

A Royal Priesthood 2

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the priesthood of every believer and the need for local leadership within the church community.

Duration: 48:11

Scripture: Acts 14:1, 1 Corinthians 14:26

Topics: "Royal Priesthood"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that the church is not just the hour-long service, but also the fellowship and ministry that happens before and after. He encourages the congregation to be a unique and special people of God, rather than trying to be like every other church. The speaker highlights the importance of every member of the church functioning and contributing, comparing it to the functionality of the human body. He also mentions the need for pastors to equip and empower the church to function on their own, allowing individuals to grow and fulfill their roles.

Transcript

Chapter 13, Acts chapter 13, oh sorry, Chapter 14, Acts chapter 14. And we're continuing to speak about the New Testament Church and I want to conclude the general introduction today, dealing with the priesthood of every believer and then from next week we'll begin to speak about specific ministries and specifics of the operation of the church. Now Acts chapter 14 and we'll read the first seven verses and then from verse 21 onwards again.

Acts chapter 14 and Paul is now on his mission journey, his first mission journey as it is known and it says, It happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude, both the Jews and the Greeks, believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was also bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

But the multitude of the city was divided, part sided with the Jews and part with the apostles. And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lysenia and the surrounding region, and they were preaching the gospel there. Verse 21, And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the

disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.

So when they had appointed elders in every church and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. And after they passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia, and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. And there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And so they stayed there a long time with the disciples. Now I'm going to just cover a little bit of the ground that we dealt with in answering questions on Wednesday evening.

So those who were there will bear with me just the first five or ten minutes. I'm going to deal with that. Also those who are in the Spanish department, I would encourage you to listen to the tapes of the Sunday morning, because this morning we spoke about Saul, the first king of Israel.

And the cry of the people of Israel was, give us a king that we may be like all the other nations. And that has been the cry of the church ever since. All the churches always want to be like every other church, instead of being a unique people of God.

Remember the book of Peter says that you are a peculiar people. That peculiar doesn't mean funny. It just means different, a special people.

And we are special, and we are His people, and we are to be ordered and to be structured His way, not just the way everybody else. And there are all these fads that go on in the church. All the latest craze, and it changes virtually every year.

There's the latest thing. At the moment it's the purpose-driven thing. And it's been going for a little while, but that is busy changing too.

And there's the next wave that is coming. And all the churches are constantly going with whatever is the latest craze, instead of saying, what does God want me to do? What does God want for this church? And let us structure ourselves and order ourselves according to God's way, and not according to man's way. And so the question which was raised, and which is I think in many folks' minds, is the fact that we emphasize the fact that there is the priesthood of every believer.

And we continue to emphasize that this evening. But the question then is about leadership. The Scripture seems to speak so much about leaders in the New Testament.

We read about Paul, and Peter, and Timothy, and Titus, and Barnabas, and all of these great men. But at the same time, it obviously mentions these men because of the great work that they were doing. It doesn't mention all of the hundreds, if not thousands of other people who were also doing important work.

And why I read that section is I want for you to see how this journey of Paul went. And we need to begin in Acts chapter 13, and just spend a few minutes in those first few verses. It says, in the church that was in Antioch, there were certain prophets and teachers.

Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Menean, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul. That's five, I think. And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

Then having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away. Now this was an exceptional church, the church of Antioch. It was a church that was sending people out into the field, and I pray that this could become such a church.

And it had five men who were either prophets or teachers. It doesn't tell us who was who. But of these five, Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Menean, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and of course Paul, those five were either prophets or teachers.

Now this was an exceptional situation. This was not the normal situation. The same way as Jerusalem was exceptional.

Remember, Jerusalem had 12 apostles in one church. You would never ever find, never again in the history of the church in the next 2,000 years after that, would you find 12 apostles in one church. In addition to those 12 apostles, you had other men like James, the Lord's brother, who was not one of the 12, but was a powerful leading brother, and other ministries that were operating in the church of Jerusalem.

And so from here they then sent these men and it says in verse 2, they ministered to the Lord and fasted. The Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. And they then began to embark on this mission journey.

