

Paul's Practical Advice

Playin' in the Church Band

Frankton - 6/1/14

Scripture: Romans 12:4-8 God gave each of us gifts to use toward building the body of Christ.

Proposition: Playing Church is a sport for everyone

“Ed the Musicainer” song with motions as a children’s chat

Today we finish a short series of sermons that I have titled: [SLIDE] Paul’s Practical Advice. This has been a study of Paul’s letter to the Church at Rome; we call it the book of Romans. It’s Paul’s only letter to a church he didn’t form. He wanted to go there on his travels, so he was writing to introduce himself and his theology to them. Unfortunately he never made it. When he did get to Rome, it was under guard of Roman soldiers and he was sent straight to prison upon his arrival. This letter to the Roman church is more of a systematic theology letter - what he believed and why - than his other letters. We hit a few passages in this book to see what advice Paul gives us for today’s living. So, let’s get started.

I need you to put on your memory caps for just a few minutes here. Now, aside from this latest performance the First United Methodist Church Choir and Ensemble just did, I want you to think back to the last time you were at a band concert of some kind. I don’t mean a pop/rock band concert; I mean some type of orchestral concert where the musicians were seated and they were lead by some type of leader usually found waving a baton. Maybe you have been to the Symphony on the Prairie over the July 4th weekend. Some of you may have been at a high school symphonic band or orchestra concert. Some may have been down to the Indianapolis POPS and listened to the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. I want you to really think about the last performance of that kind that you have seen.

One thing you can say about concerts is that in almost every instance, every part of the orchestra is heard from, in fact at some point, each section is probably highlighted. There would be a section of one piece where the brass instruments are emphasized. In another piece, the woodwinds come to the forefront. At another time, the percussion section gets to shine. And last, but certainly not least, there are sections of the performance where the strings gather all the attention of the audience. We did the same thing when we had each of the sections to play before the whole band played. Yes, to make a strong performance, each section of the orchestra is heard from.

I hope you see the resemblance between the performance of an orchestra or the First United Methodist Church Choir and Ensemble, and the performance of a local church. You are all musicians in God’s orchestra. And the name of the piece that we are performing is “Church.” All of us have a part to play. Paul spoke about it so eloquently in Romans 12 when he compared the body of Christ, the church, to a human body. [SLIDE] *Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body.* [SLIDE] *We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.* [4,5] Every part in the human body is important to the health of that body. The stomach has a part, the brain has a part, even the big toe has a part –

Paul's Practical Advice

and if you don't believe me, just stub your big toe badly and try to walk like normal. Each body part plays a role in making the body the best it can be.

The same can be said about us and the church. Each person has a part to play. Some parts may be more glamorous than others. Some parts may not get into the spotlight very often. But every one of us has a part to play. Some people may excel in singing in our worship. Some people may do their best when they are given the opportunity to serve others in the mission aspect of the church. Some people really shine when they talk with others about Jesus and what he means to them. Some people are great organizers of activities where we gather in fellowship. Some of you excel in showing what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ or discipleship.

Not only do we all have a part to play, but we need to be doing our dead level best to play our part. If your part is to lead in worship, then when the time comes for worship, you need to do your dead level best. If your part is to be on the trustees committee, then for our performance to be the best it can be, you need to do your dead level best as a trustee. If your part is to teach Sunday school, then do your dead level best as a teacher. Picture the orchestra again. If during the time where the brass section was being highlighted, what if one of them wasn't doing their dead level best and hit one of those clunker notes. You know the one: it's the one that sounds like a cat being pulled backwards through a tennis racket. Everyone in the auditorium notices that note. And it's like that in church too. When it's time for our part to shine, we don't need any of those clunker notes. So do your dead level best to make it ring loud and clear.

I want to ask you a question. Picture a night where you are going to a concert. You arrive at the auditorium, purchase your ticket and take your seat anxiously awaiting the beginning of the concert. The curtain opens and all the chairs on the stage are empty. You think that the orchestra will be filing out and be seated to start the concert. But they don't. Suddenly, the conductor walks out and you are certain that the orchestra will soon follow. The conductor taps his baton on the music stand and raises it to signal the ready position. Then he begins to conduct, but there's no music to be heard; no orchestra filing in while they play. All there is on stage is a conductor conducting an imaginary orchestra to the music that is in his head. How many of you would purposely buy a ticket to watch a conductor conduct but no orchestra play? Me either. People don't come to watch the conductor conduct. They come to hear the music of the orchestra.

Don't get me wrong conductors play an important part in the life of the orchestra. Usually the conductor picks the music. The conductor takes a leadership role in the practices and the performances. He signals to the entire orchestra when to play and how fast to play and, sometimes most importantly, when to rest, to be silent. He signals for the sections to play louder or softer so that the emphasis is where it should be and the balance is there when needed. Conductors have an important part to play, but they don't play any music, they orchestrate the performance. The conductor's job is to make the orchestra better than it is by itself.

