

“Gifted By the Spirit” (part 1)

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

In his book, *God In You: Releasing the Power of the Holy Spirit In Your Life*, Dr. David Jeremiah tells the story of how after WWII, a group of students volunteered to rebuild a cathedral that had been severely damaged by German bombs. As the work progressed, they became concerned about a large statue of Jesus with outstretched arms, and beneath which was the inscription: “Come Unto Me.” They had a difficult time trying to restore the hands, which had been completely destroyed. After some discussion, they decided to let the hands remain missing and change the inscription instead. So that when they were finished, it read: “Christ has no hands but ours.”

Have you ever seriously thought about what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus? Several years ago, Mark Hall of the group Casting Crowns wrote a song which said:

*But if we are the body
Why aren't His arms reaching?
Why aren't His hands healing?
Why aren't His words teaching?
And if we are the body
Why aren't His feet going?
Why is His love not showing them there is a way?*

It really is a powerful reminder that He has no hands but our hands. Which is another way of saying that He desires to use you and me as instruments in His hands. Turn with me in your Bibles this morning to 1 Corinthians 12, where we will pick back up in our study of the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. We've considered how the Holy Spirit has come to live within the believer as resident Helper. It is the Holy Spirit's role in the life of the believer to keep the spotlight on Jesus. He is the Spirit of truth, the One who illuminates our minds to understand the truth of God's Word. We spent quite a bit of time considering the fruit of the Spirit, which is really the character of Christ that is being reproduced in the believer's life. Well, what I want to consider this morning and

for the next couple of weeks is the gifts of the Spirit. The fruit is our character, while the gifts are our contribution. Every believer has been gifted to serve and contribute to the body of Christ in some capacity.

Ray Stedman — *“The church is primarily and fundamentally a body designed to express through each individual member the life of an indwelling Lord and is equipped by the Holy Spirit with gifts designed to express that life. And there is no experience more fulfilling than to realize that you have been the instrument of the divine working in the lives of others. Such an experience awaits any Christian who is willing to give time and thought to the discovery and understanding of his gifts, and will submit himself to the authority of the Head of the body.”*

There are three key passages in the New Testament we go to where we find spiritual gifts outlined. Romans 12 is one passage, Ephesians 4 is another, and the third is the one we’re looking at this morning from 1 Corinthians 12. Before we look at our text, I think it would be helpful for us to make some introductory statements about spiritual gifts so we’re on the same page. Some of the more divisive issues within the church have been centered around this topic. Sincere Christians hold to differing views as to whether or not all of the gifts are still in operation. Those in more ‘charismatic’ circles who believe they are still available have been called continuationists, while those who believe that certain gifts are no longer in operation are called cessationists. For the most part, I personally lean more toward the second group. I’m not a hard line cessationist, because if God still wanted to do the miraculous, He is God. He has gifted people with languages in the past, and He has performed miracles of healing in the past, therefore I have absolutely no problem with believing that God is still able to do so in the present if He so chooses. As far as prophecy and sign gifts, these were important as they confirmed the ministry of the apostles and authenticated their message. But now we have a complete Bible.

My concern is with charismatic ‘excess’ which I view as being a departure from what the Bible says. For instance, those faith healers who hold miracle healing crusades on television or whatever, I’ve often wondered why they don’t visit the local hospitals if

they've truly been endowed with the gift of healing. You don't see that. No, what you see is some self-proclaimed 'prophet' who is on tv at some late hour selling packets of miracle water which he claims comes from a magic spring he discovered way up in the mountains. "Known to cure cancer...Known to clear up acne...Known to heal male pattern baldness...For a love gift of \$12.99 this packet of miracle spring water can be yours!" I call foul on that kind of stuff.

Let me give you a simple definition for a spiritual gift. Write this down:

“Spiritual gifts are gifts of grace granted by the Holy Spirit and designed for the edification of the church.”

So anyone who claims to have a 'gift' but seeks to profit off of it is automatically to be viewed with suspicion. They are no different than Simon of Samaria in Acts 8 who tried to offer the apostles money for the power of the Holy Spirit. And you remember what Peter said to him in response:

Acts 8:20-21 — “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.”

Spiritual gifts are not for the sake of self-promotion, but for the building up of the local church. A local church is most effective when its members discover and deploy their God-given abilities to build up the body. Through spiritual gifts, the Holy Spirit enables Christians to mature in their faith and to worship, witness, and serve so that others are drawn to the Lord Jesus. With that being said, let me give you some basic introductory statements about spiritual gifts that we need to consider.

