

March 17, 2013 - You Are Gifted Here

We are in a series called You Are Here, based on the Book of Ephesians and so we are just getting to the halfway with that so we'll just continue on with that this morning.

Some of you already know this but this winter, I have been doing some curling and I will answer your two burning questions: “No, I do not have a pair of pants like that”, and “Yes, I want some” (Loud! And colourful). Anyone can go curling, all you have to do is throw a heavy rock down some ice and it just has to slide to the end and that's pretty much all you have to do to go curling. But what I've been trying to do, emphasis on 'trying' here, is learn how to curl well. Every Wednesday night I've been going to the curling rink and there's instructors there that watch you and say “Okay, you're doing this and stop doing that, and do more of that, and whatnot.” So here's what I've learned, here is the challenge for me in curling. Here is the thought process that has to go on in your head, kind of simultaneously in the three seconds it takes to throw a rock. So first of all, I'm right handed so, you put your right foot in the hack which is kind of like the starting block but you have to make sure that your toe is pointed right at the broom at the other end of the ice and then you make sure that your left foot is parallel to your right foot, Okay? You have to hold your broom in your one hand and you have to squat down a little bit and then you stand up and then you put your left foot back a little bit, but not too much, and then you slide, don't throw your foot forward, slide your foot forward and push with your right leg out of the hack. Now, if you push too hard your rock will go too fast and fly right down to the end of the rink. If you don't push hard enough, your rock will stop half way down and you won't make your shot. Now as you are sliding down you have to make sure you bring the rock straight out in front of you now off to the side where it probably started when you were in the hack. So you have to bring your rock straight out in front of you and depending on which way you need to go you have to have your hand either this way, or that way, so you have to make sure you have it the right way and you have to slide the exact right distance, because if you let go of the rock too soon it will go too fast and fly to the end of the rink. If you hang on too long, it won't go all the way down and you will miss your shot. So just at the right time you let go of your rock but before you let go of the rock you have to give it a little twist. Now, you have to twist it the right amount because if you twist it too much then it spins a lot more and if it spins more then it goes straighter and you don't curl in where you want to go. If you don't twist it enough then it curls too much and you miss your shot on the other side. Now you have to do all of those things and keep all of those things in mind and co-ordinate it during the three seconds it takes for you to throw the rock. Now, that is complicated for me and it was frustrating for me especially in the beginning when I was learning because they would say “I want you to focus on how hard you kick out of the hack.” And I said “Okay, I can do that.” And once I was focusing on how hard I was kicking out of the hack I totally wasn't paying attention to the other dozen things I was supposed to do right. And they'd say “Okay, you messed that up, now what you have to do is make sure you let go at the right point.” “Okay, I'll do that.” And so, getting all of that co-ordinated and functioning at the same time and all of my body parts doing the things they were supposed to be doing when I make my shot, was

an incredible challenge to get all that working at the same time. Maybe some of you have that feeling with your bodies at some time. It's hard to get all of your body parts doing what they're supposed to be doing at the right time. Maybe you've had a problem, whether it's because of fatigue or injury or just you're head's not in the right space, you just can't get your body to do what you think you want it to do and certain parts of your body seem to have a mind of their own and they go off and do something else. Maybe you've had that frustration of your body parts not quite working all together and not quite doing what they're supposed to be doing when they're supposed to be doing them.

Well, if you can relate to that, then you're in the right place and you know exactly what we're going to talk about when we get to Ephesians, Chapter 4. Now, just to get there, before we start I need to set the stage a little bit again and we did a little bit of this last week so I'm going to go faster this week but we still need to set the stage because if you don't have the context for this, the rest of it isn't going to make sense so, if you were here last week and you remember everything we said you can just sit here and nod but if you were here and you maybe don't quite remember everything from last week then this will be a good refresher for you. So here we go, very quickly through the Letter of Ephesians. The letter starts out in Chapter 2 and what he says "Here is what you were on your own before you came to Christ you were a mess you were broken you were corrupted, you were basically a remnant of your original beauty. You are just a shadow of the original design that you were meant to be and part of that is just because you live in a broken world where things happen and part of that is because you made some bad choices along the way; and part of that is because some people around you made some really bad choices and that kind of affected you a little bit; and so the result is that you are just this kind of broken, corrupted mess of a thing. BUT when you came to Christ, when you came to Jesus, something happened, something changed and you began to be restored and redeemed and you became God's masterpiece as he always intended you to be. And so when you come to Christ that's what happens to you and that's what you become. You become what God had intended you to be from the very beginning and so that's where you are once you come to Christ.

