

97-03-16b

Okay, we're ready now to resume with this question that I afflicted you with before the break. What does it mean when it says that as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith? We have to take a look at this from Greek just briefly, and at the end of verse 3 here we have the word for each, which is hekasto, for each, as the God, Hotheos, has divided, and that's merizo that we looked at at the end of the previous lesson, and then it says a measure, which is metron, and then we have pisteos, which is our genitive from pistis, it's a measure of faith. So he says we not think more highly than we ought to think, we should think reasonably, logically, with wisdom, according to the measure of faith which God has assigned to us.

Now what, of course there's a book by J. Gresham Macon called What is Faith, and that's the question I'm about to ask, what is faith? We know, if we think through the things that we've learned, we know that faith is not just scrunching up and hoping that everything will be alright. Unbelievers can do that in the midst of disasters and unforeseen losses and so on. We see this on the news all the time, bereavement, senseless murders and so forth, family members are interviewed, and well, we've formed a support group and we've formed an organization to help other people that have had the same problem and good is coming out of this.

Anybody can have that sort of, well, every cloud has a silver lining type of thing. Faith is more than that, there's more substance to faith than that, because faith is the substance of things that we expect. It is the proof, the evidence of things that are not seen.

People in this life and in these circumstances, they're looking for some sort of a payoff, some sort of an action-reaction type of thing, well, I've got a big deficit here, but there ought to be a plus coming on out of it. Our faith goes beyond the seen to the unseen, and we say, I may be enduring circumstances here, but this momentary light affliction is not worthy to be compared with what? With the glory that is about to be revealed, and our future expectation reaches out of the seen and out of circumstances and out of time to the future that God has promised, the future that God has placed before us, and that's hope. That's faith and hope, and that's the motivation and the means by which we have genuine love.

We have love that doesn't mind taking a hit, that doesn't mind making a sacrifice, that doesn't mind enduring with something that's not fair and that's not right, something that God has measured out to us by way of circumstance or by way of contact with people, and we think, well, why did I get this? Why is my lot in life this way? And instead of focusing on the problem and looking across the fence at the guy that didn't get that measured out to them, we look ahead and we say, God had this as a part of His plan. He has uniquely portioned out to me this measure, and this is the arena of faith. When we face a circumstance, when we deal with people, when we have issues in our own nature, our own background, our own history that continue forward to the present, we don't turn to what's the latest thing they can prescribe for me, how can they elevate my dopamine levels and play with my serotonin and get my brain to function in an abnormal

manner for me.

We say, where is the plan of God? What is the purpose of God? What is my calling? And where is the power that God has provided me to fulfill that calling? If this difficulty is interfering with my growth, if it's something that is an obstacle to fulfilling God's call, God has provided the power to overcome it. All I have to do is find it. That's faith.

Our faith, in other words, when we say, what is faith? Faith is the trust and the belief system and the landscape in our mind that determines how we're going to act in the given circumstance if we're living the life of faith, if we're seeking righteousness by faith. And so when Paul says here, don't think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, this is the biggest obstacle to functioning correctly in a set of circumstances. Our pride kicks in, our ego kicks in and we say, why me? I deserve better than this.

I shouldn't be dealt this hand. I should have been dealt four aces and four kings and four queens. I should have been dealt all the face cards here and instead I've got a handful of twos and threes and no two of them match.

I've gotten a raw deal. I deserve better than this. I'm as good as that person and they're not facing what I'm facing.

And we're thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. God has dealt out to each one of us a measure for faith, a measure of faith. This is the lot in life where our faith doesn't function in somebody else's circumstance.

Our faith functions in what God has dealt to us. That's the measure. And we'll see that as we go through this section.

Because he goes on to say, as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we being many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. Remember the idea of merizo, that you take a portion of something and allocate it to someone and it's part of a larger whole? We're members of one body. The body of Christ has a function to fulfill, has a calling, has a role, has a destiny, has a position in Christ, has an opportunity in this age that the Israelites didn't have and that the pre-flood people didn't have and that the patriarchs didn't have.

It's unique to us. And the body is performing this function in God's plan. Each of us are members of that body and so each of us is going to have a part of that mission and it's assigned to us.

