

Passionaries  
FPC  
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Eph. 4:7 ¶ But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift....  
Eph. 4:11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,  
Eph. 4:12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,  
Eph. 4:13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.  
Eph. 4:14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.  
Eph. 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,  
Eph. 4:16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love

My friend Barbara Metzler has coined the word I. She coined the word I to describe people who turn Compassion in action....people like the founders of Teach for America, or Prison Fellowship or Angel Tree or Habitat for Humanity.

Barbara says in her book called I that they are "passionate visionaries who take positive action and significantly change the lives of others."

I believe God calls us to be Passionaries. He wants us to take positive action and significantly change the lives of others.

Being a Passionary require two things: One a gifting to complete a vision...and two, a deep passion to drivesthe work.

We begin with the gifting and then I want to talk about passion.

As you can see from the passage read this morning, this sermon will be about spiritual gifts.

Many of us may have heard me preach sermons on spiritual gifts and how God gives every person who becomes a follower of Jesus at least one spiritual gift.

A quick tutorial on spiritual gifts.

First, spiritual gifts are not natural or ordinary., but so extraordinary and supernatural that when we use them others see God in us. They point to God.

Second, the Bible has several lists of the spiritual gifts but they are in no ways an exhaustive list:

They include the gifts of teaching, administration, hospitality, discernment, healing, wisdom, leadership, craftsmanship, prophecy, encouragement, exhortation, faith, service, and giving.

And while we may believe we have certain gifts, our gifting is always confirmed by others....others recognize God's gift in and to us.

Third, Gifts are by grace...not that we deserve them, but to be used so we can together serve one another, equip God's church and glorify God.

Fourth, all of the gifts are important. And when people use their gifts to build up their church communities, those communities grow in health, effectiveness and love.

Now to be sure, according to verse 12, we are given gifts to equip the body of Christ...this church. How so?

The Greek term the writer of Ephesians, the apostle Paul, uses for our English word "equip" is actually a surgical word meaning "to set a broken leg or put a joint back into place."

The basic idea is to restore something to a healthy condition it was supposed to be in. So to use our gifts to equip the church is to restore, mend or bring it back to wholeness and health.

In the body of Christ the spiritual gifts are like ligaments, according to our Bible passage.

As I said last week, the word ligament comes from the Latin word "ligare" means "to bind" or "hold together". The gifts bind us together like ligaments and keep us healthy.

Having said all of that, let me shockingly underline something, so hang on to your seats:

The spiritual gifts are useless...  
absolutely worthless...  
completely irrelevant.  
They are a waste of time.

And you may be thinking...whoa Pastor Dan, no need to get cynical or bitter....

But I am dead serious.

I have come to the conclusion....the spiritual gifts are a bunch of nothings....

UNLESS.....they are fueled by a passion to use them....not an obligation...not an Oh-if-I-have-to-attitude....but a ZEALOUS passion to use them.....and that passion is fueled by

nothing less than a gut-wrenching, life-changing, all-encompassing GRATITUDE.

In fact, if we are low on the gratitude scale....I dare say we may be a very selfish person...who live for ourselves...and I dare say are dangerously far from God.

(SCREEN LOWERS)

Let me explain.

SLIDE 1 (PAM AND KIDS)

As you all know Pam and I went to Thailand a few weeks ago with Compassion International, one of the largest World Relief Agencies.

We went to see areas of poverty and to see Compassion International at work.

SLIDE 2 ( RATCHANEE AND WERAPAT WITH D AND P)

We had a chance to see our two Compassion children.

That's Ratchanee on the left a 15 year old who wants to be an architect.

That's Werapat on the right who is 14 and right now wants to be a policeman. Such a boy thing.

Through Compassion International they are assured of health, clothing, education, and a chance to hear about Jesus.

SLIDE 3 (RATCHANEE'S CHURCH)

Here's Ratchanee's church...a very small two story building.

SLIDE 4 (CHOIR)

A choir was there practicing and sang a couple of songs for us.