- Spiritual gifts are **distinct** from natural abilities

We need to make a distinction between spiritual gifts and natural talent or ability. There are those among us who have natural ability to do things—sing, play instruments, athletics, skill to build, and so on. And these are not to be confused with what the New Testament describes as those spiritual gifts. That doesn't mean a person cannot glorify

God with their natural abilities. To the contrary, a Christian ought to bring glory to God in their work. But at the same time, natural ability can also become a smokescreen for a lack of character. You don't have to be spiritual to be gifted in this way. And you and I must not gravitate toward those who may have natural gifts but have no spiritual character.

- Spiritual gifts are **different** from the fruit of the Spirit

We looked at this when we were in Galatians 5, but the fruit of the Spirit is not the same thing as spiritual gifts. And the fruit of the Spirit is more important. Character must come before giftedness. I've seen it happen before in leadership, but sometimes a person's gifts will take them places where their character can't keep them. We must make priority the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Though spiritual gifts are important, the fruit of the Spirit is more important, first level issues to be considered.

- Spiritual gifts are **distributed** to every believer

There is not a person in the body of Christ who isn't gifted in some way by God to edify and build up the church. All of us who are a part of the body have a unique contribution to make. No matter the gift, the purpose remains the same—it is for the sake of edification, for building up the church.

- Spiritual gifts are **determined** by the will of God

Just because you don't have the same gift that someone else might have doesn't mean yours is not needed. God has given us gifts as He has sovereignly determined. The point will be made by Paul further down in 1 Corinthians 12 that even though there are many parts, we are members of one body. The body doesn't consist of one member, but of many. A foot can't say to the hand, "Because I'm not a hand, I don't belong to the body." The fact that a foot is a foot doesn't make it any less a part of the body. Though the body is diverse and made up of multiple parts, what is important is its unity. All have an important part to play. And let me be quick to point something out here—what the Bible says about spiritual gifts does away with the idea that a Christian can be devoted

to Christ and not committed to their local church. The fact is that every Christian has been gifted by the Spirit to make an important contribution, and a church is healthier and better for it. (Read)

Here in our text this morning, I want to point out the overall instruction that we find about spiritual gifts. It is important that you understand the background of this passage, for it sheds light on why Paul spends so much time explaining spiritual gifts to the Corinthians. The church in Corinth had been riddled with problems. It was the most immature and carnal of all the churches mentioned in the New Testament. They rallied behind competing personalities. There was an issue of immorality that had not been dealt with. Division, lawsuits among members who were dragging each other to court, worldly philosophy, and abuses of spiritual gifts had all been problems.

It's not surprising for a church to have sin problems. When you consider that a local church is made up of people who are saved and spiritually growing men and women—but still imperfect. And if that's the case for a group of longtime Christians, imagine a local church consisting entirely of baby Christians. When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, these believers had only been saved three years. They were all recent converts. They did not have generations of mature Christians in their culture. There were none of them who grew up in a Christian home. So it shouldn't be surprising that they were in need of basic instruction. That's what the apostle Paul is doing in this letter. He instructs them in the basic truth of the gospel, and part of that involves careful instruction in the area of spiritual gifts.

Now, the amazing thing about the Corinthian church was they had all the gifts. Chapter 1:7 says, "You come behind in no gift. You lack nothing." They had been blessed with spiritual gifts. Chapter 14:12 says, "Since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, seek to excel in building up the church." They were fully equipped for maturity and for ministry; they were fully equipped to grow in their faith. But instead, there was chaos. There was a failure on the part of the 'gifted men' (Eph. 4) to do the job they were supposed to do in equipping the saints. There was a failure on the part of the saints to minister the gifts they had been given. Instead, they were being neglected, abused, and confused. And

the end result was the chaotic mess that appears in chapters 12-14 which Paul writes to correct. In these chapters, he addresses the need for proper understanding of the gifts, proper stewardship of the gifts as spiritual endowments from God Himself. So, it is a very important section, and it is just as important for us as it was for them. And as far as instructions for spiritual gifts are concerned, notice first:

1—How they are DEFINED (12:1-3)

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says ‘Jesus is accursed!’ and no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit.”