It didn't get assigned to the foot, it didn't get assigned to the hand, it got assigned to us, wherever we fit in the body of Christ. And God has measured out to us this part of the mission for the body of Christ. What does Christ want to do? Think about your, hopefully, memory verses, that Christ desires to present to himself, what? A glorious church without spot or blemish or any such thing,

but that it should be holy.

I think it's without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. Well, what is a blemish when you look at a body? You can have a beautiful face and then you've got this dark red birthmark in just one little place. Well, that's a blemish.

And only one little part of the body didn't turn out right, didn't do its job, but it blemishes the whole face, right? Well, each of us has been measured out our function and our role in the body and when we fail to see our calling and when we fail to get with the program, we're not just affecting ourselves and saying, well, I can handle whatever divine discipline comes my way, I'm not too worried about whether I'm a bright star or a dim bulb in the eternal future. We have to remember we are members of a body and the body has a mission and when we fail the grace of God, when we fail our calling, we're not just hurting ourselves, we're part of a body. It only takes one member of a unit to fail to do their job and the whole unit can suffer for it, whether it's civilian or military or whatever you want to think of.

You've got a big team of people who make sure that an airliner can fly from Dallas to Houston. Huge team of people, guys that serve the food, guys that check the brakes, guys that refuel. One guy fails to do his job and the whole airliner can suffer for it.

People may have no food or a wheel may fall off. You saw on the news this past week where a plane was landing at DFW, somebody hadn't tightened up the lug nuts on one of the wheels on the landing gear. And so when the plane came down, the wheel bounced off and they had a picture of it leaning up against the fence there.

One guy didn't do his job and it endangered a whole airliner full of people. And those things don't just fall off. Somebody failed, they had it off, they stuck them on hand tight and never did go back and tighten them up and they came off.

So we have to see ourselves not only in terms of our individual relationship with God, but as members of a body. And Paul spends two verses here emphasizing that. And he's emphasizing it in the context of presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice, of being transformed by the renewing of our minds, of not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.

This is the biggest problem anytime you're trying to get a team going or get a unit going, isn't it? Is that one person is only thinking of themselves and they're not thinking of their fellows. Somebody is supposed to go out and lob the grenade into the machine gun nest so that the rest of the fire team and the rest of the squad can advance. And the guy says, well, I might get shot, I'm not going to go up there.

Well, the whole unit suffers as a result because somebody's thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think. They've got to think of themselves in terms of the role they play as a part of a larger thing. And that's why Paul uses marizo here.

God has, he sees us as a part of the body and he's apportioned us a particular function in the body. And it's our goal to fulfill that. And this is where the measure of faith comes in.

Have you ever noticed that, I have noticed this, that I know many guys who have gone to seminary. I know many people, both men and women, that have spent years studying the Word of God. And almost anyone you talk to, you find out that there are certain areas that they've really studied in depth that appeal to them and they thought about it more, they did more work on it.

And sometimes you don't always quite agree or you don't understand why is that person really emphasizing this one thing more than another. And I have very good friends, very dear friends who are pastors. And sometimes when we get together and compare notes, you find it, well, this person is really going down this particular road of study and it is meaningful, it's making a difference in his life and in the things that he communicates to his congregation.

And I understand it and appreciate it, but I've got something in my mind that's stimulating and that I want to pursue and that I communicate as the main thing at that particular time. Well, why is that? Why, if we're studying out of the same Bible, shouldn't we all be having the same emphasis and the same focus? And you listen to one faithful guy, he should sound very similar to this other faithful guy. But it isn't that way, is it? And why is that? Because each person has been measured out a measure of faith.

They've got a congregation, they've got an area, and God has built that particular person to follow that path and to excel in that particular area. And their understanding and their faith and their application of that so that they know that truth inside out enables them to function and apply that truth in their allotted circumstances. They need that truth for their particular row that they're hoeing.

Somebody else is hoeing a different row and God's going to apportion them the truth and the perception and opportunity to make it the object of faith that applies in their circumstance. And Paul emphasizes that. He says, look, you're part of a body and the members all have different functions.

