**TITLE: Trying to put a square peg in a round hole**

**TEXT: Ps. 139:14-16; Ro. 12:3-8, 12-31**

**INTRODUCTION:** How many of you this morning remember in your childhood trying to put a square peg in a round hole?

 Remember those little wooden plagues with all the different shapes cut out of it and then all the pegs cut into the shapes of the holes in the plaque and how you would see how fast that you could get the pegs into their appropriate shaped holes?

 I can’t remember just how good I was at that game as a young child but I have watched my grandkids try to do it when they were little and how, when they would try to get the square peg to go into the round hole, how much it would frustrate them when it just wouldn’t fit.

 In fact, I don’t know that there is anything more frustrating than trying to get a square peg to go into a round hole.

 And yet we see people trying to do just that all of the time.

 Adults play this game a lot. This is even a favorite game to play within the Church.

 In fact, I think that this is among the greatest causes of frustration in the life of adult Christians. We live our life trying to get a square peg to fit in a round hole.

Let me explain…..

 But before I do I need to set a foundation from Gods Word this morning…

 Each of us has been uniquely and masterfully created by God.

 David says in:

**Psalms 139:14 - 16 (NIV)**

**14I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;**

**your works are wonderful, I know that full well.**

**15My frame was not hidden from you**

**when I was made in the secret place.**

**When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,**

**16your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me**

**were written in your book  before one of them came to be.**

David cries out to God….

 **I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made!**

Part of the wonder of God’s creative work within us is the total and complete uniqueness of how God has created each of us.

 No two people who have ever lived have been exactly alike.

 We hear a lot about DNA testing today. DNA testing has proven innocent those convicted long ago of crimes that DNA test now prove that they never committed.

 DNA testing has been used to prove that many are guilty of the crimes that they are charged with.

 We are all made up of molecules. DNA molecules can unite in an infinite number of ways.

 The number of different ways that DNA molecules can unite is 10 to the 2,400,000,000 power!

 That is the number of the likelihood that you would ever find someone just like you!

 If you were to write out that number with each 0 being one inch wide, you would need a strip of paper 37,000 miles long!

 No two people who have ever lived have had the exact same fingerprints, eye prints or voiceprints.

 No wonder David cried out to God with a heart of awe and praise saying… **I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made!**

 Each of us is a unique creation of God. God made us and then He broke the mold…

Do you know what that really speaks of? VALUE!

Example: Companies, like Fenton Glass Company, will make a mold for a collectable piece of glassware, then they will make a limited number of that item and then they will break the mold so that no more of that item can ever be made.

 Why do they do that? To ensure that the item will retain its value. And not just retain its value, but insure that it will become even more valuable as time goes on.

 There can no more be made exactly like it because the mold has been broken.

 Collectable coins are often made the same way.

 After a certain number is made then the mold is destroyed to help insure the value of the coin.

 The less of the product that is originally made the more valuable the product becomes.

 God made you and then He broke the mold! You are a one of a kind creation and that makes you very valuable. In fact that makes you priceless. Especially in the sight of God.

 God loves uniqueness. That is why it is a part of His creative design.

 When God created, He created in variety. Just take a look around in the world that we live in and see all the variety that God has created. All the different forms of plant life. Every leaf on every tree is different from the next, no two are exactly alike. Every animal is different from every other animal. Even animals of the same breed have their own special uniqueness. The ocean is filled with an amazing variety of life. Even dirt is different from other dirt. Some is brown, some black, some red and every shade in-between.

 God loved variety so much that each of us has been created differently. We are all “one of a kind” creations. There is no one else in the entire world exactly like you and that makes you very valuable. Very special..

 So why has God created us with our own unique design?

 Why has he made us all a little differently? Why has He made us with different personalities and character traits and abilities and talents?

 The answer I believe is simple…

 To fulfill His purpose and His plan within creation.

 **Romans 12:3 - 8 (NIV) 3For 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 measure of faith God has given you.****4Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,****5so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.****6We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.****7If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;****8if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.**

I like the way that the Message Bible paraphrases a portion of this Scripture….

**So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ’s body, let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we are not.**

What does all of this have to do with trying to put a square peg into a round hole?

Simply this… Whenever we try to be something that we were not created to be or do something that God has not equipped us to do it will be like trying to get a square peg to fit into a round hole.

 It will leave us frustrated and discouraged and we will be miserable and most probably miss out on the blessings that God has for us.

 Be honest, as a Christian, how many times have you felt like you are trying to get a square peg to go into a round hole?