Paul doesn’t want them to be ‘uninformed’ or with a lack of information when it comes to spiritual gifts. The word that is used in verse 1 translated as ‘spiritual gifts’ is the Greek word ‘pneumatikos.’ We get the term ‘pneumatics’ from this particular word. Maybe you know what a pneumatic tool is. Let’s say you take your car to the local garage to have a tire changed. You pull it into the bay and the fellow working in the garage puts it on a hydraulic lift. Then, he uses an impact wrench with a hose hooked up to an air compressor to loosen the lug nuts. The air pressure gives that wrench greater torque or power. That’s a ‘pneumatic’ tool. This is the word Paul uses here for ‘spiritual gifts.’ As the wind of the Spirit is at work in our life, He empowers us for ministry and service.

The confusion Paul addresses

The gifts which the Holy Spirit supplies us are ‘spiritual’ in nature. They are not necessarily emotional, which means they aren’t natural to our human nature. They aren’t to be carried out in the energy of the flesh, but through the power that the Spirit supplies. Notice there in verse 2 how Paul is reminding the believers where they came from. Paul says, “When you were pagans, you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.” Right outside the city of Corinth was a hill known as the ‘Acro-Corinth’ and at the top of it was a temple devoted to the worship of Aphrodite. There were all kinds of pagan ceremonies that were conducted there, most of which involved extreme

emotional, frenzied activity, incoherent babbling, and extreme perversion. This was all being done in the name of worship. Greek culture believed that the more out of mind a person was, the more in tune with the divine they were. Take the Greek thinker Plato for example. He said this:

Plato—*“It is through mania, which is ecstasy due to divine possession, that the greatest blessings come to us.”*

Plato the intellectual said the more hysterical you are, the more spiritual blessing you’re going to get. In the Temoas, Plato also said this, “No one in possession of his rational mind has reached divine and true exaltation.” In other words, you’ll never be in touch with deity until you’re out of your mind. That’s Plato who had influenced Greek thought in Paul’s day. And so Paul is doing a very important thing here in reminding the Corinthians of all their baggage they brought with them into their new experience in Christ. Everything that was culturally a part of their life, because they were carnal, manifested itself in their church. And so Paul is saying to them, “There’s a different way of living, a different way of worshiping, and a different way of serving from anything that you’ve previously known.” We no longer serve the flesh, but in the Holy Spirit.

John 4:24—**“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

1 Corinthians 2:12—**“Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God.”**

In Corinth, the world came right into church, infiltrated its ministry, and it began to do the things that they were doing essentially before they ever knew Christ and calling them gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul says to the Corinthians, “You used to worship the way the pagans do, led astray to idols.” Now, you’ve brought those old patterns into the church and are out of control. So that they were unable to distinguish between the spiritual and the carnal, between the demonic and the divine. Everything was going on in their worship, and they couldn’t distinguish what was of God, what was of Satan. It was a chaotic scene.

The clarification Paul makes

Paul is saying, “The truly spiritual”—pneumatikos – “is not marked by being carried away. It is not marked by being led astray. That is characteristic of your former way of life.” Now, you see what he is saying? You used to have a ‘led-away’ religion. But not anymore. Genuine spirituality is not marked by being swept away into emotional frenzy. Being carnal and out of control is never the Christian’s use of his gift. Somebody says, “Well, I was ‘slain’ in the Spirit,” and I respond, “You may have been slain, but it wasn’t in the Holy Spirit.” I don’t buy into that stuff for a minute. I know you’ve seen this somewhere on television. There’s a fellow standing there, waiting to catch some person as they fall backwards. Maybe it’s a hypnotic thing, or perhaps it’s a demonic thing. Who knows what it is. But the Holy Spirit does not operate the gifts of the Spirit when people are out of control. This is Paul’s point here. God is not the author of confusion (14:33).

The clarity Paul brings

He says in verse 3, “Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says ‘Jesus is accursed!’” Evidently, some of those who were getting up and saying things in the worship gatherings of the church were speaking blasphemous things. Some Bible scholars have associated this with gnosticism which was popular in Greek thought. Because it believed that the body was bad, it ruled out the bodily resurrection of Jesus. It said that the ‘Christ’ spirit descended upon the man Jesus at baptism, but it departed before the crucifixion. Gnosticism wanted to differentiate between the Christ spirit and the man Jesus, and the mosaic law said that anyone who was hanged on a tree was cursed. And so imagine someone who had been influenced by these ideas getting up before the Corinthian church making the claim that Jesus is cursed! The point is that the Corinthians couldn’t tell a difference.

Don’t believe that just because it happens in the church, is of the Spirit. Satan spends a lot of his time at church. And just because someone says something in church, we must not automatically assume it’s of God.