So don't look and say, well, I've got an emphasis here and that person over there's got a different emphasis. I need to change and become like that person or that person needs to change and become like me. We don't think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.

We don't think that, well, I need to make everybody into an elbow because that's what I am. Some people have a gift of evangelism and it's a wonderful thing, but they feel led to make everybody else into an evangelist and we're not all evangelists. You might think of that as the mouth, the speaking part of the body and that's a wonderful thing, but if the whole body's a mouth, you're going to have one of my daughter Rebecca's nightmares.

She has bad dreams about just this giant mouth chasing her around the house which I'd really

like to see if I could. But obviously, it is a distortion. Each of us has been given a measure of faith and he's talking about the arena for the application of faith here.

Now, I'd like to notice I've written on the board here the structure of this passage and I've got verse 3 up here at the top and I've just given you the beginning and the end of this verse. For I say through the grace given to me, that's where Paul starts and he ends by saying, as God has apportioned to each one a measure of faith. Now, do you notice anything about the beginning and ending phrases there? God has given me grace and I'm urging you to think reasonably as God has apportioned to each one a measure of faith.

God has given grace to me for communication. He's put this word on my tongue to communicate to you. Paul says, look, God has apportioned something to you also.

Each one of you, each and every one of you that's a member of this group, God has apportioned to you a measure of faith also. And there's a parallel between the grace given to me and the measure of faith given to you. And it threads on down through this passage.

He talks in verse 4 and 5 about us being many members of one body as we've just discussed. But look at verse 6. He says, okay, having then gifts that differ according to the grace that is given to us. You begin to see a pattern of repetition here.

Paul says, look, each of us has a calling. Each of us has an allocation, a part of the whole that belongs to the body of Christ. God gave grace to me.

God has apportioned a measure of faith to you. As God has given grace to each one, differing grace to each one, let us function. And then he's going to give a list of seven different functions that are representative of the kinds of things that different believers have been allocated, different areas of function, different spheres of faith.

Somebody who's operating in exhortation or in teaching is going to have a different emphasis perhaps and be the master of a different portion of the Word of God that's meaningful and applicable in their lives compared to someone who's a leader or someone who's engaged in mercy or giving or prophecy, whatever it might be. And he says, look, everybody's got a different allocation and God has given you a measure of faith. Don't spend your time trying to get somebody to think exactly the way you do or emphasize the very same things that you do.

Don't elevate yourself up above where you are. Recognize your calling and function in it. And then he gives these.

And the vocabulary that he uses here is really to me quite fascinating. For example, he starts out here. He says, having then gifts that differ according to the grace that is given to us.

And then in English, you'll see that it's always in italics. It says, let us minister or let us do something, but it's not there. It just stops right here where I put the colon at the end of the line.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us if prophecy in proportion to our faith. And once again, we have this proportion of faith that reminds us of the measure of faith that God has allocated. What exactly does that mean? Well, first of all, this is, and anybody that's had any contact with seminary or read any scholarly things, certainly later you come across this phrase, the analogy of faith.

Well, this wild haired, strange teaching here, it doesn't conform to the analogy of faith. Well, this is where they get that because this phrase here that says prophecy in proportion to our faith, this is the word analogia, the word that's translated proportion. It's analogia.

We get analog from this. Analogous, analogy we get from this word. And so they come across and they say, well, you've got to stick with the analogy of faith.

If you're going to prophesy, prophecy has to be according to the analogy of faith, meaning I've got to be able to compare it to what I already know in the faith and it has to jive and not stick out. And that's a true principle, but that's not what Paul is emphasizing here. For example, this word is used in Leviticus in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of Leviticus, chapter 27, verse 18.

And over in Leviticus, it's talking about, and this is a real convoluted section of Leviticus, it's talking about if you dedicate something to the Lord and then you want to redeem it back, what you pay the value of the thing plus a fifth part. And he says, well, if you do it on the day of Jubilee, then the full value is at stake and you just pay the full value. If you do it after the year of Jubilee, it is prorated according to how much time is left before the next year of Jubilee, because in the year of Jubilee, everything's supposed to revert back to who it belongs to.

