gifts and strengths that we need to fully develop for us to realize our God-given potential.

**Let us look for opportunities to encourage the gifts of God and the call of God in each other's lives, so that we bring out the best in them.**

## **Suggested Discussion Questions:**

*What was the challenge that Timothy was facing that caused him to be so discouraged?*

*What might cause us to be distracted from or doubt the call of God on our lives?*

*What character qualities would you be looking for in someone who is encouraging you?*

*Who would you go to, to seek feedback and encouragement regarding the life God has called you to live?*

*Can you clearly identify the passion, gifts and strengths God has given you? (Check out the devotions for what I mean by these different terms)*

*Who do you know who would also be aware of these gifts and strengths who could encourage you in them?*

*What might prayerfully considering opportunities to encourage others look like for you?*

# Monday's Devotion – S = Spiritual Gifts

## 1 Corinthians 12:7

*"A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other."*

This week we are exploring how we honour and encourage the unique way God has created each of us. Saddleback Church in LA came up with the acronym S.H.A.P.E to remember these different areas of our God's creativity. S = Spiritual Gifts, H = Heart, A = Abilities, P = Personality, E = Experiences. Today we are exploring our Spiritual Gifts. With the Spiritual Gifts God has given us, there are several important things to keep in mind:

- 1) Spiritual Gifts come from the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Where the Spirit is present, His gifts will be present.
- 2) Every Spirit-filled Christian is empowered by the Spirit with Spiritual Gifts. No one misses out. God wants to give all of His people the ability to serve His purposes.
- 3) There are lots of Spiritual Gifts. The Bible lists 27 of them, but never in those lists does it put a limit on how many there are. Basically, if you know the Holy Spirit is empowering you to do something. It is a Spiritual Gift.
- 4) We will each have some and not others. There are plenty of Spiritual Gift assessments you can fill out online to help you identify how God has empowered you. However, others in the body of Christ should be helping you identify them too.
- 5) Spiritual Gifts are not given by the Spirit to make you feel better about yourself, but to SERVE the body of Christ. We will only sense fulfilment in this area of our lives, when we are using what God has given us for the benefit of others.

## Tuesday's Devotion – H = Heart

### Philippians 3:10-11

*“I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.”*

This verse comes near the end of a passage where Paul talks about what motivates him to do what God has called him to do. For Paul his life is about knowing Christ and making Christ known. This is Paul’s “heart,” or we might say, passion. This is what lead Paul to preach the gospel all around the then known world. God specifically gave Paul a passion to reach those outside of the Jewish faith (Gentiles).

As we seek to follow God, He will put a certain need or group of people on our heart to reach. It is important to follow that passion and see how God is leading you to express it. It may be a completely need or group than someone else is drawn to, but that doesn’t matter, the important thing is that we develop an awareness of the passion and motivation that God is putting in our hearts.

Leaning into the heart passion that God has put in your life will help you focus your priorities. It will also energize you towards helping others. It will fill us with vision and strategies. So, don’t neglect the passion or heart for others that God has placed in you. Nurture it, so that God can use you to bring His Kingdom to the world around you.

# Wednesday's Devotion – A = Abilities

## Colossians 3:23-24

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."*

The main point of this verse is that doing things to the best of our abilities is honouring to God. What this verse assumes is that we have God-given practical abilities that we can use to help others.

*So, what abilities do you have?*

When put on the spot like that, you might struggle to create a list, because we don't usually think about what we are good at. So here are some questions to help you out:

- What practical things can you create or make?
- In what ways do you think through things? EG Problem solver, strategic thinker, creative thinker, etc.
- What skills do you use in relating to others?
- What skills or abilities have you learnt over the years?
- What have you gained a qualification in?

I hope that's got you thinking.

Everyone's mix of abilities and skills are slightly different to everyone else. So, the question is, are you seeking God as to how to use the abilities he has given you to further His Kingdom?

# Thursday's Devotion – P = Personality

## Psalm 139: 13-14

*"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;"*

God created us a bit different to everyone else around us. Although there are 16 combinations of common personality types, how introverted or extroverted we are, or how planned or unplanned we are varys a lot. Therefore, the various personality combinations are limitless.

What I find intriguing is that we don't have a good awareness of the different personalities in others when we are children. We think that the way we approach life is the "normal" or "right" way to do things. As we mature though, we discover that other people do things quite differently to us. It is a very enlightening and maturing process to begin appreciating who we are and valuing the difference in others.

God didn't create us to be in competition with those around us, but to complement those around us. The more we appreciate the unique way God created each of us, the better we can serve His purposes together.

Our personalities are malleable. When we surrender our lives to God, it includes how we express ourselves and live out the strengths of the personality God has given us. So, don't blame your bad habits on your personality. God can redeem anything.

# Friday's Devotion – E = Experiences

## Matthew 10:7-8

*As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.*

The disciple had spent 3 year with Jesus. They themselves had been healed and saved. The Holy Spirit had anointed them to do the work of the Kingdom. Now Jesus sends them out to pass on to others what they had received themselves.

Our life experiences and our experiences of God are valuable. God has led us to have these experiences, not only for our benefit, but also the benefit of others.

We are more likely to be confident in praying for others for healing if we have received healing from God ourselves. Actually I believe there is a level of anointing that rests upon us, simply from the experiences we have in our relationship with God.

Why not take some time today and reflect on some of the landmark experiences in your life. What did God do? What did you learn from it? How might God use it to help others?

Whatever our experiences in life have been, all of them can be used to shape who we are and how we serve God. So, don't dismiss your past, it may be the very thing that blesses someone around you.