This journey took them approximately two years, from AD 45 to AD 27. And in the process they visited at least eight places. You can read them in Acts chapter 13 and Acts chapter 14.

So there was about eight places, eight cities that they visited and that they preached in, and in many of those cities they established churches in a period of two years. Now the point is, how long did they spend in each one of those towns, each one of those cities? We don't know. It speaks of one of the places, I forget which one, it says they spent a long time there.

But a long time in the context of two years, and if you're visiting eight cities over that time, that averages out to three months. Three months average. And if they spent a long time in the one place, then that may have been six months or eight months or nine months at best.

And then you're not taking off the time it takes to travel from one place to the other, because they had to walk. Sometimes they would take a ship, but the rest of the time they would have to walk. And so I don't know whether half of that time was spent on the road.

And so at the very best, most of these churches got three months worth of preaching by Paul and John Mark at one stage, and he then left and Barnabas. Now, if we go to chapter 14, Acts chapter 14 in verse 21, let's read from verse 20. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up, this is after he'd been stoned, and went into the city.

And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the gospel to that city, that's Derbe, and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. These are three of the cities that they had already visited.

Remember when it mentions Antioch here, this is not the Antioch from which they have been sent. There are two Antiochs. And this is the city in Antioch that he's speaking about here, not where they'd come from.

So they returned to these three cities, verse 22, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God. Now verse 23, So when they had appointed elders in every city, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Can you see the picture? They preached in these places, maybe three months at a time, went on the rest of the journey, and then on the way back, came back past those cities, this is now maybe a year later, and they now appoint elders.

Those elders have been saved for how long? A year. On the odd occasion, there may have been people, and we know that there were people in some of these cities who had come from Jerusalem, who had got saved in Jerusalem, and were scattered when the church was scattered. So there may be the odd brother who had been saved for a longer time.

But most of these churches, certainly the churches themselves, were only been going for a year. And Paul appoints elders. Now that's very, very important.

A very important insight. Something which I have always struggled with. Because we spend years and years in the church, and we still cannot appoint elders.

Now it's either because God has failed to give us elders, or because the church is not a church of God, it's a possibility, or because the men are not willing to serve, and are not sold out for the Lord. And that's a very sad thing. And of course the other option is that those of us who do have the responsibility to travel from place to place are not fulfilling our job in raising up those ministries and training and teaching elders.

That's the other possibility. But whatever it is, it's a sad state of affairs. That you can have churches that have been going for ten years, and you still cannot leave that church in the hand of elders, because you have to bring somebody from outside to keep the church going.

And this is no indictment against this church and its history. We understand that this is a different situation. But here you can see that Paul does not send a message to Jerusalem, or to Antioch, and say, now I have all of these churches we've established, we need pastors for these churches.

Please send us men who can pastor these churches. No, they go back to those churches, and amongst those brethren, they find those men who had now automatically taken a leadership position, and they ordained them as the elders. Now one of the reasons why elders do not manifest themselves, if we can use that word, why we don't see the elders raised up in churches, is because of the one-man ministry.

As we said last week, that if my salary, and my ego, and my position is dependent on you, then I'm going to make sure that you are always needing me. That you can't do anything without me. And if anybody begins to prove some kind of ministry in the church, I'll put that down.

I'll make sure that that person is either discredited, or discouraged, or something, but just so that I'm never threatened. Unfortunately, that's the reality. But our job is not to do that, our job is to raise up ministries within the local church, and to trust the Lord, and to trust them, because at the end of the day, it's not my work.

It's not my church, it's not any individual's church, it's the church of Jesus Christ. And he said, I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And that's a step of faith that Paul was able to say, I've preached to these guys for three months.

I trust the Holy Spirit to keep them, to keep them safe, to keep them from falling away, to keep them from error, to keep them from all of the stuff that comes against Christians and against the church. I trust the Holy Spirit, and I can go along, go away, and I can go to the next place. Now that's after three months.

