Service

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, September 14, 2025
PASSAGES	Acts 20; Romans 12; 1 Peter 4; Matthew 25; Genesis 12; Daniel 1; Matthew 28
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:30:13 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

God gifts people deliberately, not generically, and he gives those gifts to be spent on other people. Serving is not a matter of being a slightly better-than-average person; it is an invitation into a worldwide purpose that God will accomplish either way, and that he is letting you contribute to.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Repentance, prayer, and now service — the through line is real choices that show whose kingdom you belong to. Thinking correct things about Jesus is not the same as following him.
- Gifts differ, and so do their measures. That is the design, not a defect, which makes comparing yourself to another part of the body senseless.
- No list of gifts in scripture is exhaustive. Yours may not be named anywhere in the Bible and still be from God.
- Prophecy is to be weighed, which means it has to be offered in a form that can be weighed — "I think God is saying" rather than "thus says the Lord."
- Real service is closer to emptying rain-filled trash bins in your Sunday clothes than to a ceremony. Jesus was doing an actual chore.
- Jesus tells you to serve people who cannot repay you — not because he is against reward, but because he intends to do the repaying himself.
- Abraham, Daniel and his friends were blessed and gifted toward a purpose that telescoped outward. The point was God's name, not their résumés.

- God will finish what he is doing with or without you. Your part is genuinely up in the air, and that is what makes the choice matter.

▶ 1:30:13

This message landed third in a short run on choices — two weeks on repentance and confession, one on prayer, and now on service. Matt's framing was that loyalty to Jesus is demonstrated, not merely believed: "It's important that we not just think the right things about Jesus. He wants us to follow him with our choices." And service will look different from person to person, which is exactly why we should not judge each other over it: "I don't need you, you're a nose. Who needs noses?"

A word about the week we were in

▶ 1:31:23

Before the text, Matt circled back to something he had left unfinished — a call to pray for the nation and against further political violence, in the days after Charlie Kirk. His practical counsel was about restraint online: if posting in a thoughtful, godly manner is more work than you can sustain daily, then post once every four days and mean it. "That'd probably be better than posting every day thoughtlessly."

More blessed to give

▶ 1:32:15

> "In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
>
> ACTS 20:35 ↗

That sentence of Jesus appears in none of the four Gospels, which sent Matt on a worthwhile detour. How do we know anything Jesus said? Through the apostles, who selected from far more than they recorded — John's gospel closes by saying the world could not contain the books. The same men gave us the rest of the New Testament. Jesus explained his parables privately to them on purpose, building an authoritative foundation so that, as Matt put it, "some yahoo out in the wilderness couldn't just

come out and say, 'Jesus said that I was something special and you got to listen to me.'" You could turn to Peter and ask.

And giving is not chiefly about money. Jesus handled money about once, through a fish, and multiplied food twice. Mostly he healed, encouraged, cast out devils, and taught. Mark 10:45 is the pattern: the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

Prepared beforehand

▶ 1:34:56

> "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."
>
> EPHESIANS 2:10 ↗

Which means you can reverse-engineer some of your calling from how God has already prepared the way and gifted you. "It's not just, I've called Christians generically to generic good works. It's more thoughtful than that."

One body, many functions

▶ 1:35:36

> "For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness."
>
> ROMANS 12:4–8 ↗

We belong to one another as a result of belonging to Jesus, who placed us in a body that is designed rather than ad hoc. Matt read the "measure of faith" of verse three forward into verse six: these are faith-related gifts, exercised in proportion to faith. He also noticed the company the list keeps — encouragement and mercy sitting right beside leading and teaching.

The list is not the limit

▶ 1:37:47

No passage in scripture lists every gift, and Matt is convinced yours may not appear in any of them. He offered the comedian Nate Bargatze as a case: stories that are not funny written down, and funny anyway. “I think it’s supernaturally funny. I think he’s gifted.” Prayer and hospitality are things every Christian is called to, and some people are plainly gifted in them beyond the general call.

Hospitality also turns out to be strategic, not merely pleasant. Matt pointed to one of the least-read books in the Bible: 2 John 10 — if someone comes without this teaching, do not receive him into your house. Do not let him launch a ministry out of your home. Do not give him influence or help him along his way.

▶ 1:39:13

> “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace… whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies — in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.”
>
> 1 PETER 4:10–11 ↗

Matt read from verse eight — love covering a multitude of sins, hospitality without grumbling, which he admitted is the part he is still working on. The gifts are grace we steward, not merely temperament we were born with. The Spirit empowers the body through giftings, for service, to glorify God.