And so we got to Chapter 3 and we said "Now all of that happens, that whole process happens and is possible because of two things. First of all it's possible because of Christ's love for us. Paul says "I wish you could understand how deep and how wide and how long...I wish you could just wrap your brain around how much Jesus loves you." He said so all this happens because of Christ's love for us.

And secondly, it happens because of God's power in you. If you had to do this on your own, you would have no hope of pulling it off. There is no way. You don't have the power, you don't have the skill, you don't have the knowledge but thankfully, in Christ, God's power is working through you and it's transforming you from that broken mess that you once were to God's masterpiece as he desired you to be.

And so because of all that we get to Chapter 4 and Paul says: "Therefore, because of all the

stuff we've just talked about, I want you to live a life worthy of the calling that you have received. And living a life worthy of the calling means this: being humble and gentle and patient. It means making allowances for the faults of those around you. It means being united in spirit with the rest of the body. It means binding yourselves together with peace. And so, he says that's what living the life worthy of the calling is all about. And so he says "I want you to be a body that is united. A body where every piece fits together exactly as it was meant to do. Every piece fits, every piece functions and it does that all to keep the body healthy and growing and full of love.

So that's where Paul has taken us in the first three chapters and just into chapter 4 of his letter. And really Chapter 4 is a turning point. For the first three Chapters what Paul does he talks about theology a lot and he says "Here is who God is and here is what God has done." And then we get to Chapter 4 and he says "Here is what we're going to do in response to all of that." Okay? Are you with me so far? This is where we are when we get here to Chapter 4. In the middle of Chapter 4 Paul is going to say these words to the Church in Ephesus, he says in Chapter 4: 7, 11-13, and I'm going to skip a few verses there and I don't mean that to mislead you at all but Paul is kind of notorious for going on tangents and Verses 8-10 are kind of one of those tangents. So to not lose the point we're just going to skip over them this morning.

"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it....So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

Paul has just finished this section where he says over and over again, he says: "There is one, there is one, there is one...when we are talking about the Church there is one, there is one, there is one, but, we each have our own special grace that God has given us. Now to really understand what Paul is really giving us there we need to look at that word "Grace" and I feel that we kind of have a limited view of that word sometime and maybe a little bit different view than maybe the ancients had because when we think about the Grace of God, at least, when I think about the Grace of God a lot of times, what I think about is that God has forgiven me, right? What is God's grace? God's grace is that I had a whole bunch of sin in my life and God washed it away, that's God's grace. And yes! Forgiveness is a huge, huge, part of what God's grace is. But God's grace is bigger than that. God's grace is really, anything good that God has put into my life that I didn't deserve--that is grace from God. And when Paul talks about receiving God's grace, that's what he's talking about not simply forgiveness but he's saying "all of the good things that God has dumped into your life, that is God's grace to you. Back in Chapter 3 Paul says this and maybe this will clear it up a little bit, Paul says in Eph. 3:8:

"Although I'm less than the least of all of God's people, this grace was given to me: To

preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

And so Paul says you know what? I didn't deserve it. I wasn't worthy of it, in fact, I was the least worthy of it but God has given me this grace and the grace he's given me is this job, this mission, this role to fill out, to preach to the Gentiles the Good News of God. And so, in chapter 4 he's kind of saying the same thing except this time he's not talking about himself. He's saying “you know what? God has given grace to each one of us as Christ apportioned it.” He says “We've each been given this grace by God and so because of that we each have this role, this part to play, this job to do.” And so, what he is really saying is that the grace that God has given you, really what that is, is that the masterpiece God has made you into has prepared you and suited you and made you ready to do certain work, to do certain jobs, to fill certain roles in his body.

