

From Within
Sermon by: Chris Rowlett
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Our team Ginger, Tracy and I, came up with the idea as we kicked off our sermons in July to share where our passion is or what we are passionate about. I have a lot of things that I am passionate about and I am sure from you all knowing me for the past many years you have gotten to know some of them. I am passionate about God, family, cycling, golf, ministry, learning more about God, travel, and many other things. Sometimes our passions can change as we go on in life. As I was searching for a place for us to go on vacation, my girls said that they really wanted to go back to Michigan. We had planned on going back last year and of course as many of you also experienced; vacations and destinations were cancelled last year. We made reservations up in St. Ignace just over the Mackinaw Bridge, and not long after that I started then seeing things pop up on Facebook about Michigan, yes big brother Facebook was watching. Some sites started coming up about rocks and Michigan's rocks and minerals around the lakes. I then began to remember as a kid going up to Mackinaw City with my family to a little Motel, we actually stayed in the next town over from Mackinaw City, in a little Motel in Cheboygan Michigan. It was one of those Motels that had the cool red and blue neon lights that went all the way around the motel at the roof line. It was beautiful at night. A small mom and pop, family run place. They had a pool in the middle of the parking area with a diving board. They had two little houses off to the one side of the motel that you could rent as well, for a small family. On the other side of the pool was a little old church that they also owned that had small classrooms off to the side. It was the coolest place as a kid, and one day the owners asked if my brother and I wanted to see inside the church and that we could pick something out from what was inside. We were like sure absolutely, and were super excited, a scavenger hunt. They opened the door, and you could barely walk through the building, it was packed full of anything and everything that you could think of. It was a picker's dream destination if any of you have seen American Pickers. And you know what I remember walking out of there with? Not a cool collectible or a model car or a hat which they had stacks of to the ceiling. I walked out of there with a geo rock and some cool shells. I know, what was I thinking? But they were special to me because of the simple beauty of them. My mom and dad and grandparents took us up for many trips and we always stayed at the little motel in Cheboygan. I can't tell you where that geo is or the shells, though I had them for a lot of years.

I told you that I recently came across these groups on Facebook and it re-sparked my interest in rocks and just the cool things that you can find on a shoreline. But I came across something that I have never seen before and I will explore that with you as we talk about my passion for you and Calvary United Methodist Church here in our little corner

of Fort Wayne. You heard Bob read the scripture from Romans. What I am the most passionate about here at Calvary is each one of you and the gifts and talents that God has given you. Through the time that I have known each one of you, whether for one year, five years, twenty years or more have shown that God has blessed you with many gifts and talents. What I am passionate about is all of us including me, using those talents and gifts to the best of our God given ability to serve him and build his Kingdom here in this church and in Fort Wayne and our surrounding community. As we look at Romans it says that we are to offer our body's as a living sacrifice to God. It tells us to not conform to the world and for us to be transformed. Can you remember back to the time that you were truly on fire for Jesus? We, including me, need to rekindle that fire and passion for Christ. It goes on to say that we all form one body, meaning that we all have something to bring to the table. Each one of us has a role to play and not one of these roles is less significant than the other. We are all on the same team and each one of us has something to contribute. God has given each of you talents and gifts to serve him. Romans says that if your gift is serving then serve, if it is teaching then teach, if it is to encourage then encourage, if it is giving then give and give generously, if it is to lead then lead and do it diligently. Did you hear the words this morning? It goes on to say, Romans 12:,"9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. I know it's been a really hard year, maybe the hardest you can remember. How do we get our zeal back? How do we re-ignite the passion and start to let our gifts shine through in us. I know that you all have them, you have been showing glimpses of them to me for years. We have awesome people here at Calvary! How do we start to get back to serving each other and serving those around us? You see God does not tell us here that we are to stop or pump the breaks when the going gets tough, he does not say well if you have done it before you can stop. Is that what it said there? No, he said "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord." The scripture says **Never** be lacking in zeal. We have opportunities with groups that are meeting right here to connect and share our zeal, share our gifts and talents, how are we, together, going to connect with them?

I read all of 1 Timothy 4 and I want us to focus on the last portion for a moment and then I promise I will finish the Rock story. 1 Timothy 4 has this to say in verses 13-16, "13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. 14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. 16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your

hearers.” We are to devote ourselves to sharing Gods love and the story of Jesus according to what this is saying. Now we have not had hands laid on us, but God has given each one of us certain talents to serve him. We are not to neglect our gift; we cannot sit idly by and wait for someone else to step up. We are all in this together, we are one body of Christ serving him together. We need to continue to lift each other up and serve side by side. Calvary was founded on strong and courageous people; you remember some of their names. And if you do not, ask someone around you to tell you the story of some of our Saints that have gone on to Heaven.

Ok, so back to my Rocks, I have some ordinary rocks here I want to show you, they represent each one of us. When you look at them, they are kind of plain and grey they may sparkle a little but not much. From the outside they do not look like much, and no these are not geos and we are not going to take a hammer to them. These are called Yooperlites. You say what? Yes, they are Yooperlites. These grey brownish looking stones have been laying on the beaches up in Michigan for hundreds of years and no one even paid them attention, probably passed over them hundreds and even thousands of times. But that is because they never looked at them with the right lens. We need to get back to thinking like God thinks and trying to see through Gods eyes. We need God to shine down on us and to shine through us with these gifts and talents that he has given us. I am passionate about each one of you because I have seen your gifts and talents first-hand. I have seen God shining through you when you served a dinner, when you reached out to In as Much, when you volunteered at the rescue mission, when you served on a church board, when you filled stockings for redemption house, when you filled shoe boxes for those less fortunate overseas. God is calling us to action, and he is trying desperately to shine his light on us and through us, so that we can light up and bring his Kingdom here. Gods light in our life is like this UV flashlight that I shine on these rocks. It brings out the best in the rock, it brings out the best in each of us.

You want to know what I am most passionate about it is **YOU**, Men and Women of Calvary, and our mission, it can be accomplished through Jesus and the gifts and talents that he has given each one of us. Amen!

Really think about that word from scripture earlier “Zeal” when we stand to sing the closing hymn. We should all strive to do what this hymn says, we need to LOVE to tell the story and share this good news with others.