Gifts held humbly

▶ 1:40:26

Hope Chapel believes God still speaks — through scripture, in prayer, sometimes by putting a thought on a heart unbidden. Which makes the instruction in 1 Corinthians 14:29 load-bearing: let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. Matt’s point was on that last clause. “If you’re just shouting, ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ what’s there to weigh?” Unless you are a prophet or apostle of the Bible, say “I think God is saying to me” — and remember that
even an angel from heaven preaching another gospel is to be accursed. “We’re not here to establish ourselves as authoritative voices in our giftings.”

He ran through more: compassion that can respond in mercy over and over, creativity that bubbles up rather than being assembled, faith to pray for the sick, faith to hold God’s promises, business sense. Scripture names craftsmanship as Spirit-given —

Bezalel, filled with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence and knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise a

Inventorying your gifts is genuinely fun. Dwelling there — "Wow, it's cool to be me, isn't it?" — is the trap.

What footwashing actually looks like

▶ 1:42:55

> "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."
>
> JOHN 13:13–15 ↗

A pastor in a clean shirt with a silver basin and an already-clean foot is not the picture. Jesus was doing a real chore on genuinely dirty feet, and something faintly demeaning. Matt's better example came from the previous week: John Hubrex, who serves in children's ministry, emptying the cracked trash and recycle bins — filled to the brim after days of hard rain — in his Sunday best before the service. One person happened to see it. That, and Aubrey's example earlier in the morning, is service offered to strengthen the name of Christ rather than build one's own.

He intends to do the repaying

▶ 1:44:54

Then a harder word. Luke 14:12–14: when you give a banquet, do not invite friends, relatives or rich neighbors who will invite you back — invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed because they cannot repay you. Matt would not let that be read as anti-reward. Jesus said it because he wants to be the one doing the repaying, which implies he is watching, and paying attention to the things we would forget.

▶ 1:46:05

> "And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"
>
> MATTHEW 25:35–40 ↗

Not the greatest of these — the least. He was close enough to the temple treasury to watch a widow put in two copper coins, and he cared (Mark 12:41–44). Matt turned it into a question worth sitting with:

who is least to you, and who do you struggle to show anything but disdain? His illustration for why the King takes it personally: pull a splinter out of my finger and I do not say "my finger thanks you." I say you helped me.

Blessed toward a purpose

▶ 1:48:16

To keep this from collapsing into random good deeds for random rewards, Matt went back to Genesis 12:2–3: I will bless you and make your name great, *so that you will be a blessing*. Abraham was not blessed to accumulate and then do good deeds nearer the Mediterranean. Centuries before Christ, God's blessings already telescoped outward.

Same with the four young men in Daniel 1:17–19, given learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and found ten times better than anyone else before Nebuchadnezzar. Standing before the king is something to write home about — and it was never the point. The fruit shows up in Daniel 2:47, when the king says, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings." They were placed where they were placed to expand God's name, not theirs.

Where do you fit in?

▶ 1:50:34

> "Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will."
>
> HEBREWS 13:20–21 ↗

He equips, then he goes with you. So the diagnostic questions are ordinary ones: where has he put me, who do I know, who is in my family, who do I live by, who do I work with, what skills do I have, what desires are in my heart. Those answers point somewhere, because they all fit inside one grand purpose — Matthew 28:18–20, all authority, go and make disciples of all nations, and behold I am with you always. Jesus is seeking and saving the lost tribe by tribe, language by language. He can do it without help — Matt named Paul, and Muslims in the Middle East to whom he is appearing directly — and instead lets us contribute for glory's sake.

Matt was candid that a topic like service can sound boring, because it seems obvious. Service is good, be good, don't be bad — what is there to say? But the invitation is not to live a slightly better than

average life. “You get to take risks and see fruit on the battlefield that God will win. Knowing that he’ll win anyway, but also that your part is up in the air.” He closed by asking the room to pray a question rather than hear an answer: what choices can I make this week to apply this?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- Acts 20:35
- John 21:25
- Mark 10:45
- Ephesians 2:10
- Romans 12:3
- Romans 12:4–8
- 2 John 10
- 1 Peter 4:8
- 1 Peter 4:10–11
- 1 Corinthians 14:29
- Galatians 1:8
- Exodus 31:2–4
- John 13:13–15
- Luke 14:12–14
- Matthew 25:35–40
- Mark 12:41–44
- Genesis 12:2–3
- Daniel 1:17–19
- Daniel 2:47
- Hebrews 13:20–21
- Matthew 28:18–20

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt said repentance, prayer and service are all real choices that show loyalty. Which of the three is easiest for you to think about and hardest for you to actually choose?
2. Working backward from Ephesians 2:10 — where has God placed you, and who is already within reach because of it?
3. Matt believes some gifts are not named anywhere in scripture. What have you been hesitant to call a gift because you never saw it on a list?
4. Jesus said to invite the people who cannot repay you. Who are the least to you, and what would including them actually cost?
5. What choice will you make this week — a specific one, with a name attached — to serve someone out of what God has given you?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHjYHMVIw_w&t=5413s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.