

Wholeness: Giving your all to God

At the moment, the church family here are thinking on Sunday mornings about what it means to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. How we live our lives differently as Christians.

It's been a real pleasure to baptise little Joseph today, on this, his birthday.

When people are baptised, it's a commitment to live with and for Jesus. But Joseph is too little to make that commitment for himself, so it's something Sean and Eleanor – mum and dad - have decided on his behalf. And when babies and small children are baptised, it's parents and godparents who have a special responsibility to pray and support the child, to help them grow up in the faith they've been baptised into, so that, at some point in the future, they can own that faith for themselves.

But being a Christian doesn't end at being baptised. It's just the beginning of the journey. The great theologian John Stott said, '*Becoming a Christian is one thing; being a Christian is another.*' And that's what we've been thinking about, and will continue to think about, over the next few weeks.

Last week, we looked at the responsibility we have towards each other, as the body of the church, to pray for each other, to encourage each other, and to share with each other in the good times and the bad. I think we do that well here. When we have visitors to the church, people frequently comment on the feel of '*being family*' that exists here.

And last week, we began to talk about spiritual gifts, special God-given abilities that God gives to each and every one of us when we say yes to following Jesus.

Our Bible passage from Paul's letter to the early church in Corinth, an ancient town in Greece, about 48 miles west of Athens, continues the theme of spiritual gifts. And, in this passage, Paul talks about there being lots of different gifts, but the same Holy Spirit.

Here's another way of thinking about it.

I have a tool box full of tools. I imagine you have a toolbox like this around your house, don't you? Why do you suppose we need so many tools? It is because each of these tools has a different purpose.

There is no one tool that can do everything.

If I needed to drive a nail into a door, what tool do you think I would need?

Right! I would need a hammer. Here's my hammer.

If I were putting together a bookshelf and needed to put in a screw to hold it together, what tool do you think I would need? You are right again! I'd need a screwdriver, and here it is!

Let's see, suppose I needed to measure something, what tool do you think I would need. Of course, I'd need a tape measure. I wonder if I have a tape measure in here? Yes, here it is.

What if I needed to drill a hole? Yes, I would need my drill. It is important to have the right tool for the job.

What would happen if I tried to drill a hole using a screwdriver, or a hammer? It simply wouldn't work would it? And why not? Because that's not what it's intended for? That's not what the tool is good for.

The Church is like God's tool box. God has a lot of jobs to do and he has given the people in his Church different gifts and talents to help him to do those jobs. We are his tools!

To some he has given musical talent to help lead others in worship – in singing songs to God.

To some he has given the talent of teaching so that they can help others to learn more about him.

To some he has given the skill of listening so they can help people who are sad or have a problem they need to talk through.

There is no one person in the church that can do everything, is there? Even me!

Listen to what our reading today said, 'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works in all of us.'

If I needed to tighten a screw in my glasses, would this hammer help? Would this great big screwdriver help? No, I would need this little tiny screwdriver. You see, it doesn't matter what your talent is and it doesn't matter if you are

big or small. What does matter is that when God has a job for you to do, you need to be right there in his toolbox, ready and willing for him to use you.

Look around you. See this church building? It is God's toolbox. Look at all the people in this room. They are God's tools. Each one ready and willing for God to use them to do his work in this community. And it doesn't matter how big or small you are, how old or young. Whether you've been here 50 years or whether today is your first time. Each and every one of us has a gift, a skill that God can use.

Toolkit Prayer – up on our feet!

God, we want you to use us to help other people, take us out of your toolbox and use us. (*Jump up*)

Sometimes we need to be like saws (*mime sawing*) ,
with sharp edges to cut through hate, fear, or unkindness.

Sometimes we need to be like hammers (*mime hammering*) ,
making a loud noise to tell people about you.

Sometimes we need to be like screwdrivers (*turn around*) ,
seeing that we are wrong and turning our lives around.

Sometimes we need to be like spanners (*mime using a spanner*) ,
making sure that we are tightly fixed to you.

God, we want you to use us to help other people,
take us out of your toolbox and use us. (*Jump up*)

Amen.