And that includes things that people would dedicate to the Lord. And so what he says there is that word that says you'll prorate it out, when it came over into Greek, they used analogia. It's compared to, it's proportional to how much time is left.

So we have here, if you're going to prophesy, do it proportionally to our faith, in proportion to our faith. And of course we have the standard word for faith here, but what's he talking about? What are we talking about in this passage? God has given me a specific set of circumstances. He's given you a specific set of circumstances.

And if your particular gift, if your area of function is to hear, to prophesy, whatever your area of function is in the body of Christ, perform that in proportion to what you've been measured out, in proportion to your faith, your sphere of faith. Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. I'd say the easiest example to give is when someone goes to seminary to become a pastor and is trained and has the gifts and so forth, and God has a place for that individual in maybe a small church.

There's a church of people who are hungry, who have a certain set of circumstances to whom

that person can communicate effectively. Well now, that is the sphere. That's the allocated portion for that communicator to function in.

Well, here comes along a big opportunity and a huge grandiose thing, and oh, you'll have five underpastors and you'll have TV ministry and you'll have a blow dryer all your own and all this kind of thing. And he says, well, I'm going to function in this larger, greater, more grandiose arena. And oh, think of all the impact I'll have and so forth.

And there start to be other little motivations that creep in like, boy, I'll be well-known. And we keep saying, well, I'll really make a difference in that kind of thing. But it's out of proportion to what God allocated.

And we have to know what it is that God has allocated for us and not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. So if you are going to prophesy, prophesy in proportion to faith. What is faith in this context? It's the measure of faith that God has proportioned out.

It's the grace that has been given to us. God gave the apostle Paul a big measure. He's an apostle.

He's the apostle to the Gentiles. He writes inspired scripture. He founds churches.

He trains pastors. He defines the early church. There were other people in these churches, as we saw in Corinthians, who were trying to pump themselves up and be like Paul and say, well, I'm going to set policy and I'm going to teach doctrine and I'm going to write letters and I'm going to make an impact on people like Paul does.

And Paul says, these people are thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think. Not that Paul had greater quality, but God had given him grace and had measured out to him a sphere of function, a place for his faith to operate, a place for his application and gift to function. And you can't go jumping in and saying, I want to be like so-and-so.

I want their portion. We have to function according to the grace that is given to us. And the grace that's given to us circumstantially may be planning ourselves squarely at home and training children and performing domestic duties.

It may be being a solid citizen in terms of employment and participation in the community. It may be concentrated in the area of being a good spouse, being a good parent, being a good child of parents who need care or need assistance. That's the measure that God has measured, and that's the sphere for faith.

And so we function in proportion to that faith. God will make sure that we have communication of the Word of God that covers the principles and the promises and the doctrines that we need. We're listening to somebody and we really feel like we get benefit.

He's got a radio program or he's got tapes or he's got a book or he's got a church that we can attend locally. And that feeds me for my sphere of function. What God has apportioned to me, I get what I need to make it through my day.

And I'm content with that. And I don't think somebody says, oh, you know, you've got to do this and you've got to hear that and you've got to go here and there and the other. We function within that measured out portion of what God has given.

And we fulfill even our spiritual gifts in proportion to our faith, in proportion to that thing that God has allocated to us. And if you look at this, you can see that these things are all parallel all the way down. The grace given to me, Paul says, God has apportioned to each one a measure of faith.

Having these gifts that differ according to the grace that is given to us. Here's our area of function and here's that measure of faith. Whether in prophecy, in proportion to our faith.

People who have the gift of prophecy were teaching mystery doctrines before the canon of Scripture was complete. And it's interesting, in fact, that word canon showed up in the passage we looked at where Paul is telling the Corinthians, I'm not going to boast beyond measure, but God has allocated to me responsibility within an area. And that word for area is canon.

What are the defined limits of inspired Scripture? That's the canon. What are the defined limits of our faith? That's our canon. That's our assigned area of responsibility.

Military people know what happens if you transgress your area of responsibility. You've got a certain sector for which you're responsible. If you say, oh boy, that sector over there really needs some help.

I'm going to run over there and you leave yours undefended. The flank is unsecured or the center is weak or whatever else. We have to stick with our assigned function.