SLIDE 5 (PASTOR PASSES OUT CANDY)

Here's her pastor passing out the candy we brought for the village children. In poor areas Compassion tells us that children always share immediately with others what you give them.

Give them a pack of gum and they immediately open it up and share unlike American kids. Give them a huge bag of candy and...they never hoard, it is given out to others instantly.

SLIDE 6 (DAN PRAYS WITH A KID)

I pray for my sponsored Compassion children often. In fact, I have an acronym in my journal that I write every time for the six children our family prays and supports via World Vision and Compassion. It is BAWARY.

SLIDE 7 (DAN WITH GROUP OF KIDS)

It stands for Bolivia, Andrianus, Werapat, Anjas, Ratchanee and Yuberis from Indonesia, India, Thailand, Dominican Republic.

You can see some of them on the Compassion Wall of the 400+ children our church supports.

SLIDE 8 (KIDS AT A CAMP)

The high point of the 12 day trip for me was the time spent with the 80 college students in Compassion's Thailand *Leadership Development Program*.

This program selects children who were supported by Compassion sponsors through childhood to enroll in a special college program

SLIDE 9 (KIDS VERTICAL SHOT SITTING)

Sponsors contribute not \$32 a month but \$300 a month to pay for one student's college and books plus a Compassion program done in addition to their college curriculum which trains them in Christian on leadership principles and the Bible.

SLIDE 10 (KIDS HORIZONTAL SHOT SITTING)

The day prior to the graduation, I had the chance to give a one-hour talk on leadership to about 80 of them at a Christian camp.

SLIDE 11 (KIDS SINGING)

Here they are singing a song of welcome as Pam and I entered the room., and the room rocked in this packed room with their band playing away.

SLID3 12 (KIDS STANDING)

During my talk I asked them about the professions they were training for/

SLIDE 13( KIDS STANDING SMILING)

They said, nursing, microbiology, pharmacology, ministry, accounting, business, tourism, teaching.

SLIDE 14 ( KIDS SITTING SMILING)

It brought a lump to my throat as I thought of how these young people would never have had the chance unless people like you gave them that chance.

SLIDE 15 (KID STANDING WITH MICROPHONE)

And most of them want, I am told, to give back, and help those who are poor.

SLIDE 16 (KIDS WITH HANDS UP TO THEIR FACES)

In Thai culture they always greet you with their hands put together as well as when you leave. Like Aloha meaning goodbye and hello. And depending on the respect the higher the hands go. For the King it is really high.

SLIDE 17 (OUTSIDE PICTURE OF CHURCH)

The next day, we went to the graduation of 4 students from being held at a Presbyterian Church in Chiang Mai.

SLIDES 18 (INSIDE SANCTUARY SHOT)

Fortunately, like our Keeaumoku and Ko'olau campus the Presbyterian church was air conditioned which saved me in during a hot day.

SLIDE 19 (SHOT OF TWO ADULTS, ONE BOY 3 GIRLS)

Here they are. This was the first graduating class that actually graduated last year, one boy 3 girls. Not a big class but again, Compassion just started this program about 10 years ago and these are the first two classes combined in all of Thailand so

SLIDE 20 (SHOT OF TWO ADULTS FOUR GIRLS)

that is why the president Wess Stafford wanted to fly out to be there with them. Here are the four girls who graduated this year.

Their outfits were rented by Compassion because they couldn't afford to buy them.

But here is what nearly brought me to the knees of my heart.

SLIDE 21 (SHOT OF A POWER POINT – WORDS)

Each young man or woman got up to the podium to give a testimony. But before the testimony they showed a power point. They showed the graduate's name.

SLIDE 22 (SHOT OF SMALL GIRL)

It shows the student starting out in one of the child development centers of Compassion as a young child.

SLIDE 23 (GIRL A BIT OLDER WITH HER NUMBER)

Then you see her a bit older still with her compassion number on her photo.

SLIDE 24 (GIRL OLDER SLIDE)

And then she gets older.