So, think of it this way if you look at a real body. Your hand has these little opposable thumbs and your hand has opposable thumbs so that you can pick things up and hold them and grab them, right? It has been suited to do that job because of how it was made. Your eyes have cones and rods in them so that you can process the light that comes into your eyes and see what's happening around you. Your ear has a hammer and a drum and an anvil so that you can process the sound waves that come into your ears. And likewise, Paul is saying: “You know what? We're in the body and in the body each member has been crafted, has been shaped, has been worked by God to be prepared to do a certain role, to do certain jobs, to do certain work in his Kingdom. Basically what Paul is saying is: “You work here.” When you're in the body you work here. Now you can take that two ways and I think first of all you can say: Well you work here means you fit here. You function here, which is what we were talking about last week, right? If you've never had that experience when you were trying to do something, maybe you were trying to prop something open or fill a gap, or you needed a gear to fill into some mechanism, right? And you were looking around and you finally found something that would hold that open or that would fill that gap and you looked at it and said “Hey! That will work.” That's what we're talking about here. You work here; you function here; you have a job; you fit; you work here. But there's another way to take that instruction, to take that phrase. And that is to say: You work here means, you have a role. You have a job here. God has given you something to do in the body. And the body is counting on you to do your part. Now that's not to give you a big guilt trip or it's not to give you another item for your 'to do' list or if you're like me, another 'to do list' to add to your pile of 'to do lists'. That's not what we're saying here. We're thinking in terms of a body right and your feet are never going to give a guilt trip to your eyes to make them see, right? No! They're just going to say “Hey fellas! Could you look around a little bit cause I'm stubbin' my toes on everything, right? And your mouth is not going to say to your hands and pressure and nag your hands to feed it, right? No, it's just going to say: “You know what guys? I'm starving here could you pick up that burger or something and maybe bring it near.” And that's how the body works, right? And that's the kind of thing we're talking about and that's the kind of thing Paul is talking about the kind of imagery he's setting. And so, as he says that he kind of gives us five different roles that existed in the

early church. Now, when it comes to these five things I won't go out on a limb and say that this is an all inclusive list by any means, but here is what I am willing to go out on a limb and say: If these five kind of roles are functioning well in a church, then that church is going to be a healthy and a vibrant and a growing church. And if these five different roles aren't functioning well in a church, then that's going to be a church that has it's struggles and has it's problems and has it's issues. And so, we're going to look at all five of them really quickly this morning. Now, I'm going to change the names different from the names that Paul gives us and I'm doing that for two reasons. First of all some of these names carry with them some baggage. They kind of have some associated meanings with them now that weren't necessarily there when Paul first wrote this and so I don't want that confuse or mislead us. For example, this isn't in the list but I'll give you an example so you know what I'm talking about here. You know the word "Elder". You see the word elder in your Bible all over the place. The word elder, the Greek word is "Presbyterius" from which we get the word "Presbyter", but we never call Ian our Presbyter, right? It's also the word that can be translated as Bishop. But, we're probably not going to start calling our Elders Bishops, why? Because there's some other associated meanings to those words that aren't connected to the original so we're sticking to Elders most of the time. So that's what we're talking about. We're also changing the name of the word because I confess I have an absolute addiction to alphabetical alliteration. And so we're going to change the words just a little bit this morning as we're going through and hopefully that might help us keep them in mind a little bit as well.

The first one we're going to look at is: The Evangelist. We're going to call that "The Sharer", okay? The one who shares. That's because that's what an evangelist did. An evangelist went from place to place sharing the Good News. They usually went from city to city. The city didn't stay in one place for a very long time and what they would do is, they would tell people who had never heard the Good News about who Jesus was and what Jesus had done. And so they did a lot of preaching, except their preaching was different from the preaching I typically do on a Sunday morning, in the fact that, most of the time their primary audience was people who had no relationship with God; who had no connection to the church. So they were the ones who were reaching out to those who had never heard before.

So the first one I'm going to do is the Sharer. Because Craig made us these nice posters last week and I didn't want to see them go to waste so we're going to give body parts to each of these too. The Sharer, we're going to give the foot, because the foot is the one that takes you out and around and stuff. And then there's the verse in Romans that talks about "blessed are the feet of those who bring the Good News. So that seems to fit. I remember I was in India once and they had a big banner that had that verse on it and for the whole week I was there I was really self-conscious, every time I had my bath about scrubbing my feet really clean because I never knew where they were going to take that. So the first one is going to be the Sharer and he's going to be the feet of the body.