God give us grace that we may maybe take three years, or whatever it's going to take in modern context, to be able to bring churches to a place where we can say, you're on your own now. And it's under those conditions that men are raised up, that men begin to function, and begin to do the job. You know, you can work with a motor mechanic as much as you like, and pass the tools, and wipe the tools, and do all of that sort of stuff.

But until he leaves you alone and says, there's the engine, strip it and fix it. It's only then you're going to learn to really do it. And you know, you can watch, learn, you know, you can watch anything.

You can watch somebody drive a motor car for your whole life, and still not be able to drive until you get behind the wheel. And you have to, you have to do it. And so, this is just the practicality of how these things work.

All right, I mentioned last time that we were going to look at, very quickly, at the weaknesses of the clergy-laity system. The weaknesses of the system, and we've touched on some of these things. It places one man in a position above all others in the assembly.

It elevates one. Now Jesus said, you're not to be great, or seek for greatness. You're not to seek that first position or the prime seats, but you're to be servants, one of the other.

It allows one man's gift and bias to dominate. Now that's just the reality. I am a teacher, and if I'm the only one who's ever going to do anything in this church, all you're going to get is teaching.

But you don't just need teaching, you need other things also. You need encouragement. You need exhortation.

You need the ministry of a prophet. You need pastoring, shepherding. I'm not a very good shepherd.

You need deaconing. Somebody needs to do the material things around. There are many other things that we need, and one man cannot do all of those things.

You know the saying, a jack of all trades and a master of none. And unfortunately, most modern day pastors are exactly that. They're a jack of all trades.

They can do a little bit of this and a little bit of that, but they really do nothing particularly well. Now the emphasis in the New Testament is, let me do what I can do, and you do what you can do. And if each one does his part, then we have the best of both worlds.

We have the best of everything that each one can bring. You see, when we go out looking for a pastor, for a leader of a church, everybody wants a five-talent preacher. Remember, Jesus spoke about the talents, and he gave to one man five talents, and to another one, two, and to another one, one.

Now every one of us has one, and I'm going to come to the Scriptures for that in a moment. Every one of us has one talent. But when it comes to a preacher, well, we want the best we can get.

We want a five-talent preacher. We don't want a two-talent preacher. We want a five-talent preacher.

So we go out, and there are ways in which they do it. There are Internet websites, and there are agencies who will find you a pastor. Or if you want a church, you can go there, and they'll help you find a church.

And you put your qualifications down. He's got to be a good teacher. He's got to be a good prophet.

He has to be a good apostle. He has to be a good evangelist. He has to be a good administrator.

He must be a good painter. He must do bookkeeping and a sweeper and all of the other stuff. So we have all of the list, and we want a five-talent.

Now, folks, the reality is there are not many five-talent men out there. There are very few of them. And if we did a search, and we found a five-talent man, and we brought him in here, and we said, now, brother, here's your salary.

Here's whatever it is. Here's the Bentley. Do the job.

You still have how much? You have five talents. That's all you've got. And he's an exceptional man.

You're probably not going to find many of those. But if each one of us brought out one talent, then how much would we have? Fifty or a hundred. And each one of us has one talent.

So what is more, fifty or five? And yet most churches are very happy if they can just get the five. When, in fact, we could have the fifty. And so let's just do a little bit of the math.

And let's just try and figure out, you know, what is better, five or fifty? But unfortunately, too many people are fooled into believing that the five is what it's about. It's not about the five. It's about the fifty talents, every one of us just bringing out one talent.

And so it prevents the fleet. It allows one man's gift to dominate. It prevents the free flow of other gifts in the church.

And so it stops others from making their contribution, which may be more appropriate and more of a blessing at the particular time than that which one individual may be able to bring. It stops the development of other ministries, as we've said. Because if I'm going to do everything all the time, then nobody else is going to learn to do anything.

Nobody else is going to take responsibility to do anything. And no one else is going to develop. And that's why it's necessary sometimes for those in leadership to move on so that the church can continue.

It creates the impression that the professionals can do everything better than the lay people. That's something which is very prominent in America. The idea that the preachers are the professionals and that the rest of the people are the lay people and that the professionals know how to do it and the lay people really know very little.