SLIDE 24 (ANOTHER GIRL OLDER SLIDE)

And older

SLIDE 25 (GIRL OLDER)

Clearly a young adult in college.

SLIDE 26 (WORDS)

And then finally a slide saying what she is doing now.

SLIDE 27 (GIRL AT PODIUM WITH MAN)

The First graduate got up and immediately you could see this was going to be way different than an American commencement.

She got up and said, "I want to thank my mother for being my mother and father in my life."

SLIDE 28 (GIRL AND MOM)

I got very teary eyed. Here is a later picture with her mom that she thanked.

Then she said after thanking her Compassion teachers, "I want to thank Compassion for believing in us....in a world that sees poor children as worthless."

SLIDE 29 (GIRL AT PODIUM WITH MAN)

The next girl got up.

She tried to quote Psalm 121 the first two verses where it says

Psa. 121:1 I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?

Psa. 121:2 My help comes from the

And then she broke down weeping overcome with gratitude

She could not finish saying  
My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.

SLIDE 30 (GIRL CRYING AT PODIUM)

And then the third student got up and spoke but then overwhelmed with gratitude to her parents, teachers and sponsors like you via Compassion, she broke down.

SLIDE 31 (GIRL STANDING IN THE PEWS)

But then later something happened that I will never forget.

After all of the students spoke, they picked up wrapped gifts and went down into the congregation, into the pews, to find their parents....and then their Compassion mentors for the last 4 years....

SLIDE 32 (GIRL KNEELING IN PEWS)

Finding their parents, they knelt down in front of them and said thank you. Many of them wept...burying their heads in the laps of their parents.

SLIDE 33 (GIRL KNEELING IN PEW)

They cried...and the dads were crying and the moms were crying...as their child said...thank you.

SLIDE 34 (GIRL WITH FATHER)

Here's the picture of one of the fathers who I saw weeping greatly as his daughter knelt before him and thanked him while giving a gift. You wonder about the stories behind all of that.

SLIDE 35 (GIRL WITH HANDS UP NEAR FACE)

The students then searched for their Compassion mentors to thank them too. I was so proud of all you Compassion sponsors, some of you even doing this for college kids, all in your own way with your own children in some country making this even possible.

A far cry from an American graduation ceremony where you might not even get a thanks from a child as they run off to their parties.

SLIDE 36 (PAM WITH GIRL)

Later, as they had their party, they were taking a lot of pictures, the emcee asked Pam and me to get up with them on stage with their family and friends for photos.

I said, no, I mean we are just along for the trip watching. We're just flies on the wall. We didn't do anything for those students up there.

SLIDE 37 (GROUP SHOT WITH GRADUATES)

But the emcee said, "No, you are a sponsor....you are the only sponsors here at the graduation. You must come up, in essence, saying, for you symbolize what so many American sponsors have done and are doing for our kids."

I wasn't ready for that. I came just to watch. But we went up.

SLIDE 38 (INFORMAL GROUP SHOT WITH GRADUATES)

Later, in another photo op with just students in the college program, we were asked to join them.

At one point to make sure everyone fit into the picture, I dropped and kinda knelt down in the second row, so people could be seen behind me.

Immediately, all of the young people looked shocked and went “woooooo,” and out of respect, they all dropped instantly to get lower than I.

They felt it disrespectful to be higher than I. So as you can see I decided to stand up because the group was suffering getting lower than I.

SLIDE 39 (WESS GIVING OUT DIPLOMA)

It hit me then – Here I was in a developing country. And they are so grateful.

It made me wonder....if we do not have that sense of gratitude....or awe....can we ever worship properly?

Have we in America...who think we have so much, in the process lost even more....lost that sense of awe....and gratitude....

SLIDE 40 (TEARY EYED GIRL STANDING AT PODIUM)

where we can hardly talk about how great God is without crying?

You see, the spiritual gifts don't mean didly squat...if we don't use them out of gratitude....and in awe of a great God.