And the same is true of a church. I want you to know that I understand that I don't play the music in this orchestra – I'm not a musician, I'm the conductor. That's my responsibility. I'll help pick the music, set the direction if you will. I'll signal the orchestra when to play and when to rest or be silent. I'll try my best to make sure that the parts that need emphasis get emphasized and I'll do my dead level best to attain balance when we need balance. But you are the

Paul's Practical Advice

musicians in this orchestra. People will come to hear your music. People will come because of you. And if you don't believe me, picture this. Picture the conductor without the orchestra – not many will be in the audience. The same is true of this church. Picture me standing up here on Sunday morning giving a sermon and not a one of you is here, sitting in the pews listening. How many people would come in off the streets to come to church to hear me in an empty sanctuary? It's probably the same number of people that would come to see a conductor with no orchestra.

Together the conductor and the musicians can make some beautiful music. Together, I think you and I can make beautiful music in this church where people will want to come and join us. Let's do it together.

Paul's Practical Advice

CHILDREN'S CHAT

“Ed the Musicainer” song with motions

MEMORIZING NOTES

Series

Remember symphony

Different parts

Resembles church

Symphony: All have parts

Church all have parts

Symphony: Every part important

Church: every part important

Dead level best – lento to allegro

Concertmaster – leads orchestra in tuning before performance and practice

SERMON NOTES INSERT

Sermon Notes, 6/01/14

Playin' in the Church Band Romans 12.4-8

Compare being in a band to being a member in Christ's church.

Discuss each the spiritual gifts noted in verses 6-8.

Do you think there may be more spiritual gifts not noted here?

What do you think God has given you as a gift to use to build his community? (ie: What do you think is your spiritual gift?)

Paul's Practical Advice

What might your 'tweener note be?

Which part of the "body of Christ" do you feel like?

Do you think God has blessed this church with all the spiritual gifts needed to build his community? If not, what might be needed?

Name one action you can do this week that you can take from this sermon?

NOT USED

I'm sure there are some of you in the congregation that would love to have a voice and the talent to be able stand up here and belt a song and have the congregation just fawn all over you in praise. How many of you would love to be able to do stand up and sing a song and it sound really good? I know that I wish I had a good singing voice and I've daydreamed about being a good singer as many of you have. And the same goes for playing an instrument as well. I daydream about being able to play an instrument well enough to be in some kind of band or orchestra. I'm guessing that a lot of you have felt the same way. Maybe you wanted to be a guitar player or a piano player or even some of the other less glamorous instruments – like a tuba or a cello. Well, congratulations – today your daydream will come true because effective immediately you are all members of the Frankton First (Aroma) United Methodist Church Choir and Ensemble. Over the next few minutes you are going to learn to sing a new song and play an instrument to accompany the song.

As a Kentuckian friend of mine in the ministry says, "Give y'all self a nice round of applause." That was really good considering it was the first time for this choir and orchestra come together. (Notice I said first time – there may be more.) The bagpipe section did a wonderful job. The choir part of the performance was rally quite melodious. The tubas and cellos were hanging right in their. The piano players needed a little more beep-beep-zip-dang but they were ok for a first time. What I think was really important was that all of you got to play a part; we didn't leave anyone out unless they wanted to be left out. So I was glad for that.

Paul's Practical Advice

Paul's Practical Advice

Ed the Musicainer Lyrics:

Ed the Musicainer came to lead the band singing ick-do-shpeelen

“Yah, do shpeelen.”

After the tubas

(tip-toes, middle, knee bend, middle)

Oompa oompa oompa-pa

Oompa oompa oompa-pa

Oompa oompa oompa-pa

Oompa oompa oompa-pa

Ed the Musicainer came to lead the band singing ick-do-shpeelen

“Yah, do shpeelen.”

After the cello

(fake bow, exaggerated hip swing, opposite directions)

Cello, cello, cello-lo

Cello, cello, cello-lo

Cello, cello, cello-lo

Cello, cello, cello-lo

Ed the Musicainer came to lead the band singing ick-do-shpeelen

“Yah, do shpeelen.”

After the bagpipes

(holding nose with one hand, striking throat with the other)

Aah, aah, aah, aah, aah, aah, aah

[didn't do for time] Ed the Musicainer came to lead the band singing ick-do-shpeelen

“Yah, do shpeelen.”

After the pianos

(hands ‘plinking the piano)

Plink, plink, plink, plink, plink, plink, plink

Ed the Musicainer came to lead the band singing ick-do-shpeelen

“Yah, do shpeelen.”

After the whole band

(all doing their ‘instruments’)

Oompa oompa oompa-pa

Cello, cello, cello-lo

Aah, aah, aah, aah, aah, aah, aah

Plink, plink, plink, plink, plink, plink, plink