

QUESTIONS WE WANT ANSWERED

32 What Are the Gifts of Mercy and Helps?

Scripture: Romans 12:8; I Corinthians 12:28

It is not easy to appreciate something that doesn't work. The feeling is that it has to be repaired or replaced. It is for this reason that many people are not able to muster too much interest in the church. They feel that it just doesn't work. The great tragedy is that God planned and prepared His church so it would function properly and do what He intended it to do. One reason why the church operates at minimum efficiency is that so many believers feel that the Lord's work is for professionals and people who are specialists. Certainly one of the most depressing thoughts that can come to a person is that he or she is useless. There just isn't much left to do-but attend meetings. God has not planned it that way. The God who has called us to Himself has also given each one of us what it takes to do a job for Him. He has given gifts to people, divine abilities to serve. Let us consider two very special kind of gifts which have to do with lending a hand toward others who are in need.

I. THE GIFT OF MERCY:

This gift is mentioned in Romans 12:8 where we read *"he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness."* The Greek word here is "eleos," and means "pity" or "mercy." This gift enables a person to sympathize, beyond the ordinary, with those who have come to tragedy in their lives. There is a divine pity which is true of God (Isaiah 63:9; Psalm 103:13) and this likeness is seen in human form by virtue of this gift. It seems to me important to note that such a gifted person is not overtaken by the sorrow of others, there is not the spirit of carrying the woes of the world single handedly. There is joy such acts of compassion and caring. ("cheerfulness" - Greek: hilaros). There is surely an absence of this quality abroad with the church as we know it. The unrealized potential in the exercise of this gift must be very great. The gift of mercy is to show compassionate cheerful love to those in need. We can parade our doctrine all we wish and leave people cold until they are able to see some feeling and the helping hand. The Bible describes our time as one of indifference (II Timothy 3:1-4), the person gifted with mercy will be much used of God. To work cheerfully with those whom the world has forgotten to show love.

II. THE GIFT OF HELPS:

The gift of helps is mentioned in I Corinthians 12:28 and there are several examples of this gift in Scripture. (Acts 6:2, 19:22; Philemon 11; II Timothy 4:11.) This gift refers to the ability and desire to give assistance or aid in a way that lightens the load of another thus bringing relief and encouragement. This gift may differ from the gift of mercy in that it is not addressed to the aged, sick, widowed or poor in particular. It is the willingness to step in anywhere and do a job that needs doing. The gift of helps has to be of amazing importance in the work of a given body of believers. For this reason I believe we can take II Timothy 1:18a (TLB) to mean there will be special recognition at the judgment seat of Christ for those who have used this gift. *“May the Lord give him (Onesiphorus) a special blessing at the day of Christ’s return.”* Think of it! A recognition when Jesus comes, not for preaching great sermons to thousands of people, but for doing little things that will help the overall work of the Lord.

Alan B. Christensen, Pastor, Hope Evangelical Free Church, Wilton, CT