SLIDE 41 (CHILD PRAYING #1)

If we use them out of oughtness or out of efficiency...or perish the thought, pride or power – that's not it,

but when we are grateful...so much in awe of God...so thankful...that gratitude drives us...fuels a passion to help others know God and be saved by him.

SLIDE 42 (CHILD PRAYING #2)

Can we live lives where everything we do....everything is fueled by passionate thankfulness for what God has done in

SLIDE 43 (CHILD PRAYING #3)

our lives that we will do anything, use anything, spend anything to help others?

SLIDE 44 (CHILD PRAYING #4)

To be a true passionary....is to be gratefully passionate about God that you will do anything to save another – whether it is their soul or to save them from poverty or illness in the name of Christ.

SLIDE 45 OF SCHINDLER LIST COVER OR LOGO

The movie Schindler's List, closes with a most moving scene. Oskar Schindler was a Nazi German during World War II.

But secretly he worked against the Nazi's to save 1100 Jews from the Holocaust by hiring them in his factory.

At the end of the movie, the Nazi's have lost and now Schindler and his wife must leave the Jews he has saved, otherwise the Allies will think he is a Nazi and kill him.

GO TO BLACK

This is the scene were the Jews say good bye to Oskar Schindler played by Liam Neeson.

GIVE ME A SECOND OF BLACK AND PAUSE TO GET CONGREGATION READY.

Roll Schindler DVD 4:04

Watching this recently, seeing Schindler driving away and seeing all those Jews he had helped, I thought to myself, what is my Schindler's List?

What have we done that we can say – yes these are people we have tried to save for eternity or in some way helped them greatly?

What have we done out of our gratitude to a God who came here and was killed and suffered for our sake?

Note this is out of gratitude and not a means to earn our salvation. It is because God loves us and has rescued us – and not proof He must.

That is something we all have to decide.

But here is a starter for our church family.

I think our wall...our Compassion Wall that David Free and Chris and Angela Mathieu and others have worked so hard on.....that Wall that shows more than 400 Compassion kids....that's our Schindler's List.

Without many of you they would not be clothed, fed, educated, given proper medical care, saved. 102,000 Compassion children accepted Christ last year...maybe they were some of yours who got to know Jesus because you sponsored them in a Compassion program.

It is one way to save children and their parents who often accept Christ because of their children.

In fact, last week, a friend of mine and I decided to sign up for another Compassion child, our fifth.

Our church reception desk ALWAYS has packets of children who need to be sponsored, and we have extra ones for today or you can go to the Compassion website which is what I did.

And you can choose a child based on his or her birthdate which could match your anniversary or your own birthday or your child's birthday or a lost loved one and choose a child out of gratitude for what you have....which is what I did recently.

I typed in February 20 in the search section, which is the same birthday as my son Quinn (since we already sponsor children close to or on our other birthdays in my family)...but none yet for Quinn...so any child in the world on Feb. 20...and only one popped up out of all kids in all countries in a Compassion project.

You won't believe this....it was a child in the Philippines who is ten years old...two years younger than my son Quinn.

And his name is Leo Paul Quinning.

If you should hit the website which is easy just *compassion.org* this week to consider sponsoring a child...

and should you decide to sponsor a child, write in the box that you heard about it at First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu and Compassion will send your child's picture to us to post on our Schindler's List, Compassion Wall.

I just don't want any of you to be at the pearly gates....and find yourself saying to the Apostle Paul,

I made much money...wasted so much money...and I could have saved one more, and maybe if I did not buy that...maybe en more.

We can always use our Spiritual Gifts, but as my friend Barbara Metzler says....we can be a passionary...a person who has passion to do great things...and I say the best, greatest, most rewarding things come out of a deep, deep, deep sense of gratitude to God...that frees us to do anything...anything to help someone in the poverty of this world either physically or emotionally or spiritually.

For such it is for those who follow Jesus and are called to be like our Lord who came to serve and not be served.

Amen!

NO SONG, Go right into Communion.

Communion: speak about Christ's death, how we should have gratitude and be in awe and wonder of God as we REMEMBER Him.