So he says prophecy according to the analogy, according to the proportion of what God has assigned us in the area of faith. We don't have to trust for somebody else. We don't have to trust too little or too much.

He goes on to say the area of ministry. This is diakonos. This is service.

And what grace has been given for service? Some of us have been graced with a lot of financial resources. That's a proportion of faith. That's the grace that has been given to us.

And we can function in proportion to what God has given us. Some of us have moderate means and we can minister moderately in that area. Some of us have been given the ability to serve in other ways.

Some people are really well organized. They duplicate tapes. They keep records.

They mail things and they're like clockwork. It always comes on the same day. There's a wonderful gal up in Tulsa that mails tapes to us from a pastor who's a dear friend of ours up there.

And she is as predictable as clockwork. You can count on it. They're always there.

She sends a note if she's going to be out of town. She tells us when a class was missed and we always know exactly where we stand in terms of hearing those tapes. And that's just her area.

That's the measure of faith that God portioned out to her. That's her sphere of function and she does it wonderfully. And her crown of glory for doing that is just as great as somebody who goes to the mission field and wins thousands of savages because that's what God measured out to her.

And with that coin that she was given by the Master, she has done what the Master asked. And it's a wonderful thing. In teaching, this is our standard word for teaching and in the area of teaching.

Some people are allocated teaching for children. Well, then, function according to the grace that's been given there. Take advantage of the resources that are available.

Be faithful. Be diligent in teaching children. Don't feel like, well, you know, I'm not really a teacher.

I only teach children. Or it's not the same as being a pastor and teaching a congregation. Or it's not the same as being Billy Graham or Charles Stanley or somebody way up there.

If God has measured out a few children to communicate with, that is every bit as important. It's a part of what the body of Christ is supposed to be doing. And it's just as important as any other member in any other part.

And we have to be just as diligent. Someone who's teaching children can't say, well, you know, if I was a pastor, I'd really have to study and dig and be prepared. But since it's just these few children, or somebody who's a pastor of a small church can't say, well, you know, there's just a few people.

It doesn't really matter if it's a great lesson or not. I'll just do a slapdash preparation. Somebody who's preparing for a few people should do just a diligent preparation as if he was going to be on national television and be going worldwide.

Because that's the measure of grace that's been given. It's the measure of faith that's been given. And each of us can look in our lives and see areas where God has given us responsibility.

Being a spouse, being a parent, being a child of parents who need care, being an employee, being a citizen, being a whatever it may be, whatever God has measured out to us, it's just as important as the most important thing you can think of in terms of the mission of the body of Christ. He who exhorts in exhortation, the one who gives with liberality. Now, this is a great one because people come to this all the time and say, well, you know, if you're going to give, give generously, give until it hurts, give sacrificially, and all this kind of thing.

And they'll come to this verse for support. But the word here is *metadidamy*. Now, *didamy*, D-I-D-O-M-A-Y, I think *didamy* is the root form.

This is the standard word to give. Someone *didamys* and someone *lombanos*. *Lombano* means you receive.

Didamy is to give. But this has got a prefix on it that is M-E-T-A, *meta*. And *meta* means that you're with something, that there's an exchange going on that involves you and somebody else.

And *metadidamy* doesn't just mean to give, it means to share. It means to share. This word is used, for example, in Romans 1-11, in the introduction to Romans, this book, when he says, I desire to be with you that I may share with you some spiritual benefit, some spiritual gift.

Paul can't allocate a spiritual gift to someone and hand it to them. He wants to share with the spiritual gift that he has. He's going to give them the benefit of that.

And so there's a bond of fellowship involved in this. It's not just simple giving. This word is used in 1 Thessalonians 2-8, when Paul says, you Thessalonians have shared with me in the Gospel.

We shared the Gospel with you. That is a wonderful passage because in terms of the definition of Gospel, when Paul talks about sharing the Gospel with them, he says, we taught you daily. We lived with you.

We let you see the example of our lives. We were sharing the Gospel with you when we did that. That's a reminder that it's church-age truth.

You can see it in Luke 3-11 when Jesus says, he who has two cloaks, let him share with another. It doesn't necessarily mean give it away and never see it again. He says, if you've got a spare and there's somebody in need, share it with them.