Now, the gifts that God gives to those who are full-time in the ministry and those who are not full-time in the ministry are exactly the same gifts. And so, to say because he is full-time, that he is professional, he's

been to seminary or Bible school, he knows what to do, how to do it. You know, most of these men in the New Testament never went to seminary.

Now, I don't have a problem with theological education. I believe it's important. But I don't believe that that makes a preacher.

And I don't believe that that makes an effective member who contributes his particular gift or his particular ministry. These are not skills you can learn in the Bible school. The Bible school doesn't teach you these things.

These are things that you can learn only in the local church. And so, the free flow of gifts, the professionalism, makes believers completely dependent on the clergy for all their spiritual input. We spoke about that last week.

People are built around a man, his gifts and personality, instead of the Lord Jesus. Very, very, very serious. It inhibits the leader's own freedom as a servant of the Lord by tempting him to seek to please those that are paying his stipend.

Very serious. It's not only a problem for the church. It's a problem for the preacher or for the pastor who is in that full-time job and who we look to for everything, because now he has to do something that he is not gifted to do and that he's not being called to do.

Many years ago, when I was a young man, I went into the ministry when I was 20 years old. I started preaching when I was 16. And I went into the ministry when I was 20.

And then, later on, when I was about 24, 25, I left the full-time ministry. Because people were expecting me to do things that I was not gifted to do. Here was this 24, 25-year-old kid expected to solve grown-up people's problems, to deal with elders who've been in the church for 20 years and 30 years and were half-blackslidden.

I was not equipped to do those things. I was not gifted to do those things. And yet, I was expected to do them because I was the pastor.

I said, I will not do this. I will do what God has called me to do. I will preach.

And so, I left the full-time ministry and I took a job. And I held down a job for, I don't know, 25 years. And I preached more than most full-time preachers preach.

Average of 10 times a week I taught and preached. Because that's what God called me to do. And so, it is incredibly restrictive and restraining on the man that you put in that position and you expect him to be this jack-of-all-trades and the man who does everything.

And then, finally, it obscures the truth of the headship of Christ. Because, yeah, we believe that he is the head of the church, but really, at the end of the day, the pastor is the head of the church. And, you know, we can believe the theory, but it's the practice that is the issue.

All right, those are some of the problems. Now, let's speak about the issue of every member. Because I think that there is a problem in our minds.

We say, but, you know, does it really mean every one of us? Does everyone really have some part to play in the church? And the answer is yes. The word in the New King James, which I use, the word eat is used 35 times in the context of our responsibility to the church, to the body of Christ. That word eat, 35 times it says each of you.

Each. 79 times it uses the word one another. One another.

Again, in the context of our responsibility to the church. Suppose the one that we best know is love one another. Is that a responsibility? Is that a job? Is that a ministry? Yes, it is.

If that's not present in the church, we have something very seriously missing. And some of us are better at loving than others. Some of us are a little bit intellectual, a little bit straight up and down, legalistic, whatever.

We need others who are loving, who can bring a balance. And so 79 times the New Testament speaks about one another. Now, on the average, these are very, very important things.

If you think how many times does it speak about breaking bread? I haven't counted it, but it's probably five, six, maybe seven times at best. And yet, 79 plus 35 times it speaks about each and one another. This is an important message that flows right through the New Testament.

Let's just have a look at one or two of those. 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 11. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Distributing to some, each one, each one. So the Spirit, and I believe what the Bible says, it says that the Spirit, obviously the Holy Spirit, is distributing or giving out to everyone as He wills. Very important.

That's one of the problems. But Lord, you know, I want to be the painter. And the Lord says, no, I don't want you to be the painter.

I want you to be the mechanic. And I say, no, Lord, that's not the job I want. So I'm not going to do anything because what I want is I want the mechanic, the painter's job.

And that's the problem. Everybody wants to be the preacher. And the preacher wants to be everybody else.

But the gift we have is as He wills. It's not something I can will. It's not something I can say, Lord, I want this job or that job.

Or, you know, I think it would be great if you made me this or that or the other thing. You can only be what God chooses for you to be. It's His choice.