The second one that Paul lists is called The Pastor and we're going to rename that 'The

Supporter'. That's the one who brings support to the body. It's the one who cares for and loves and nurtures and meets the needs of the body. That's the role that the Supporter has. And we're going to give the body part - the hand is going to be the body part for the Supporter. That makes a lot of sense too because when you think about your own body, what part of the body takes care of the rest of the body? The hand, right? When you're hungry, who feeds you? The hand, right? When you have an itch, who scratches it? (The wall, right?) When you need to get dressed, your hands. When you're washing, it's your hands. When you need to comb your hair, it's your hands. Your hands are the part of the body that takes care of the rest of the body. And that's what the Supporter does, that's its role, its function in the body.

Number three is going to be The Teacher. I apologise in advance. I renamed the Teacher--The Schooler. And I know that's horrible, but please just ignore that and just work with it because it's the one who schools people; it's the one who teaches; it instructs the church, right? It helps the church, right. It's the one who helps reveal deeper truths about faith and the one that adds life applications to what we want in the church. It's a little different than the Sharer, because the Sharer is the one that's sharing with people outside the church the Good News for the first time and the Schooler is the one that's helping the church learn more and develop and grow in that way. And so for the Schooler, we're going to give them the mouth. The Schooler does the talking and the sharing and the teaching, like that, so...

Number four. Paul calls this The Prophet. We're going to adapt that and we're going to call this person The Searcher. Here's what the Searcher does. In the Bible when we see Prophets, I don't know why but when we think of Prophets usually what we think of is somebody who predicts the future. That's what we think a prophet does. But if you look in the Bible, they do some of that but a lot of what a prophet does isn't so much predicting the future, what a prophet does is listens for the word of the Lord and received the word of the Lord and then passes that on to the people. And so if you look at the prophets in the Old Testament especially, that's a lot of what they are doing, is they're out there and there listening for a message from God and when they get the message from God they go out and they start sharing that with the people of God. So these are the ones who listen for God; who search for his leading; and once they have a sense of that they go cast the vision for the rest of the body. So, we're going to give the Searcher, the ear, because they're the ones who listen for God and listen for God's voice. That's not to say the rest of us don't listen to God, but these are the ones, that's their role, that's their gift, that's the part they play the best and the most.

Number five. The Starter. Paul uses the word 'Apostle'. We're going to use the word Starter. That's because they start new things. Jesus said "I'm going to start this new thing and call it "Church" and I need some people who are going to go out and make that happen for me. So he gathered the Apostles and that's what the Apostles did at the start of Acts, right? Their job was to start the church going. To start this movement that was going to take over the whole World, right? That was their job, was to start that and to lead that.

In Acts, Chapter 6 there's a passage where the Apostles actually say: "There's these widows who need to be taken care of" and I'm going to paraphrase this a little bit, what they say is basically, we're going to pass that job on to some supporters because that's what they do well and we're going to keep on doing the task that we were given, which was to start this thing called Church, and make this happen. So they were the ones who would go to new places and start new churches or they would start new ministries in churches and that's kind of what the Starter does. So, they're the ones who see new opportunities and see new ways of doing things and so, we are going to give them the Eyes. Because they are the ones who see new ways of doing things, see new opportunities and really, they take what the Searchers have and say "This is how we can make that happen; here's how we can follow where God is leading."

And so, all of these different little pieces kind of make up the Body of Christ. Again, it may not be one hundred percent all inclusive, but these are five of the really big ones that the church needs to have happening for it to be healthy and growing and vibrant.