Let them use it until they get their own. Ephesians 4-28, let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands, so that what? So that he may share, have something to share with others. If he is diligent and works with his own hands, he will, instead of taking from people, be able to share with people.

And so, this isn't talking about just financial giving. This is talking about the one who shares, the one who has the opportunity to benefit others by sharing something with them, whether it's their

time, their finances, their skills, whatever it may be, their support, their presence. If you are going to share, and then it says, with liberality, and the word is not liberality either.

This is haplotēs, H-A-P-L-O-T-E-S. And even if you look in the lexicon, the lexicon will list as the second definition liberality or generosity, but it says this meaning is much in dispute and shouldn't be relied on as an accurate meaning of the word. Because the first meaning of the word is sufficient to explain all of the passages, and there's no reason to read into it generosity or liberality.

But haplotēs means singleness, single-mindedness, undivided motivation, undivided attention, no subterfuge, no strings, no hidden agenda, no duplicity involved. You're single-minded. You've got one thought and one heart when you do this thing.

When you're sharing with someone, your motivation is all together. You don't have a backup motivation. For example, one of the things that you often hear that I have often heard in churches today is because everybody is so sold on the idea that we live to evangelize, they'll say, well, you know, you need to make an impact in your community.

You need your presence ought to be felt in your neighborhood. So get out there and make friends with your neighbors and chat them up and find out what their hobbies are and invite them over for a picnic and so forth. And then you look around for an opportunity to slap the gospel on them.

What are you doing? Do you have a single heart and a single motivation when you're sharing your time and sharing your food with this person? You've got a double mind. You've got an agenda. It's like when the phone rings and you pick it up and someone says, hi, how are you today? And is everything going okay? And you think, what are you really getting at here? You're not just calling up interested in my welfare.

You're wanting to sell me siding or you're wanting to give me pest control or an alarm system or something. You want me to change my long distance service, aren't you? But there's this duplicity. There's a hidden underlying motive.

Paul says the one who shares with others, do it with only one thought in your mind. Do it in a single-hearted way. This word is used, for example, in Ephesians 6, 5 and Colossians 3, 22.

They're both parallel passages that talk about slaves serving their master. And he says, don't do it in a double-minded way. Don't do it, well, I'm doing this, but I'm really thinking something different.

Sometimes you see people complying and obeying and fulfilling things, but their heart's not in it and they're really thinking and grousing in their mind the whole time. Paul says, if you're a slave, don't do that. He says in Ephesians 6, 5, Bond servants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart as to Christ.

And that word for sincerity, sincerity of heart there, is haplotes, with a single heart. You're doing it all for one reason and it's because you want to glorify Christ. He says the same thing in Colossians 3, 22.

Again, he's talking to slaves and he says, Bond servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men pleasers. I'm going to do this and I'll get a benefit. This has a real nice name today.

It's called networking. Well, I'm going to give this person a call and chat them up and kind of keep my name in their head because they may be of benefit to me down the road. I don't want to lose touch with this person because they're influential.

They're helpful. They've got something I may need down the road. And so you call up and you have this disingenuous sort of contact where it's like, well, you know, I don't want to come right out and say, well, the main reason I'm calling you up is I want to use you for a reference here in a couple of weeks and I hope you remember me and I'm a nice guy.

He says don't do this with eye service as men pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. One motivation, one thought, one priority. I'm doing this because I believe it's my calling.

It's a part of my allotted portion. This word is used in 2 Corinthians 11.3. And you may want to turn to this and make a note because you'll see people quote this sometimes like, oh, you know, you don't need to really spend a lot of time in Bible study. You know, all of this complicated theology and you're taking notes and you're getting all heavenly minded and you're no earthly good and that sort of thing.

And they'll turn to this passage. They'll go to 2 Corinthians 11.3 and they'll say, I fear less somehow just as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. It's simple.

You don't have to get all this complicated. You don't have to have seven different kinds of baptism and three different deaths in the Scripture and all these different aspects of redemption and so forth. There's simplicity.

Your mind is being corrupted from this. You're getting puffed up with knowledge and so forth. Well, that's not what this says at all.

