



Minutes With Messiah

Volume 23, Issue 8

Web Site: <http://www.minuteswithmessiah.com>

June 2022

AT MY MOTHER'S KNEE

At my moth-er's knee I learned a-bout Da-vid. At my moth-er's knee I came to know Paul,
At my moth-er's knee I stud-ied the Bi-ble. At my moth-er's knee I sang praise to God.

God and Christ, sin and sal-va-tion, And how Je-sus came to give us his all.
Love and joy, prayer and be-lie-ving. Where Je-sus was born, and pla-ces he trod.

Lo-is or Eu-nice or Mar-jo-rie, Ma-ry or Lin-da, who - ev-er she be; There is no bet-ter
place for me Than learn-ing of God at my moth-er's knee.

This song was written when I realized I was leading singing on Mother's Day. It was too late to publish in the May issue, so I am putting in this month.

The song includes what I call the "Timothy bar." Paul mentions, in 2 Timothy 1:5, the grandmother (Lois) and mother (Eunice) of Timothy. In the song I mention them, and at the same time use my mother's name, Marjorie. Since she was the mother of a Timothy, it is only appropriate.

CONTENTS

At My Mother's Knee	1
Other Gifts	2
Transitive Property	4

All articles Copyright 2022 by Tim O'Hearn unless otherwise noted. The ideas expressed in these articles are those of the authors and are not to be considered the doctrine of any specific congregation or eldership.

OTHER GIFTS

God is a giver. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." (Jas 1:17) There is no good gift that does not come from God. He is not just a giver, but the perfect giver. Most people are familiar with the miraculous spiritual gifts that Paul writes about in 1 Corinthians 12-14. Many people, however, forget that Paul lists other gifts, less miraculous but hardly less important.

Some people claim to have the miraculous gifts, although they usually concentrate on the one that Paul considers least important, the gift of speaking in languages they have not learned in the normal way. Others point out that the Bible indicates that those gifts ended some time around the end of the first century.

And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:18-19)

The basic meaning of the word prophet is one who speaks for God.

Even though Philip had been specially chosen for service in the church, he was unable to grant anyone the miraculous gifts. Only the apostles were able to do so. Since the last of the apostles, John, died around the turn of the first century, those upon whom the apostles had bestowed the miraculous gift must have died in the early- to middle-second century. Scripture would seem to indicate that the miraculous gifts ended about then, if not before.

Paul tells the Romans about other gifts from God. They are not dependent upon the apostles, and are available even today.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. (Rom 12:6-8)

Prophecy

Some people would say, "See, the first of these gifts is miraculous; otherwise how could one foresee the future?" While certain of the biblical prophets were able to talk about future events, this shows a lack of

understanding of the word prophecy.

The basic meaning of the word prophet is one who speaks for God. Generally this would be miraculous, because the word would have come directly from God. It is entirely possible that Paul was writing about those who had gotten a direct revelation. However, since the other gifts he mentions are non-miraculous, it may also be that he is writing about anyone who speaks the word of God, whether based on a direct revelation or based on the scriptures. Peter had the same idea when he said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Pet 4:11)

That gift should be used "according to the proportion of faith." Just three verses earlier he had used the similar phrase "according to the measure of faith." Both phrases are similar, though not necessarily analogous. (Interesting choice of words, since "proportion" comes from a Greek word from which we get the word analogue.) Not everyone can preach the word of God as fully as another. Those who, because of time, have more experience with the Bible may be able to preach or teach in ways that a newer Christian may not. That doesn't mean the older preacher is any better than the younger. It just means the proportion of their faith may be different. Either way, one may get the message to the hearers in the way that is best for their level of faith.

Ministry

What is ministry? Even Greek lexicons list at least five definitions for the word deacon/minister. The one thing they all have in common is service. A minister of the gospel, a preacher, is serving God by teaching. Others minister by seeing to the health or physical needs of others. In Acts 6, men were chosen to minister in the distribution of food to the non-Jewish Christians.

In 1 Timothy 3, the word appears to apply to a specific office of the church. Paul gives the qualities that a deacon (minister, servant) must have.

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. (1 Tim 3:8-13)

If your gift is service, serve well. Whether holding the office of a deacon or just having the gift of service,

“they that have deaconed well purchase to themselves a good degree.” Who generally receives more honor in a church? Is it not those who have served others? It could be serving food, or giving comfort, or praying for the sick. These are the people who receive a good degree.

Teaching and Exhortation

These two terms seem similar in English. In the Greek, teaching always means teaching. The word translated exhortation, though, is also translated beseeching, comforting, or praying. They are similar enough in meaning to look at them together.

Some people have a gift of teaching. They can teach the gospel or any other subject anywhere, anytime. And yet, in some churches these people are relegated, by choice or not, to sit and learn. Teaching is not limited to formal Sunday school classes. Nevertheless, if a congregation has a man who has the gift, he should be encouraged to teach such a class. Women also may teach classes, but may be limited in doing so by some of Paul’s admonitions. Some who have the gift may not excel at classroom teaching, but are great teachers in a one-on-one situation.

One of the great teachers in the early church was a woman. She had the gift of teaching individuals. “Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” (Acts 18:26) Sometimes a woman may be the more appropriate teacher of individuals.

