

At The Movies Msg 7
 Spider-Man Far From Home: Using My Gifts To Make A Difference
 Sermon preached by Dr. Rick Mandl
 Eagle Rock Baptist Church
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Welcome to ERBC.

My name is Rick and I'm glad you're here today as we continue our At The Movies teaching series.

Each weekend during At The Movies – we're exploring the spiritual themes behind some of the summer's biggest movies.

Today we're looking at the new movie

Spider-man Far From Home: Using My Gifts to make a difference

If you haven't seen the movie, here's a quick look at what it's about.

Spider-man Trailer

Most of you know the story of Spider-man

Teenager Peter Parker is bitten by a radioactive spider and given superhuman abilities that he then uses to fight evil.

Spider-man has quite a few superpowers, but with all of the characters in the Marvel universe, it can be confusing as to which character has what power.

So before we get too far into this movie, I thought it might be worthwhile to see how much you know about Spider-man.

I'll give you some possible super-powers and you can let me know, "Yes" or "No" as to whether Spider-man has these powers.

Let's start with an easy one . . .

Shoots Webs?

Does Spider-man shoot webs? **Yes**

Can Spider-man Fly? No

Sometimes it might seem like it because of the speed at which he swings from building to building but he can't fly.

Can he climb walls? Yes – he's Spider-man & he's sticky

Let's go on to something a little tougher

Limb regeneration?

If Spider-man loses a limb – an arm or a leg, can he grow it back?

The answer actually is . . . **Yes & No**

This one is tricky because in the movies the answer is "no" but in the comic books the answer is "yes"

Vampire Bite Immunity?

This one is tricky because in the movies the answer is "no" but in the comic books the answer is "yes"

You'll only learn this through the comic books but this radioactive blood makes him immune to the bites of vampires

How about this, can he **Breathe Underwater?**

No. Aquaman can, but spiders drown

What about . . .

Spidey Senses that alert him to danger?

Yes!

When Peter Parker was bitten by that radioactive spider he was given a unique set of gifts – of superpowers - that he didn't waste.

He received these gifts but he didn't let them lie dormant

He didn't use them to rob banks or just for his own benefit, instead he used them to become Spider-man - to fight evil and make a difference

But in this newest installment, Spider-man tries to take a break... a nice European vacation to get away from the Superhero Life.

But that doesn't last long.

He's visited by Nick Fury, the dominant leader of the Marvel superhero universe, and told that his help is needed.

Once again, the world is in trouble and they need his gifts to make a difference.

Spider-man was given a mission.

A mission that would require all of his gifts and abilities.

You and I may not have radioactive blood

We may not be able to shoot webs or be part of the Avengers but **God has created each of us for a purpose that is just as significant.**

God has placed you on this earth for a reason -he has a mission for you to fulfill

And **he has given each of us special gifts** to complete the mission that he has for us.

And the gifts he has given you are not random, they were given to you for a specific purpose.

Our MEMORY VERSE for this week is up on the screen and it comes from 1 Corinthians 12:7 and it says . . .

“A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.” 1 Corinthians 12:7

Underline those two words. . . .

Spiritual gift

God has intentionally given each of us Spiritual gifts

Let me explain how these Spiritual gifts work . . .

When you become a Christian God gives you very specific and special spiritual gifts that fit you and the mission that He has planned for your life.

God didn't give you these gifts just for your own benefit, so that you can make money, or become famous, but to use those gifts to bless others and to serve His church.

It was God who has given us these gifts, but for a lot of us, if we're honest, those gifts are lying dormant within us – they're not being used – they're collecting dust.

And when we do that, we're wasting them.

And that's sad, because God has given us those gifts to fulfill the purpose He has planned for our lives.

God won't force you them – that's up to you.

And so this morning I want us to look at . . .

How To Use My Gifts To Make A Difference

Here's the first step . . .

Be THANKFUL that God has given me gifts. (6:20)

There has never been anyone like you

There will never be anyone like you

You were uniquely created unlike anyone else

Sometimes we get so caught up comparing ourselves to someone else, and wishing that we had the gifts that they had, that we forget that we're not THANKFUL for our gifts and we WASTE our gifts.

And we'll make the mistake of using our differences as a cop-out, so as not to do anything . . .

“If I could just sing like she does . . .”

“If I could just speak like he does. . .”

Then I could really make a difference - - I could really be used by God if I were like them.

That type of thinking is wrong for a number of reasons.

Not only does it create resentment and jealousy in your heart, but it also keeps you from recognizing the wonderful way in which God has shaped you and the gifts that you already have.

So the first step to using my gifts to make a difference is to believe that God had uniquely created us and to thank him for the gifts that He has given us.

In Ephesians 2:10 the Apostle Paul writes these words . . .

“For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” Ephesians 2:10

God has planned good things for us, and He planned these things before you were born.

So – if you want to use your gifts to make a difference– start by being thankful for who God created you to be.

Instead of critiquing your every flaw. . .

