

Ministry Matters

Romans 12:3-8

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I'm excited for the opportunity to speak again this summer, last year was fun and allowed you all to see my heart for Jesus. But this year I thought I'd change it up a bit. I love Jesus, I also love ministry to others. When Pastor Jerry asked me to preach he graciously gave me a couple of months' notice. So naturally being a millennial I waited till this week to prepare. I am just kidding, I'm not a total procrastinator, I started last week. As we dive in this morning I want to say two cavaotes, one is that I want you all to remember that I am a youth pastor. So today might sound and look a little different.

Secondly, is that what we are going to talk about today is more of a 5-8-week sermon series boiled down to 23 minutes remaining. But I wanted to start off today with some information as the Church's resident guru on Gen Z, for those who do not know Gen Z is those born from 1999 to around 2015-2020 depending on which study you use. To be honest however, I am not a guru on this every changing generation, I am not even a guru on my own millennial generation. But I try my best.

With every generation there is language that is used throughout, now this does differ from region to region, culture to culture but for the most part these words are used across the board. Now remember, this generation changes so much that by the time I tell you these words, they could be out and not cool to use anymore, but we will do our best. There are hundreds of words which is also called lingo, as in cool language, so we are only going to go over three.

The first is Fam and or squad. These two words mean family or squad. As in a group of close friends. For example, a group of four boys that always hang out would consider each other their squad. Another word would be Lit. This is a common term used among teenagers to describe something as cool or fun. Finally, one of my personal favorites right now is extra. Extra what you might be asking, drama, over reacting, just being excessive, or way too much. Sally is so extra for not letting Susan come.

We could go on and talk about words like, woke, goat, dead, bae and others. Every generation has words they use, know you know a few more to help you understand gen Z.

See, Gen Z is not going anywhere for a while. We as the church need to embrace them in, just like millennials, Gen X, baby boomers, the silent generation and the G. I. generation. We all are a part of God's church. Would you just pray with me?

Father, allow these words to be your words. You are the voice, I am the vessel. God as we talk about doing ministry for your kingdom, let us all learn something today. Myself included. Bless the next few minutes Lord. Amen.

We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. Psalm 78:4-7

Do you ever wonder how we as a church got here? Not just as the EFree church in Bemidji but the Church as a whole today? It has been 2,000 years since Jesus Christ our savior and Lord died on the cross and rose again for our sins. That is a long time, and the only reason that we can stand, or sit, here today is because generations of believers followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit and taught the next generation. If the disciples would have just focused on the older generation do you think we could be here today?

I think the disciples learned a great lesson that day in Matthew 19, when they rebuked the kids from coming up to Jesus. Sometimes I look at how perfect Jesus' teaching of the disciples was and I am amazed I get to read about it. Jesus told them to not keep the kids from coming to him. We are here today because the disciples taught the young and the old, we know this from Acts 2:39 at Pentecost, where Peter tells the crowds that the good news is that the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call. Salvation is for all, not just those over 18 or 30, depending on when you start seeing people as adults.

Why do I bring this up? Well, **our** youth and **our** kids and **our** ministry to them matters. Notice that I said **OUR**, youth ministry matters, for simplicity sake, youth will mean birth through high school. Why does it matter? Because it is teaching the next generation the eternal truths of God. Let's look at it this way, we say our mission statement every Sunday. It reminds us what we are doing at our church, again that **OUR** piece. We as a collective whole.

Our mission is to promote the supremacy of Christ, another way of looking at this is being an example of Jesus. Who are you being that example to? Youth. Youth are always watching, they see what their parents do, they see what others in their lives do and say and how they act. Youth are like sponges. You want to promote the supremacy of Christ, be an example to every youth you see and come in contact with. Celebrate His love. How can you do this in terms of youth ministry, tell them about grace, and His love, and share with them your stories. You all have a story of what God has done. Obey His truth. How will youth know what to obey if it is not taught to them. I agree that we should obey His truth, but we need to know it first. And lastly, enlarge His kingdom, that's a no brainer. Share the gospel with them. Day after day. Our youth ministry matters in our church. This is not the Albin show, this is not the Gerri Thorsgard Show. This is our church body coming around our youth and bringing them up.

Now, you as a parent might be sitting there saying, Albin, I am raising my child, thank you. And I want to tell you right now, I am so proud of you. Myself, Gerri and the whole church want to partner with you in that. Look I have an hour on a Sunday morning, 2-3 hours on a Wednesday night. I cannot raise your child, but I sure can be a partner and a resource to confirm the truths you are teaching them. It comes back around to the fact that it is OUR youth ministry, it is the 60+ plus volunteers that give up their Wednesdays to serve our youth, it is the women who make meals for those volunteers every week, and countless others who ripple out from our youth. We as a church need to value our youth, like the generations past. Again, this is a 5-week minimum sermon series, I don't have time to share with you the stats on how important the first 18 years of a person's life is. All I know is that Jesus, like all things, was right. We should not keep the children from Him.

Do you know what else matters though? All the other demographics in our church. Yes I am a youth pastor, and my passion is for youth but we have adults, parents, singles, married couples, retirees, elderly, and others that need ministry too. See youth matters, a lot but so does every other ministry in our church. Church ministry matters.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. Romans 12:3-8

The apostle Paul, was telling the church in Rome that everyone had a gift in the church. And just like the church in Rome, the church here in this building, which is not the church, we are the church, is given the same understanding, there are many people here today, all with different gifts. One person cannot do all of the ministry that is needed to be done here. We must come together as a body of believers to accomplish this. That is why we are asking for you to fill out our find your fit handout. It is a simple piece of paper with eternal kingdom work on it. From cooking and cleaning to teaching and moving. There are so many ways you can serve here at our church. Fill it out, step out and serve, not for me or Pastor Jerry but for the Lord, remember this is kingdom work, it's eternal.

Now I know there are three kinds of people here today, those who call this church their home on Sunday mornings, you all should serve in some way, for the kingdom, there are those of you here visiting that call another church home, if you are not involved there, I would encourage you to step up and volunteer, and lastly those of you here who are new comers. You may have only been coming to church for a few weeks, or maybe this is your first time here, we would love to connect with you more, fill out that connection card and come see us at the welcome booth by the front door. We want to meet you. Church ministry matters.

A couple years ago this old man that I grew up listening to taught me a phrase that I want to share with you today, my father taught me this, that I may be a pastor but every Christ follower is a minister. You are all ministers. You are all on a mission field. God has placed you exactly where He wanted you to be to glorify Him and point others to Christ. I cannot be where you are all the time, pastor Jerry cannot be in the factory where you work, in the schools, in the hospital, in the home or the store. We are all called to ministry. 1 Peter 3:15-16 says this

...in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Church, your ministry matters. You have opportunities to share the good news of Jesus Christ, it can be as easy as sharing your grace story with someone, how Jesus changed your life, it can look like being that example to your co-worker, it can be clearly sharing the gospel to someone. Look for ways that you can minister to those around you, that is your ministry and it matters.

If you would like to learn more about the good news of Jesus and the free gift that he is offering everyone in this room, would you come talk to me or pastor Jerry or Pastor Eric? Ministry matters, Youth ministry, church ministry, and your ministry all matter because they are all about the kingdom of Heaven, and serving our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer

God you are so good. All ministry is yours. We give all the praise and glory to you alone. Thank you for today. I pray that you would encourage all here to step out and serve for you Jesus. It's all about you Jesus. We desire to put you first in our lives God, not for our own gain but for yours Father. We love you and thank you. Amen

Benediction: 1 Peter 4:10-11

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

*This sermon was preached at the Evangelical Free Church of Bemidji
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