

# Pr Mark Turner: Think Soberly - Achieve Unity (8/8/20)

The correct understanding of the biblical teaching of spiritual gifts brings unity to the church. The recognition that each one of us is valuable and a needed member of the body of Christ is a unifying thought. Every member of the church is necessary for the accomplishment of Christ's mission. Every member is gifted for service.

**Romans 12:3-8** - The key to unity is humility. Pride creates division. Humility brings unity. Paul says that we each need to "think soberly," as God has given everyone a measure of faith.

**Philippians 1:27** - Being in unity = walking worthy of Christ.

## **Unity Comes Through Humility:**

**Philippians 2:1,2** - If Christ means anything to us, we should demonstrate that by being like-minded.

**1 Corinthians 1:10** - This likemindedness in Christ is the key to avoiding divisions.

**Philippians 2:3,4** - To have no selfish ambition, but lowliness of mind is the calling. Other-centred love - looking out for the interests of others.

How? **Philippians 2:5** - Have the same attitude as Christ.

**Philippians 2:6-8** - Jesus demonstrated His humble attitude by not seeking His rightful equality with God, but deferring His position for the sake of others.

So, unity comes through humility. But how does humility come?

The humility that brings unity comes from a proper understanding of our unique function within the body of Christ. That is, an understanding of Spiritual Gifts.

## **The Blind Men and The Elephant:**

It was six men of Indostan  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind),  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant,  
And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
At once began to bawl:  
"God bless me!—but the Elephant  
Is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk,  
Cried: "Ho!—what have we here  
So very round and smooth and sharp?  
To me 't is mighty clear  
This wonder of an Elephant  
Is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal,  
And happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands,  
Thus boldly up and spake:

"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out his eager hand,  
And felt about the knee.

"What most this wondrous beast is like  
Is mighty plain," quoth he;

"'T is clear enough the Elephant  
Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,  
Said: "E'en the blindest man

Can tell what this resembles most;

Deny the fact who can,

This marvel of an Elephant

Is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun

About the beast to grope,

Than, seizing on the swinging tail

That fell within his scope,

"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant

Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan

Disputed loud and long,

Each in his own opinion

Exceeding stiff and strong,

Though each was partly in the right,

And all were in the wrong!

So, oft in theologic wars

The disputants, I ween,

Rail on in utter ignorance

Of what each other mean,

And prate about an Elephant

Not one of them has seen!

**Romans 12:3** - Paul, when introducing Spiritual Gifts in this passage, cautions us not to think too highly of ourselves. Why? Because our perspective is incomplete. We are each like one of the blind men in the poem. We have a perspective, but that does not make it the complete perspective.

Can you imagine what it would be like if, like the blind men with the elephant, seven Christians came together to form the ideal church? Each one with a different perspective - based on their predominant Spiritual Gift.

Each one gives their perspective:

- Prophet –“Well prepared sermons exposing sin, proclaiming righteousness, and warning of judgment to come.”
- Server –“Practical assistance to every member of the church to encourage them and to help them fulfil their responsibilities.”
- Teacher –“In-depth Bible studies with special emphasis on the precise meaning of words.”

- Exhorter –“Personal counselling and encouragement for every member to assist them in applying Scriptural principles to their daily living.”
- Giver –“Generous programs of financial assistance to missionaries and other ministries.”
- Organiser –“Smooth running organisation throughout the church so that every phase will be carried out decently and in order.”
- Mercy –“Special outreach and concern for the precise and varying feelings of individuals with a readiness to meet their needs.”

Which one is right? All and none.

They are all right to have their perspective. But none of the perspectives is complete on its own. Each needs the input of the others.

In Romans, Paul encourages us not to see our perspective too highly, but to be humble and appreciate each perspective and its function.

What have we learned?

Unity comes through humility (Phil 2:1-8)

Humility comes through:

1. Recognising my own limitations
2. Valuing the contribution of others
3. Making a positive contribution where I can