Instead of looking in the mirror and wishing you were someone else, be thankful for your uniqueness.

In fact - criticizing yourself is really criticizing God - because He is the one who made you. So the next time you start to complain about a certain characteristic of yourself or compare yourself to someone else just ask yourself...

"Do I really want to tell God He messed up when He made me?" He didn't mess up – you are wonderfully made!

So – the first step is to be THANKFUL for my gifts...and that leads us into the next step in using my gifts to make a difference:

Be PROACTIVE in discovering my gifts

If you've been a fan of the Spider-Man movies since the beginning, then you know that Peter Parker didn't just start out as a great super-hero.

He had a lot of mis-steps along the way in trying to figure out how to use the gifts he had been given.

Before he could save the world, he first had to figure out what his powers were and how he was going to use them.

Maybe right now you feel like there's more you could be doing with your life - - - like God could use you in a bigger way.

This is why it's so important for you to be "Pro-Active" and discover what your spiritual gifts are.

Because when you begin to discover what your gifts are, it gives you clues as to how to use them to make a difference.

If you're not familiar with the term spiritual gifts, you may have some weird images that pop into your mind when you hear that term.

Spiritual Gifts sound so "spiritual" - - like you've got to be super-religious, almost perfect person to have these things or use them.

We all have gifts

Some of them are natural gifts we were born with.

Some of them "spiritual gifts" that were given to us when we were born again.

Natural gifts are things you were born with and are good at, and that's not to say that you can't and shouldn't develop those things to get better at them, but even when it comes to natural gifts, we're all different, and no matter how much I might want to be able to sing like _____, no amount of practice will enable me to do that because I don't have that natural ability.

Your natural gifts may or may not be connected to your spiritual gifts.

Spiritual gifts, those gifts that God gives you when you become a Christian have been given to you specifically for the purpose of serving one another.

In 1 Peter 4:10 the Apostle Peter gives us these words . . .

"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another." 1 Peter 4:10

Underline that phrase . . .

"serve one another." 1 Peter 4:10

The gifts God has given you weren't just given for yourself, but for the purpose of serving others.

And then the second thing we see in that verse, is that there are a ***great variety*** of Spiritual Gifts

In other words there are a lot of different gifts that God could give you.

So how do you discover which spiritual gifts might be yours – which ones you might have?

On your notes I've given you a "partial list" of some of the

Spiritual Gifts

that are listed in the Bible.

I say, "partial list" because different places in the New Testament provide lists of gifts and they aren't identical.

And a lot of scholars feel like they also aren't exhaustive.

In other words, there may well be other gifts that aren't included on these lists.

But I want to walk you through this list and you can see if one or more of these resonate with you.

As I take you through this list, if these describe you, or if other people have told you that they think you have this gift, just go ahead and put a check mark next to the ones that apply.

The first one on the list is . . .

Administration

This is "organizing"

If this is you, you're good with details.

You're good at organizing things.

If I'm shopping for a birthday gift for you, I know you'd love a label-maker.

Someone with this gift might be good helping out in the office.

Taking the info each weekend from the connection cards and entering it onto spread sheets.

Discernment

You're the person that people are coming to and asking "What should I do?"

You give godly advice

People trust you

Encouraging

Now again, we're all called to encourage one another, but doing this energizes you.

You love to take people who are down and build them up.

And then there's the gift of . . .

Giving (financial)

This relating primarily to the financial area.

And again, just like with encouragement, we're all called to tithe, but you just like to stretch yourself and go above and beyond.

This is your spiritual gift.

And then there's the gift of . . .

Leadership

How do you know if you have the gift of Leadership?

Look behind you and see if anyone is following.

Maybe you've heard the saying, ***"If you think you're a leader but no one is following, you're only taking a walk."***

Shepherding (care)

You care about people.

If someone gives you a prayer request, you remember it

You're inviting people to be in your group

You love seeing other people grow in their faith.

You have the gift of shepherding.

Teaching

You like to study and share with others what you're learning.

And the people you share with like to learn from you.

And this gift can be exercised in many ways.

It can be up front w/ adults

It can be as a small group leader in Next Gen with EROCK kids.

Across the column you've got . . .

Pioneering

You love starting new things.

It drives you crazy to keep doing the same thing.

You love starting up new ministries and new initiatives.

Other people get stressed out when things change

You get stressed out when they don't

Church planters have, to have this gift.

But it's a rare individual who has the necessary gifts to start something, take it to a certain level, stick with it, and then take it to the next level.

Next, there's the gift of . . .

Evangelism

God calls all of us to "share our faith"

But some of you are just energized by inviting others to come to church and see what you've found.

Why do we do the Free Movie Ticket Give Away here?

It's not for the people here who have the gift of evangelism.

They don't need it.

They're always inviting their friends to church.

It's for the rest of us.

Next, the gift of . . .

Faith (high trust in God)

Faith is something that God is looking for in all of us.

