

Sermon Starter – Gifts From God’s Hands

Joel 2:23-29

This sermon establishes a biblical context for understanding that gifts are rooted in God’s abundant, creative love. Sometimes we mistakenly think of the gifts of the Spirit as a way to get God’s work done in the world. To be sure, the gifts do accomplish God’s work. But that is not their fundamental purpose.

The gifts of the Spirit originate in the overflowing love and generosity of the Trinity. They bless and empower the body of Christ—individuals as well as the community—to embody and express/proclaim God’s generous love in the world. That flow of love heals, restores, and renews all that is broken, distorted, or unwhole. In response, we offer praise and love to God as we become more and more united with God and God’s creative purposes.

Though the gifts of leadership are essential in the church, the prophet Joel emphasizes that God’s Spirit is poured out on all people—young and old, male and female, slaves and free. Today’s sermon celebrates the abundant generosity of the Spirit that empowers the whole church for joyful praise, authentic witness, and fruitful service.

The preacher can include a story from the congregation’s life that illustrates how the gifts of all are needed for the fulfillment of the church’s call to mission in this particular place and time.

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