Exhortation may be the act of encouraging another to greater things than they think they can do. It may be saying a right word at the right time, or sending a card, or making a phone call. One of the most famous men from the New Testament was known specifically for exhortation. “And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation).” (Acts 4:36) The word translated consolation there is the same word translated exhortation in Romans 6. How great it must be to be so known for your ability to exhort that it becomes your nickname.

Giving and Mercy

Giving may entail many things, but most often we think of it in monetary terms. Some people have the ability and desire to give more money than others. On the other hand, Jesus commended a widow for giving two small coins, because it was all she had. (Mk 12:42-44) Others may be giving of their time. Whatever it is you may have a gift of giving, do it in simplicity, free from pretense. Paul urged just this quality on the Corinthians.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. (2 Cor 9:7)

The gift of mercy is similar. When Jesus urged people not to be public in their alms, that latter word is the same as mercy. Sometimes, then, mercy may involve

giving. But it is broader than mere money. It is having compassion. One may give money with many motivations. It may be selfish, so that one receives back or, maybe, feels good or superior. It may be motivated by compassion. It may involve seeing not just the situation another person is in, but also a solution.

Mercy is to be done with cheerfulness, just as giving is. The Greek word translated cheerfulness is the one from which we get the word hilarity. Time has changed the shading of that word. Today it means excessive humor, sometimes at the expense of others. Mercy should never be at another’s expense. It should build them up, not tear them down. Those with the gift of

One of the great teachers in the early church was a woman. She had the gift of teaching individuals.

mercy are glad to be merciful. It makes them feel good, but not in a selfish way.

Ruling

In the church, we tend to think of ruling as the responsibility of the elders. And so we should. The concept of ruling, however, may extend to any member of the church put into a position of supervision. The elders are, indeed, the ones to whom this most applies. But what about the person who organizes a food pantry? What about a person (elder, deacon, or otherwise) who gets men to assist in the worship by saying prayers, reading scripture, or leading singing? Are those any less positions of ruling just because they may be done by men or women other than the elders?

Some people are born organizers. If a group of people gather for any purpose, they are the ones who take charge and get things done. They are the ones that other people naturally look to for making assignments and inspecting the work. In many churches, as in other walks of life, these are often women.

Paul tells these people to rule with diligence. Most of the time, that exhortation is unnecessary. Those who have the gift of leadership usually perform it with diligence. It is a necessary trait for rulers.

Paul could probably have added to this list. Everybody has a gift. It is not necessarily the same as that possessed by another. Nor is it any less valuable. That is what Paul said in introducing this list.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (Rom 12:4-5)

TRANSITIVE PROPERTY

Mathematics has several named properties. The commutative property, for instance says that “changing the order of the operands” does not change the result. Thus, $a+b=b+a$ (and the same holds true for multiplication). The distributive property says if you multiply $a+b+c$ by a number, you get the same result if you multiply each of those by that number and then add them together. The associative property says that if you add three or more numbers, the result is the same regardless of the order you add them. Then there is the transitive property. It says that if $a=b$ and $b=c$ then $a=c$. Of all the properties, this is the one that Jesus uses in his prayer in John 17.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (Jn 17:21-23)

Jesus starts out using the commutative property. “Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.” He says $A=B$, where A is God and B is Jesus (thou art in me) and then commutes it, $B=A$ (I in thee). Some people have alleged that Jesus never claimed to be God or the Son of God. Those people have obviously never read the gospels. “I and the Father are one.” (Jn 10:30) Lest some argue that he simply means they are one in purpose, the witnesses at Jesus’ trial testified, “He said, I am the Son of God.” (Matt 27:43) Even if he had not said it, the unclean spirits he cast out of people consistently testified, “Thou art the Son of God.” (Matt 8:29; Mk 3:11; Lk 4:41; 8:28) $A=B$ and $B=A$.

The second part of the Transitive Property then requires that Jesus (b) and his followers (c) are equal. In the passage quoted above, Jesus states this as a given, requiring no proof. “I in them.” Some people point out that Jesus is the “only begotten of the Father.” (Jn 1:14) They then refer to the believers as having been adopted (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5), as if that makes everyone of less value than Jesus. The fairy tales often show stepchildren as being looked down upon, but we are not stepchildren. We have received adoption. Many videos are available online, showing the joy of a child who has been a stepchild for a while being given the gift of adoption. Legally, adoption places a person on equal footing with the birth-children in a family. We are not less than Jesus; we are equal as brothers and sisters in the family. $B=C$, not B is greater than C .

Having established that $A=B$ and $B=C$, we must necessarily reach the conclusion Jesus reached, that $A=C$. “That they also may be one in us.” God, Christ, and Christians are then a unity. I am in God. Not through any righteousness of my own, but through that given by Jesus. “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Rom 4:5)

Is being in God something about which we should boast? Yes, and no. We boast of our righteousness through the blood of Jesus. We rejoice that we are no longer slaves to sin. Even though we are one with God and Jesus, though, we should be humbled. We did not earn unity with God and Christ. It was granted to us through faith. We can rejoice that we are in the family of God, but we should also be humbled that God counts us worthy to be accepted into that family.

Timothy J. O’Hearn
737 Monell Dr NE
Albuquerque NM 87123