Hebrews 11 says ***“Without faith, it’s impossible to please God.”***

The gift of faith shows itself in people who aren’t afraid to set High Goals for God and trust Him in big things.

In circumstances where other people are freaking out – not you

Because you know God is in control and He will come through.

You’ve got the gift of faith.

Then there’s the gift of . . .

Hospitality

You love opening-up your home and welcoming people in

You’d be great in hosting a Life Group in your home.

And if this is your gift, we have a place for you.

We’re always looking for Life Group hosts

You don’t even need to be willing to Lead the group, but be willing to host.

You could exercise this gift on our welcome team as well.

Just by being the person who welcomes guests who arrive each weekend for worship.

Then there’s the gift of . . .

Mercy

You’re a good listener

You’re empathetic

You LOVE people, even the people who are HARD TO LOVE

Others want to get away from them, not you.

The gift of . . .

Serving/ Helping

God wants all to serve, but you come to an event and you’re not even signed up to help, but you’re helping.

Then there’s the gift of . . .

Wisdom/ Counseling

You give wise advice and you love being able to help people find the best path in their particular situation.

If none of these things are resonating with you, let me suggest

Suggest A Free Resource we have on our website.

Spiritual Gifts test at:

Erockchurch.com/spiritual-gifts-test

And like we say around here, **the only thing better than a Spiritual Gifts test is . . .**

A FREE Spiritual Gifts Test. . .

So take the test!

And then if you want, but this one is up to you . . .

We’d be happy to sit down with you and discuss the results.

But . . .

Let you in on a little insider information. . .

Very often the best way to figure out, and identify your spiritual gift is to just test the water.

Try a first-serve.

Every one of our ministries offers the opportunity to **try before you buy**.

What do I mean by that?

What I mean is we love it when we have people who arrive at the church for the first time and they already know their gifts, and they are ready to serve.

They want to hit the ground running.

They say, ***“Show me where the Middle-School group meets cuz I want to serve.”***

That’s great, but it’s rare.

Most people don’t know where they would be most effective or most fulfilled before they give something a try.

And we have opportunities to do that in every area

When it comes to our

Welcome Ministry

You can participate by signing up to serve once-a-month at the service you attend.

This means once a month, you get here 15 minutes before the service begins.

Just once a month.

The rest of the time get here 15 minutes late.

Or serve with our . . .

Prayer Team

Or serve in the area of . . .

Worship Arts

This can be up-front, it can also be behind the scenes.

We need people who can sing, or play an instrument, or read a passage of scripture, or who are gifted in graphic design or social media. . .

The list goes on and on.

ErockKids

Ministry with our little ones . . .

Can be on the weekends or during the week. . .

You can help out in the

Office

Occasionally just need someone who can answer the phone, or stuff envelopes. . .

Street Kitchen**Trader Joe's**

We are a church that loves to eat, and we need folk who can help with

Food Prep

And serving.

We also have opportunities that aren't local, but global.

We have a team of 11 heading for Guatemala this Friday...

Pray For Guatemala

We're looking for people who will commit to pray for them.

And then you can also support us by . . .

Guatemala Social Media

Following us on Facebook or Instagram

Next Year's Guatemala Trip**Mini-Mission – Kenya Trip****Mini-Mission – Philippines Trip**

Please understand, this is not an exhaustive list.

There are probably still a bunch of ways you can serve in so many other ministries. . .

The simplest way to get more information is just to

Check the box on your connection card. . . .

The third step in using my gifts to make a difference is to . . .

Be **DILIGENT** in serving others with my gifts

One verse that's not on your notes but is worth noting is 1 Timothy 4:14

It says . . .

“Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received...” - 1 Timothy 4:14

Like owning a lawnmower and having a yard but never using the lawnmower, those gifts are just going to collect dust if you don't put them to use.

But like the lawnmower, those gifts have a purpose.

You have to put those gifts into action and use them to make a difference.

That's why the Apostle Paul writes. . . .

“If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.” Romans 12:7-8

Whatever your gift is, just use it and trust God to use you to make a difference.

Fulfilling your purpose is found when you commit yourself fully to God.

The last verse on your notes. . .

“Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.” Romans 6:13

Give your entire life to God.

The reason why we need to do that – to give ourselves completely to God is because because as long as we remain in control of lives – God can't be in control.

And when God's not in control – He can't use me.

But when you step aside and give God control - you quit trying to play God by being in control – you enable God to step in and use His power in your life.

Maybe you are here and you are a Christian - but you holding tightly to an illusion of control and you need to fully surrender or re-surrender to God.

You can do that today!

Maybe you are here today and you need to surrender your entire life to God for the first time.

Maybe you've never decided to follow Jesus before.

Maybe that's what God is asking you to do for the first time today.

To surrender your life and ask God to come into your life and save you and secure your life for eternity.

Whatever the case – today let God be God – and you be you.

And you'll discover that God can use you in ways you never thought possible.

Let's pray together