After putting that all together the inevitable question is: Well, how does that apply to us? How do we fit with that? And so, for the last couple of weeks what we've done is, we've had people in our Small Groups filling out an online survey for us. If you haven't had a chance to do that, the link is on our Facebook page and if you're not on Facebook just talk to me afterwards and I'll give you the link to it. What this survey has done is, it breaks down the areas of strength that each person has. It will say here's the area that, according to your answers, which I know all of these things are subjective, if nothing else, it says "Here is where you perceive that you are the strongest." I'm going to give you ten seconds or so. Look at those five areas: Sharer; Supporter; Searcher; Starter; Schooler; and think about our congregation as a whole. What do you think the group totals are going to say about our congregation? Which one or two of those do you think are going to be our strong suits? Think about that. Tell the person beside you so that afterwards you can't say "I knew it", if you didn't tell that to the person beside you. Which one do you think is going to be our strong suit? Based on the people who responded to the survey, qualifying it there, and the fact that it's subjective by how you answered the question, here is how we perceived our strong suits to be: Supporters and Schoolers. Now, I see some heads nodding. Anyone brave enough to put up your hand if you got that right? If you picked one of those two? Here is what the survey said, based on the results of the people who answered. According to that 98% said Supporter or Schooler was their number one or number two strong area. Which to me was a fairly convincing number. 5% said, "These are my top two. I'm a Supporter-Schooler; or Schooler-Supporter. Now that, for at least to me, paints a fairly good picture of where our congregation is at, or at least perceives ourselves to be at. Now if you're wondering; 38% picked Sharer as their number one strength. And 2% picked searchers. 2% picked Starters and that's a little misleading because that was the same person, they tied in their score for first. So, that paints a picture for me. Now, I wouldn't base everything on one survey for sure and I don't intend to do that. If you're one of the people who did that survey you may say "Well, I did it and the answer I got back was, you

know, I'm a Sharer, that was my top strength and man, I never pictured myself as being a Sharer. Now, if that's the case two things to consider. One: Are you a Sharer in areas of your life not involving church, right? If you are one of those people who are out there and if every time you discover something new or something you like or a new thing that's really burning up inside of you, you just have to tell someone else: then you're a Sharer. Now, you may not have applied that to your Christian life but that's who you are, kind of how you're wired.

Beyond this particular survey and I wouldn't base it on just one event, how many of you remember awhile back, probably a year or two, we did a lesson and we asked: How many people are hands? How many people are eyes? How many people are feet? And what was the overwhelming answer to that question? Hands! Yeah! We had a lot of people who said "If you need help, let me know and I will be there." And that's what hands do, right? They're the ones who care, who nurture, who help the body, right?

Before my time here, Bernard did a Spiritual Gifts Inventory, and I have actually seen those results at one point but I've heard you guys talk about it, more importantly, and you guys have, on several occasions noted to me that, in that Spiritual Gift Inventory, you said "You know what? The vast majority of us were 'Nurturers'. That's what we do. We're Nurturers, that's our strong gift." I've asked people who have been here much longer than me and they said "You know what? That wasn't the first time that we've kind of looked at ourselves and said that this is our strong suit. Our strong suit is fellowship and Bible study. Those are our strong suits as a congregation, right? And so, there is kind of this group of evidence? Trend? That says: As a congregation, as a whole, generally speaking, we are really strong at fellowship and Bible study. We are really strong at supporting and teaching. We are really strong at fellowship and Bible study. These are where our strength lies. And there is probably a good reason for that. We come from a heritage that was greatly influenced by a guy named Campbell and if you look at the stuff that Campbell was all about, it's no wonder that teaching and Bible study is really kind of at the core of our DNA as a church. That makes sense. You can say "You know what? It's not surprising because like people attract each other, right? And so, if we're a church that's really strong in supporting and schooling and someone comes here who is strong in supporting and schooling, they're going to feel right at home and they're going to fit in and they're going to stay here. And that makes sense, right?"

It could be because we have a lot of family ties in our congregation and that's maybe true of Churches of Christ in Saskatchewan in general, right? And if you're not sure about that, ask someone who is not in that loop and they will tell you "It just weird's me out because every time I'm talking to someone they say "I'm related to this person, who is related to this person...and I know none of them. But we are. This is who we are. And I'm not saying that's good or bad I'm just saying that's who we are. Because we're family, because we're related, family takes care of each other. And so, this is who we are. This is what we do. Maybe we're that way because simply the fact that, you know what? A place that will teach

me new things and teach me deeper understanding; a place that cares for me and loves me; and helps me; that's a nice place to be. I like a place like that. And so, maybe that's why we're that way. I'm pretty sure it's probably a combination of all those things and several I haven't even thought of. And so, why are we that way? I don't know. What do we do with it?