It's His decision. The best I can do is recognize what God has given me. And this is very important.

And I trust that by the end of the series, we'd be able to come to some kind of understanding and say, this is where I fit in. Let me just do what God has asked me to do. Remember the Old Testament, what your hand finds to do.

Do it with all your might. Now, we'll speak about that. I don't want to get sidetracked on that.

1 Corinthians 14, verse 26. How is it then, brethren, whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

Again, each of you, not the pastor and the worship team, each of you has a contribution to make. Now, we understand that not all of those contributions are necessarily public. If we have 50 people in the congregation, there is just not enough opportunity for 50 people to participate.

But remember that our meetings together is not just what happens from 6 o'clock until 7 o'clock. It's also what happens before and after we dismiss here. As we talk to one another in the hallways and as we talk in the parking lot and we have fellowship.

Often times, a lot more real ministry goes on in the parking lot or should go on in the parking lot than it goes on in the church. As we just talk to one another and we advise, we counsel and we minister to one another. But we have this mindset that the church begins at 6 o'clock when we open the service and it ends at 7 o'clock and that's where the whole thing happens.

No, that's not where the whole thing happens. Alright, Philippians chapter 2 and I've just selected four of these over a hundred verses. Philippians chapter 2 and verse 4. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests but also for the interests of others.

Each of you. So when we come together, what should we be doing? Looking out for the interests of others. How can I bless somebody else? How can I help someone else? How can I care for somebody else? How can I minister to somebody else's need? But you know the problem is we come and we go away and we say, well, I got nothing out of that service.

Why? Because I've come with the attitude of looking for my own interests. But Paul says I should not be coming looking for my interests, I should be coming looking for somebody else's interests. And that should really be on our hearts as we come to the meetings, as we come together.

It's not come to say, well, what can I get out of it? But Lord, how can I make some contribution? And the contribution is not just putting money in the plate. And the contribution is not just keeping the seat warm. It's far more than that.

And you know, I trust that somehow we can get this vision where we say, we're going to meet together tonight. And we're not going to hear what the preacher has to say. We'll hear that.

But I'm going to look to be a blessing to somebody. To speak to somebody. To pray for somebody.

To just shake somebody's hand and be a blessing. Look, each of you, each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. You see now, while we have elders and we should have elders and there are pastors and we'll speak about those.

Can you imagine when somebody comes in amongst us? A stranger comes in amongst us. And 50 people are around him. I mean, I know it can be a little bit overwhelming.

We don't want to scare them off. We don't want to get too heavy. But at the same time, if that person goes away and says, I don't know who the pastor is in that church.

But certainly they are a loving people. I can see that they care for me. And they care for one another.

Why? Because they see a shepherding of one another. A caring for one another. A ministering to one another's needs.

Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 16. Now remember, Ephesians 4 does not just deal with the fivefold ministries as they well know in verse 11. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

Ephesians 4 deals with the church. Most people think Ephesians 4 only deals with those ministries. One of those verses deals with those ministries.

The rest of it deals with the church. Then verse 16. From whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies.

Now I know the translations are very different on this verse. But they all have the same basic sense. What is it that knits the church or the body together? What is it that joins the body together? A powerful charismatic leader? No.

What every joint supplies. My body is reasonably healthy not because I have a good heart or strong kidneys. My body is reasonably healthy because every part of my body is reasonably functional.

Now if one part of my body says I'm going to take a vacation tonight. My lungs say well you know we need a break. We've been sucking air all this time.

I'd be in serious trouble. Every other part of my body all 200 pounds or whatever it is may be functioning perfectly. But if that one part of my body says I'm on strike.

We've got a problem. And yet the body of Christ comes together and 80% of the members are on strike. And we wonder why the church is not this wonderful place that it's supposed to be.

Oh but it's the pastor's fault. You know he's not really up to scratch. From whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies.

You see it's not about what I can get out of it. It's what I supply. I don't know what your translation says but that's what this one says.

It's what every joint gives, what every joint supplies. And my job is not to get out of it. My job is to put in.

