

COMMUNITY

IS OUR MIDDLE NAME

Connect

What is something (a skill, food, instrument, item, etc.) that is good on its own, but is great when paired with something else?

Review

Take a couple of minutes to review some of the main ideas from the sermon:

1. **The Ascension of the King.** The world is broken because the wrong king is on the throne, but Jesus descended into the depths to rescue us and ascended to take the throne humanity was meant to hold. He won that throne through humble, sacrificial service; going all the way down before going all the way up.
2. **The Giving of the Gifts.** Jesus gives each of us a gift, uniquely shaped for the part he wants us to play in what he's doing. You don't have someone else's gift, you don't earn yours, and you don't get to brag about it; you receive it, grow it, and use it to serve.
3. **The Equipping of the People.** The ministry of the church is not done by the pastors; it's done by you. Pastors equip, train, and develop you to use your gifts to serve the church. We each have a role to play.
4. **The Building of the Body.** The church is built not by programs, budgets, or pastors, but by ordinary people using the gifts Jesus has given them to show up, serve, care, and grow together. Jesus gives gifts to equip his people to build up the church.

Read Ephesians 4:7-12

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." 9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Make Observations: After reading Ephesians 4:7-12 out loud, give your group a few minutes to make observations on their own. Then go around the group and share the things you observed and discuss them.

Discuss

1. What does Jesus going all the way down before going all the way up reveal about the kind of King he is and the kind of people he calls us to be?
2. Pastor Clayton mentioned three questions to evaluate your giftedness – using these questions as a guide, what are your unique gifts? (*What comes naturally to you that doesn't come naturally to others? Where do you see bigger results than your effort? Where do people keep turning to you?*)
3. God has equipped you in a specific way for a specific purpose. How might your unique gifts be used to shape the way you serve others and partner with God in his work in our world?
4. Do you currently have a role in the leadership pipeline (member, leader, coach, director, senior leadership)? If so, what would it look like to grow deeper in that role?
5. As a group, take some time to honor one another. Reflect on the unique gifts you see in each person, then write down or verbally share encouragement about those gifts and how they help build up the group and the church.

Apply & Pray

Take a moment to silently reflect on what God wants you to do with your gifts.

Then, after reflecting, break up into smaller groups of two or three. Share your response to the question: What are you doing (or going to do) with your gifts?

Then, in your smaller groups, spend some time praying for each other to have the courage, the capacity, and the desire to use your gifts to do the assignment God has given you to do, to join him in his work.