Here's some of my thoughts on what to do with it and I'll start by saying: I have nowhere near all the answers. But here are some of my thoughts:

First. Let's start with our areas of greater strength. The supporting and the teaching kind of areas. What we need to do is, we need to celebrate those. We need to rejoice in those. We need to be excited about the fact that this group of people is a group of people that EXCELLS at caring for one another. It is a group of people that prioritises caring for each other and meeting the needs of each other and helping each other. We need to be excited about that and we need to celebrate it and we need to just acknowledge the fact that, if we were not strong in those areas, we may not be here anymore. Because churches that aren't good at caring for one another; churches that aren't good at teaching each other and growing in spiritual ways, they don't last. And so, we need to celebrate the fact that God has blessed this group to be strong in those areas and because of that, that has made us who we are and that has helped us probably survive some things that maybe some other groups may not have survived. \

Secondly. We need to maximize our strengths. We need to realise that in these two areas especially, this is where our group can have a really big impact, right now. These are things that we can start doing really good, big wonderful things in, right now. We don't have to grow in these to accomplish something, we should still grow, yes, but we don't have to grow in these things to accomplish things in these areas. We are ready to just take these areas by storm and accomplish great things for God in these areas because he has already built us up and strengthened us in these two areas, especially.

Now, that was the easy one. The more difficult one to answer is: What do we do with some of these areas that are areas of less strength perhaps. Well, a couple of thoughts come to mind there. First of all, if you are one of those people who, whether it 's from the survey or from other people or from whatever source it has come, if you are one of those people who feels like you have been graced in one of these areas, if you have been graced as a Sharer; or you have been graced as Searcher; or if you have been graced as a Starter; if those are your strong areas, if God has built into you strengths in those areas, then what we, as a group need, is for you to step out. What we as a group need is for you to take the reins. What we as a group need is for you to lead the rest of us who just simply aren't strong there in those kinds of ministries.

And second, if you are someone who has not been deeply graced in one of those areas, we need to keep in mind, that those who have been are in the minority in our group and so the

work of those areas is falling on a very small group. And so, when one of those people in those areas steps out and tries to accomplish something in those areas, even though that's not our strong suit, even though we don't feel like we're very well equipped to do it, we've got to get on board. We've got to get behind them. Let's be Supporters. We don't know what we're doing, but we're there for you man! Right? We've got to get behind those people who start these things in these areas because the minority is not going to make it on their own. They're not going to be able to get it done all by themselves. Probably the truth is, if that minority is left to accomplish everything in that area by themselves, what's going to happen? They're going to wear out. They're going to be done. They're going to say: "You know what? I've tried and tried to make something happen in this area and I feel like God's gifted me in this area but I am done. My tank is empty. So the rest of us need to get on board and get behind them when they do step out.

So, Paul ends this section of text and he says: Really what this is about, it's about maturing in Christ. Maturing means growing up. Growing often means having to stretch a little bit. So we've tried to do some of that stuff, in our Fish Groups over the last few years we've purposely tried to program some things that are going to stretch us in some of those areas where maybe we're not as strong as we'd like to be. Now, the program is only going to get us so far but we've tried to at least, make opportunities for us to accomplish some of those things.

Let me try and explain it this way. At our house most of the time I'm the last one to go to bed. Sometimes my kids outlast me but most of the time they go first, then my wife goes second because she has to get up earliest. Then I'm usually up later cause I'm kind of a night person and actually that's my most productive time of day after 9:00 p.m. So I'm usually the last one up and I'm usually in the living room and working on my lap top or I'm watching T.V. or I'm doing whatever. I always make a point of leaving our kitchen light on. In our living room, if you've ever been to our house, our living room just has lamps and I learned very quickly that when I'm done and ready to go to bed, if I turn this lamp off and I turn this lamp off, then it's really dark and I can't find my way out of the room. So I purposely always leave the kitchen light on and I can get out. Now, quite frequently, my wife will wake up and go to the kitchen to get a glass of water and then go back to bed and on her way back to bed she turns off the light. And so, despite my best efforts, I'm still fumbling around in the dark trying to find my way back to the room. Now, when it's dark I can't see, right? And so what happens. Touch takes over and I try and find my way back to the room by way of touch. And that's what the body does, right? When there's an area of weakness the other parts try and compensate. They try and fill in. They try and help out. Now that's really good and that's what we should do and as a body, the body of Christ, that's what we need to do. Maybe we're low in the areas of Searchers. Okay. So we don't have people who are strong in that area but if we think that's something that needs to be done maybe some of us who aren't strong in that area need to go and do it anyways. That's what the body does. But here's the truth of it, one night this week the same thing happened. The light was on and then the light was off and I turned off the lamps and it was dark and I was