The word simplicity there is haplotes and it means single mindedness. It doesn't mean you're simple. It doesn't mean you're thick and that well, you know, I've got to have this all in monosyllables or I can't function.

He says, what happened to Eve? What did the serpent do to Eve in the garden? He divided her motivations. She had a motivation to please God, but she looked at the fruit. She saw that it was

pleasing to the eye, that it was desirable to make one wise and she started getting a mixture of motives here and she started thinking, well, you know, I can be like God.

She started thinking of herself more highly than she should have thought. And I'd like to know good and evil. God does.

And He got her down the track of mixed motives and that was the basis of the fall. And turn with me especially to 2 Corinthians chapter 8 because this bears directly on what we're talking about here. Look at chapter 8, verse 1. Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.

In a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. You say, oh, see, they gave a great big financial gift even though they were... Well, look, He says it was deep poverty that they had. They had deep poverty.

They did not make, the churches of Macedonia did not make a huge financial contribution to this collection that Paul was taking up for the needy saints. What they did do is what they gave was with a pure heart. It was a single-minded.

They had one thought and that was, here's an opportunity to minister. Here's an opportunity to be a benefit to believers who are in need. And that was their only thought.

They weren't trying to enhance their reputation. They weren't trying to say, well, you know, later on these guys will help me. He says they did it with an abundance of joy.

Even in deep poverty, they abounded in the riches of their single-mindedness, their single priority in giving. And this word occurs like three different times in this chapter and in its surrounding context. You can look in chapter 9, verse 11.

Now, may he who supplies in verse 10 of 2 Corinthians 9, may he who supplies seed to the sower, bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, for all haplotēs, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. And it means that they can have a pure motivation. They can understand the issues that these things came from God and that the exercise of ministry in this area glorifies God.

And that's their only thought. They don't say what's in it for me. They're not thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think.

This word is related to hop loose. And as one of our final passages this morning, turn with me to Matthew 6, and verse 22. Matthew 6, 22.

What does it mean to share with liberality? In this section of Matthew 6, Jesus says in verse 19, Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves

break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Live in the light of your hope.

Live in the light of your expectation. Don't be trying to gain things for yourself. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness. The word here for good in verse 22 is haplotes. It's not agathos or anything of that sort.

It's haplotes. If your eye is undivided, if it's undiluted, if it's pure, if you can see that laying up of glory in heaven that pleases God, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, there's a fascinating topical study you can do on the evil eye, the bad eye in Scripture.

We don't have time to do it this morning, but you can do a concordance study on eye just in the New Testament and get some wonderful insights into what it means to have a good eye or a bad eye. Jesus told the parable of the workers that started in the morning. He negotiated with them for a denarius, a day's wage to work all day through the hot sun.

Some people showed up at like five o'clock in the afternoon. He said, I'll give you a denarius also. And so when it came time to be paid, the individual... Well, this fact is right here in Matthew.

Just turn over to Matthew. Oh, I thought I had that written down, but I don't. Anyway, he says, why are you the master when he's paying out the denarius to the ones who only worked an hour? The others come up and at first they were happy with what they had been allotted, with what they had been apportioned.

But then they saw these other people that only worked an hour getting the same pay. And now they started thinking of themselves more highly. They said, well, we've worked all day through the hot sun and we deserve more.

And Jesus points out the fact, the master says, well, I negotiated with you for a denarius and you were happy. Why now are you giving me the evil eye? Why are you looking askance at me? Why is your eye divided now? And you're looking at these other people. Now you're not content anymore.

And it's called the evil eye. And it's related to this passage here where Jesus says, if your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. If you're undivided, you focus on the goal and you don't worry about what other people are doing, you're in good shape.

But finally, as our last passage, turn over to Matthew 10, 16. Matthew 10, verse 16. Jesus is sending out the disciples and He says, Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.

Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. I've always kind of scratched my head over this passage. I can understand what it means to be as wise as a serpent, but what does it mean to be as harmless as a dove? Don't give harm to anyone.

Well, this word for harmless is haplotes. Be as single-minded as a dove. And I thought, well, now wait a minute.