But as I put in, as I supply, others supply my need. You know if my kidneys start saying well we've got to start looking out for ourselves. When the rest of the body stops ministering and supplying the kidneys with blood and I don't know all the stuff.

I've got to be careful here I'm on dangerous ground. Bernardo is going to correct me in a minute. But you know when the rest of the body begins to say we're not supplying any of the needs for the kidneys because the kidneys aren't supplying our need.

Then you've got problems. You've got serious problems. And so there is a supplying and there's a receiving.

There's a giving and a receiving. And so as I give I receive. And what I give and what I receive are two different things.

What the kidneys give and what they receive are two different things. And so we have this balance. That's the way that the body operates.

Now the emphasis in the New Testament is on different ministries. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and chapter 14 emphasizes that we are not all the same. That my body has different members.

And you know when we look at the body that Paul draws that comparison with you'll see that the body is amazingly different. Not even my two index fingers look exactly the same. Part of it because I cut the one up in a machine but even if I didn't they still wouldn't look exactly the same.

Not one of us here has the same fingerprints. Not one of us here has the same eyes. And this is the newest technology that they're identifying people by the irises.

Because that's even more unique or as unique as the fingerprint is. We're all different. And God makes us different.

Of course man wants to make everything the same. The military is good at that. When you come in you have to lose your identity.

You shave your mustache, shave your beard, cut your hair. Everybody cuts their hair exactly the same. Everybody wears the same uniform.

Because we all have to be the same. That's the way the world does it. But God's way of dealing with us is he makes us different.

That's what makes the church strong. That's what makes the church rich. The problem is that we have difficulty with that difference.

And so we all want to look the same. We all want to be like the pastor. I was in a denomination where everybody preached like the man who started that denomination.

And you could see one of those men if you never come across them in any other place. You hear them preach. You can say, I know where he comes from.

But God doesn't want us to be copies of one another. And you will never, praise God, you will never be like me. And I will never be like you.

And none of us will ever be like Billy Graham. Or like somebody else. Each one of us is different.

Each one of us is unique. Now while the New Testament gives us different ministries and it says there are apostles. And we said that there are about 22 different gifts that are mentioned in the New Testament.

Not even two of those gifts are exactly the same. So there's no stereotype. I can't give you a picture and say to you, this is what an elder looks like.

Because there is no such thing as a classical elder or the elder model. And all elders look exactly the same. Because every one of them is different.

In the New Testament you have, I've forgotten now, about 15 or 16 men who are named as apostles. And yet none of them are the same. Peter and Paul, probably the most prominent of the apostles.

And I'll get to that idea in a moment. Look how different they were. One was a fisherman.

The other one was a learned scholar, a rabbi. One preached to the Jews, one preached to the Gentiles. They were different.

They had different personalities, they had different gifts. And so every one of the ministries that you find in the New Testament is different, even if they have the same classification. In other words, if they're apostles or they're teachers, no two teachers will ever teach exactly the same.

No two pastors will ever shepherd exactly the same. And that's what makes the church rich. Why do we have fruit salad on Sunday mornings? Because it's better than just having an orange.

Do you have a little bit of orange and a little bit of strawberry and a little bit of mango and whatever else is in there? A little bit of apple. It's the variety that makes it rich and makes it strong. In our diet, we would die very quickly if we only ate menudo every day.

We need the vegetables and we need the meat and we need the starch and we need all these different things. And that's what the body of Christ is about. It's about giving us a balance and a richness of all of the things that we need.

And so each ministry is different. And we can go to many, many scriptures to prove that. But Paul goes, and this is his theme in 1 Corinthians 12, and he says that the eye is not the hand.

They are different. And yet they are still part of the body. And they are equally necessary and equally important for the functioning of the body.

But then there's also what I call a different measure. Measure in the sense of size. Different measure.

Now, again, we would have to go to a number of scriptures, but there are at least four scriptures that give us this idea of different measures. Now, Timothy was an apostle in my understanding. Paul was an apostle.

But was the measure of Paul's ministry the same measure as Timothy's measure? By no means. Paul established many, many churches. He wrote most of the New Testament.