walking to bed, I was walking along and I walked down our hallway and I went past Sawyer's room and the bathroom and I went down to the end of the hall, I looked in Harrison's room, he was sleeping there, and I turned to go into my room and the door was closed. You can guess what happened. That's to say that touch can fill in for sight, but the ideal thing, is to be able to see better, right? And so, in the body of Christ the same thing applies. Short term; Yeah! Even though we're not gifted there, even though we're not strong there, let's go and let's do it and let's make it happen. But the real solution is for us to grow. The real solution is for us to develop. The real solution is for us to get better at those things. The question that really, we're left with and the question I'm going to leave you with is: In a year from now, if we went through a similar survey and we went through all those questions again, or different questions and came up with a different kind of a breakdown or whatever; the question is: Are our numbers going to be any different than they are today? The value of the numbers isn't really as important if next year, our numbers are greater. If next year we can look at it and say "You know what? We've grown. We've developed. We've become more. We've become more of what God has been calling us to be. If we're growing and if we're maturing then our numbers should be higher across the board even in our weaker areas our numbers should be higher. But the truth of the matter is that our numbers are only going to be higher if my numbers get higher. That's the way it works.

So let me leave this thought with you. You know when you're in school, you go to school in University and you have your major. You have your major subject that you're working on in your degree and then you have your minor. When I went to school I got a Bachelor of Arts degree and I majored in Biblical Studies and I minored in Biblical Languages. So that means most of my work was over here, some of my work was over here. So I want to challenge you as you look forward to the weeks and months and year ahead to think of what your major is and then develop a minor. Your major is that role, that area of ministry that you are just naturally drawn to. The one that you just go to by default because that's where you're pulled to, that's where your heart is, that's who you are. You go there. Your minor is that area that you look at and you go "Wow! That's just a little bit outside my comfort zone. That's not really me. That's not my thing." That's your minor. So develop your major and your minor.

I'm going to pick on Al just a little bit. Al, if a year ago if we had done this one year ago and I said "You're going to go to India." What are you going to say to me? "No Way. Not a chance." And if I said "Al, when you're in India you're going to preach a sermon." What would you say? "Not a chance, No!" And if I said "Al, after you come back from India, we're going to have a men's breakfast and you're going to lead that thing and you're going to talk about your faith and you're going to lead a discussion with the rest of us about your faith, what would you say? "No way." You'd say "That's my minor over there." But Al, you went. You did it. You grew. You're different now, aren't you?" Yeah! You are man! And it's good. It's good. And you've probably all experienced that, right. There is something to try outside of my comfort zone land I know it's a good thing and I want to go there, so okay I'm going to grit my teeth and do it and I do it and it's not quite as bad as I

thought it was going to be. I get back from that and I realize, you know what? I'm different. I've grown; I've changed. And you know what? That minor isn't quite so minor to me anymore. So this year, I encourage you to have a season where you intentionally go out and major in some of your minors.

Probably the most important thing we need to do is we simply need to ask God to grant us more grace. To simply say "God, we want to be the body that you want us to be and to accomplish that it doesn't matter how many strategies we come up with or how many programs we come up with or how much skill and will we put into this thing, unless you grant us a little more grace, it's not going to happen. So God, please grant us more grace. Please put more grace upon the people who are here. Add more grace to each one of us so that we grow, so that we are more, so that we're different. And maybe this is a little weird and outside our comfort zone, but say "You know what God, if what you need to do is find some people who are really deeply graced in the areas that we're weak in, go out and find them and bring them here and add them to our group and build us up that way so that we can grow in your grace that way." And when he does, I will warn you they're probably going to be a little different, because they are graced in ways that we aren't. But God is going to bring them if we ask him and he's going to put them here and in a year from now, we're going to be very different than we are right now.

Can you imagine what would happen if we poured ourselves into making the most of our strengths? Can you imagine what would happen if we endeavoured to grow in our areas of less strength. Can you imagine what would happen if we committed ourselves to asking God to grant more grace upon us. Does that get you excited? Does that get you dreaming? Does that get you fired up about what might be? It could happen. Because God blesses his church and we work here.

We're going to continue our series again next week.