It doesn't mean to be single-minded like a dove. I thought the dove was a symbol of being flighty and so forth. And I've been told in seminary that the book of Jonah was named Yonah, which is the Hebrew word for dove.

And that Jonah bears that name because of his dividedness. He didn't want to do what God wanted him to do. And they said, well, it's symbolic of Israel.

Israel is flighty. They're fickle. They think about God sometimes, not others, and they're like a dove.

So I thought, well, there's obviously some disconnect here in my knowledge. And so I went and looked up doves in the Bible encyclopedia and all their characteristics and come to find out the word Yonah is a reference to what's known as the rock pigeon or this type of dove that was used for food and also for homing, message carrying. They were like homing pigeons.

And they were used from ancient, ancient times because people knew that when they turned that dove loose, it would always head right back to the same place. And it was single-minded in that. You could take it anywhere, tie a message to its leg, and it would go back where it came from.

It was very single-minded. And I got to thinking, if you just think about doves and pigeons in general, I mean, think about pigeons. What do they think of all the time? It reminds me of two dogs that my parents used to have.

All they ever thought of was food. It was just single-mindedness. Any context, any time, day or night, one of them nearly ate itself into oblivion when it got a hold of a loaf of bread and ate the whole thing.

Didn't matter how much it got. All it thought of was, I must eat. I live to eat.

And pigeons are that way. Look at people in the park. Pigeons will put up with anything.

They're not afraid. They'll come right up because all they're thinking about is food. They're very single-minded.

And so in two different aspects of their behavior, you see that it's not... Pigeons and doves aren't noted for their flightiness. They're noted for their single-mindedness. They always return to the place from which they came.

They've got one goal in mind. And once they get there, all they want to do is eat. All they want to do is find those breadcrumbs.

And so Jesus says, be as wise as serpents, but be as single-minded as doves. Don't be distracted. I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves.

Don't get distracted by the wolves. Don't get your motivation divided. Don't have your heart and your thinking divided.

Be single-minded. That's what Paul is talking about here, when we realize that we've been apportioned a sphere of opportunity. If we're someone who's been apportioned the opportunity to share, which many of us are, do it for one reason.

Don't be thinking in the back of your mind, well, this is going to help me in other ways and this is going to be good for other things. Maybe I can talk this person into something or maybe I can change them or maybe I can do this, that or the other. We have one thought in mind.

Here's an opportunity. It's within the sphere that God has apportioned to me. That's how I want to live.

I want to please God in this. Let the chips fall where they may. There may be no consequence from this, but as I do this, I do it as unto the Lord, just like the servant who's not a man-pleaser, not doing it for eye service, but as unto the Lord.

And to be a leader with diligence, to be merciful with cheerfulness. The word for cheerfulness there is *hilaros*, from which we get hilarity. And it doesn't mean to be slap happy when we're being merciful, but it means, have you ever been around someone who was mercifully doing something for you, but they were depressed at the same time and it was like a drudge for them and you almost wish they weren't helping you because their heart wasn't in it.

I mean, I have done that. I have grudgingly helped and it would have been better if I wasn't even there. If we're going to be merciful, we should be cheerful.

How can you be cheerful when you're rendering mercy? By being single-minded, by recognizing the proportion of faith that God has allocated, the opportunity that's there, doing it as unto the Lord in a single-minded way. And that's why in verse 9, Paul can continue and say, let your love be without hypocrisy. Don't have a love that's got a hidden agenda.

Don't love expecting something in return. Be single-minded. Abhor what is evil and cling to what is good.

We'll pick up there next week, but let's close here in prayer. Father, we thank You for the truth that's contained in Your Word. We thank You for the applications that we're seeing here in chapter 12 of Romans from all of the truths that Paul has communicated under the ministry of the

Holy Spirit to us.

We pray that these things will remain in our memory and become a part of our thoughts, that the Holy Spirit can use these things to motivate us and to stimulate our faith and our hope and our love, and that as a result, we will live a life that is conformed to the example of our Savior, that we will be transformed, that our minds will be renewed, and that our lives will be living sacrifices that are holy and acceptable in Your sight. We ask all these things in the name of our Savior. Amen.