Possibly you see people around you doing all these neat and good things for God and you just can’t seem to do what they do? Or at least do what they do as good or the way that they do it.

 Churches in general can be a good example…

Some Churches seem to be thriving and growing hand over fist while others seem to really be struggling just to survive.

So, the one struggling looks at the one that is thriving to try to see what it is doing that they aren’t.

 So, you see some things that they are doing differently and try to duplicate them….

Maybe you see that they have a praise and worship band so you think that may be the secret to their success so you try to start one….. You struggle though the process because of lack of talent and giftedness of musicians and end up falling flat on your face. It doesn’t work so you grow even more frustrated.

You see that their pastor is a real extrovert and flamboyant and is a lot more animated in the delivery of his sermons then yours is so you try to get your pastor, who is more of an introvert, to be more like the extrovert and you find that, not only are you frustrated when your pastor doesn’t pull it off, but now he has become frustrated by the failed attempt.

Maybe you see all the needs of people around you, but as hard as you try, you just can’t seem to fulfill all of those needs. And it leaves you feeling frustrated and discouraged, like you are trying to get a square peg into a round hole.

What is the answer to the problem? It’s really pretty simple..

Stop trying to get a square peg to fit into a round hole!

 Stop trying to be something that you are not!

Stop expecting others to be something that they are not!

Stop trying to make yourself into something that God never created you to be!

**3For 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 measure of faith God has given you.**

**4Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.**

What is this telling us here?

To stop trying to do things that God has not equipped us to do but to do the things that He has equipped us to do!

 God has created each of us with certain abilities and talents, and He has gifted us with certain spiritual gifts as well.

Do you understand the difference between abilities and gifts?

Abilities are our natural talents and character qualities that make up who we are. They are inherently a part of our character. Part of Gods creative design when He made us.

 They are our natural abilities and talents.

Spiritual gifts are gifts, talents and abilities that God gives us after we are saved to be used in fulfilling His purpose within the Church and His plan within the world.

 They, for the most part, are supernatural abilities and talents.

 Often, they will transcend our natural talents and abilities.

Example: I have natural abilities in management. I was a good grocery retail manager before I became a Christian.

After I became a Christian, and particularly, after I went into ministry God gave me the spiritual gift of public speaking. Of standing up in front of people and forth telling the word of God.

 How do I know that this is a spiritual gift of God to me?

Because I have no desire in myself to stand up in front of people and say anything. In Fact, I am almost as apprehensive of it today as the first day that I started doing it.

In and of myself I would not be standing up here this morning. I do not have an extrovert personality! In fact, just the opposite is true…I am more of an introvert.

 I do this and I do it with a great deal of satisfaction, not because I enjoy standing up in front of people, but because God enables and equips me to do it, and because of that there is no real frustration involved for me to do it.

Here is the thing…. Whenever I try to operate outside of Gods giftedness, I feel like I am trying to put a square peg in a round hole. I do get frustrated, I can get discouraged.

And if you are honest, I think that you will see that the same is true in your life.

At the times of your greatest frustrations, you will probably find that you are trying to put a square peg into a round hole.

 You are either expecting yourself to do or be what God has not programmed and equipped you to do or be or you are expecting someone else to be something other then what God has equipped and programmed them to be.

This principle applies, not just within the Church, but within all of life.

Marriage, family life, the workplace, the marketplace and especially the Church.

Ladies, if your husband was as introvert, a shy guy, when you got married don’t expect him to become an extrovert, an outgoing person, just because he married you and you happen to be an extrovert with an outgoing personality!

If you have those expectations, then he will most probably feel like he is trying to put a square peg in a round hole with his life and will be frustrated at the failed attempt. And you will most likely be just as frustrated by the experience.

 And guys, if you are an introvert and your wife is an extrovert don’t expect her to become more of a introvert like you as it will make her feel like she is trying to put a square peg in a round hole and she, and you, will end up frustrated by the experience.

Example: I am about 5’6” tall. I live in a house with

 9 1/2’ ceilings. If we have a light bulb burn out in a ceiling fixture and we have a tall quest who happens to be there, someone who is over 6’ 6” tall, , he may offer to change that light bulb. He may be able to do it flatfooted without the use of a ladder.

Now the next time that that light bulb buns out let’s say that Pam feels that I should be able to change it without dragging in a ladder like that guy did---- I will probably be frustrated by the failed attempt. It will leave me feeling like I am trying to put a square peg into a round hole.