Timothy may have established a few churches. He certainly would have had to be able to be listed as an apostle. He wrote none of the scriptures.

And yet Timothy is an apostle and Paul is an apostle. They have different measures. And so you may have two elders.

One has a great measure to meet with many people, to shepherd many people, to give a lot of advice and a lot of counsel. And you may have another one who has a smaller measure. He is still an elder.

But he doesn't have the capacity that the other one has. But what we say is, no, you know, that brother is inferior because he doesn't have the same measure as this one. No, Timothy was not inferior to Paul.

Peter was not inferior to Paul. They were just different. They had different ministries.

They were different men and they had different measures. And so the giving of the talents is about that issue. One receives five, the other received two, and the other received one.

And the guy with the one said, you know, this is no good. I haven't got what he's got. I haven't got two.

I haven't got five. And you know what he did. And that's the biggest problem.

We look at our measure and we say, well, you know, I have a measure to be able to paint. But, you know, I can only paint one wall and brother David can paint five walls. So, you know, I'll just sit here and watch him.

No, let me bring my one talent. And the indictment against the man with the one talent was not because he had one talent, but because he took that one talent and he buried it. That was the problem.

And that is the problem with many, many churches. It's not the fact that there are so many people with one talents. The problem is that those one talents are being buried.

Whether by those people or by the hierarchy or by whatever. But at the end of the day, it's the same problem. So let me bring my one talent.

Let me not say because I don't have, because I cannot preach like Billy Graham. Or because I can't do something like that brother or like that brother. That's not the issue.

God has not called you to be like somebody else. He has not called me to be like Paul. Or like Timothy or like anybody.

He's asked me to be like who I am. And let me be that. Let me do that with all of my heart.

How are we on time? Five minutes. Time's up. All right.

Let me deal with this very, very quickly. I don't want for you to get the impression that we're talking about a democracy. Or mob rule.

What you have in the prisons right now is mob rule. The Bible is not about everybody doing their own thing. Paul is clear about that in 1 Corinthians 12, 1 Corinthians 14.

He says, yes, we're all different. But there is order. We can all speak, but only one at a time.

The gifts need to function within certain limitations. So it is not a mob rule situation. It's not where everything goes situation.

There are clear parameters within which we work. The churches we've emphasized on Sunday mornings, get the tapes, is a theocracy. It is ruled by God.

It's God who orders it. It's God who leads it. It's God who directs.

And it's God who empowers. A democracy is of the people, for the people, and to the people. Or by the people.

It's man-centered. And many churches try, when they read and they hear about the kind of stuff that I've been speaking about, they say, ah, that means it's a democracy. And they run their churches on a democratic principle, democratic basis.

They call it the congregational church style. The church is not a democracy. There are only two times, there's only once that you see a democracy in operation in the New Testament.

Any idea where that was? Sorry, in the Bible. Let me not confuse it. When they came to the promised land, they had a referendum.

They had an election. And they voted. And what was the vote? 599,998.

You got that? 599,998. Said, we will not go into the land. Two said, we will go.

Guess who was right? The two. That's the one occasion where we read about a democracy. Now, I'm not speaking about the government.

I'm not speaking about national politics. That's a different matter. But the church is not a democracy.

And when you look at the church in operation in the New Testament, the only time it gets close to a democracy was when deacons are appointed. Because Peter says, seek out amongst you men of honest report that we can appoint over these affairs. But notice what happened.

It was not the people coming to Peter and saying, we need to appoint deacons. But the apostles said, we will appoint deacons. You select the men, we will appoint them.

The appointment was still a responsibility of the apostles. That is the only time, and it's the only ministry, and I'll deal with that and the reasons for that when we get to that ministry. It's the only time when the people have a say in the appointment of ministries.

For the rest of the time, those ministries are appointed by God through ministry that is already in operation. In other words, apostles appoint elders. Elders will appoint further elders in the local churches.

Local pastors and teachers and prophets, as in the case of Antioch, will send out ministries to the other churches. It's never a democratic process. Now, I know that that will raise more questions, but we've run out of time, and we'll deal with that after we close the tape.

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