Why? Because God didn’t design me to change light bulbs flatfooted on 9 ½ foot ceilings…

If this same person and I are throwing a frisbee around and it goes into a 5 ½ foot high culvert and I go into retrieve it and don’t even have to bend over and a little later it goes in again and I expect this guy to go in after it without stooping over, then for him it will be like trying to put a square peg in a round hole. No matter how hard he tries it won’t fit.

My physical design is better made for picking up night crawlers than it is for putting sheetrock on a ceiling….

 The point is God designed each of us and He designed us for a specific purpose. To use our design, whatever it is, to best serve Him in our world.

Why would we ever want to change Gods design?

I have heard people say, as I am sure you have---

Things like, I wish I could be more like that person..

 They are prettier than I am, they are taller than I am, they have more hair than I do, they are more out going, then I----I want to be like them!

What a slap in the face of God! What is it that we are really saying? God, you didn’t do it right! God, you messed up! God you should have made me differently then You did---God you made a mistake!

When we become a Christian God will ask us to change many things that we do but He will never ask us to change who we are!

Why? Because He is the one who created us who we are!

God’s creation is like a big jig-saw puzzle. No two pieces are exactly alike. None of us are exactly alike but we all have a place in the puzzle of life that only we will fit to make the puzzle complete.

Have you ever tried to make a piece of a jig-saw puzzle fit in a place where it doesn’t belong? Even though it may be very close it is not the right piece for that place in the puzzle. The harder we try to make it fit the more frustrating it becomes.

But then when we do find where that particular piece of the puzzle fits --how much satisfaction we feel as we stand back and look upon the finished work.

Each of us is a part of Gods puzzle in creation…

Each of us was designed by God to fit into a particular place--Created to fulfill a specific purpose for Gods finished work.

This is especially true within the Church, within the Body of Christ!

**1 Corinthians 12:12 -31 (NIV)**

**12The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.****13For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body— whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.**

**14Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.****17If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?****18But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.****19If they were all one part, where would the body.**

God has created you as He wanted to create you. We each have our own unique design. We each have character qualities and abilities that are a unique and special part of who God created us to be.

God has then gifted each of us with special spiritual gifts that help add to the uniqueness of our creation.

Paul compares the Body of Christ to our physical bodies….

**12The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ!**

**21The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”****22On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,****23and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.**

**And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,****24while our presentable parts need no special treatment.**

**But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it,****25so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.**

**26If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.**

**27Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.**

The spiritual gifts that God gives us are as diverse as we ourselves are.

**28And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.****29Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?****30Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues****£****? Do all interpret?**

**NO!**

No one has all the gifts, but all are gifted! And those gifts are to be used to bring wholeness and completeness to the Body of Christ!

In our physical bodies the hand is of no more importance than the foot or the finger more important than the toe or the head more important than the stomach but they all contribute to the wholeness and wellness and completeness of the body.

Paul says so it is with Christ! So, it is within the body of Christ. Each part contributes to the wholeness and welfare of the rest.

Don’t try to be a body part that you were not called to be because it will be like trying to put a square peg in a round hole and you, and the rest of the body, will end up frustrated by the attempt.

 Do strive with all of your heart to be the body part that God has called you to be, has gifted you to be, and you and the body will rejoice because of it.

In closing, If God has created you with an introvert personality, then use your personality to serve God in your part of the world…

 If God has created you with an extrovert personality then use your personality to serve God in your part of the world.

If God has gifted you with the gift of teaching then teach, if He has gifted you with the gift of generosity then be generous, if He has gifted you with the gift of encouragement then encourage, if He has gifted you with the gift of service then serve, If He has gifted you with the gift of hospitality then be hospitable….If He has gifted you with the gift of listening then be a good listener….counseling then be a good councilor, comforting then be a good comforter….

Don’t waste your time trying to put a square peg in a round hole by trying to be like someone else, like someone that you are not…. Get the square peg in the square hole.

Strive to perfect yourself as God created you!

 Strive to use yourself in your own unique design to serve God in whatever way that you can..

Thank Him daily for creating you exactly as He did..

For there is truly no one else in all of creation just like you and that makes you more than just valuable, that makes you priceless in Gods sight.

Tired of living your life trying to get a square peg into a round hole?

Then simple strive to be all that you can be as God has created you to be ---for Him!

Allow Him to use you in your uniqueness and giftedness to serve Him in your part, your corner of the world! Get the square peg in the square hole and you will learn what real satisfaction and fulfillment in life is.

**And you and those around you will rejoice because of it….**