Paul goes on to say in verse 3, “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit.” In other words, no person can truly acknowledge Jesus is the Lord except by the Holy Spirit. When a deep conviction of genuine understanding about who He is comes forth in a person, it is of the Spirit. When somebody curses Jesus, that’s sufficient evidence that they’re not of the Spirit. When somebody confesses Jesus, that’s sufficient evidence they are. And where the Lord Jesus is being magnified, the Spirit is truly at work. God works through our gifts to magnify Jesus!

2—How they are DESIGNED (12:4-7)

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

Now, having said something about how spiritual gifts are defined, a second thing to mention involves their design. Notice that Paul uses this word ‘varieties’ at least three times. God has so designed spiritual gifts that they come in a variety of ways. We’re not all carbon copy clones of each other. The members that make up the body have a unique contribution to make. Though the gifts are varied, notice the common denominator—it is the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God who supplies them. So that there is unity, but it is expressed through varieties of gifts, varieties of service, and varieties of activities.

Gifted by the Holy Spirit

Paul says in verse 4, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.” The moment you and I were born into the family of God through salvation, we were endowed with a spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit. No matter who you are, if you’ve been born again, you are gifted by God to serve and bless the body of Christ. Think of it this way: God gave you a gift on your spiritual birthday, all for the benefit of others.

“Gifts” —*translates the Greek noun ‘charisma’ and means gift of grace; the root word means to show favor or bestow*

Have you ever known someone who has a charisma about him or her? To say someone is full of charisma is to say he or she has a charm about them that tends to attract others. Or a 'charismatic' personality is one that stands out, one to which others are drawn. The word comes from a root word 'charis' from which we get the word 'grace.' Even the name 'Karen' comes from this root word. Paul is saying here that these gifts come as the result of God's grace. At salvation, every believer receives 'grace gifts' which are to be used in building up the local church. Then notice they are also:

Directed by the Holy Spirit

Verse 5 says, "And there are varieties of service, but the same Lord." The Spirit has gifted every believer, and there are a variety of ways in which you and I serve, but it is all under the direction of the same Lord. Think about all of the multiple ways people are serving the Lord Jesus through the ministry here at Hopewell. As of right now, there are 72 different ministries listed under the 'Ministry' tab on our app or website. That's not including the way people are serving through their discipleship groups, led by teachers and other leaders. Think about the ways people are serving the body of Christ through natural, and unorganized means—maybe praying with someone in the parking lot, checking up on the widows, encouraging someone who has had a tough week. There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit who works among us. There are varieties of services, but the same Lord. And notice how it is being:

Energized by the Holy Spirit

Verse 6, "And there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone." The word 'activities' refers to various effects or that which is produced by the Holy Spirit.

"Activities" — *the Greek word is 'energema'*

We get the word 'energy' or 'energize' from this term. The point being made is that there are a variety of generated activities in the church, but the same God who empowers them all in everyone. God empowering and energizing the exercise of our

spiritual gifts. That's the way it is supposed to be in the church. Notice verse 7 says, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." Or in other words, you don't operate the gift apart from the Giver. And you can't separate the gift from the Giver. A spiritual gift is God Himself who is at work through your life in some capacity. That's what Paul is saying. There are varieties of gifts, services, and activities, but the same power at work in each one.

Sam Storms—*"We often mistakenly think that the only individuals in the church who are recipients of God's power are apostles or elders or pastors or those with a seminary degree who can read Greek and Hebrew. But consider Stephen, neither apostle nor elder nor pastor, whom Luke described as 'full of grace and power,' by which he did 'great wonders and signs among the people' (Acts 6:8). Stephen was one of the first seven deacons. He was assigned 'to serve tables' (v. 2) so that the apostles could devote themselves to preaching the Word and to prayer. The only thing that set him apart is that he was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (v. 5)."*

The power that filled Stephen was the same power that filled Paul, the very same power that is available to work through you and me today. A believer's spiritual gift is a unique capacity to minister to the body of Christ through a vehicle or means by which the Spirit of God supernaturally touches the lives of other people. They are designed to 'build up' the body of Christ, not 'puff up' the person who has them. That's what was happening in the Corinthian church. Rather than seeking to be a blessing to other people, men and women in the church became enamored with themselves and their gifts, and they rallied behind competing personalities so that the church became divided.

Spiritual gifts are not designed as special privileges for the one who has them. Your spiritual gift is not for your own edification. Sanctification, yes. Service, yes. But self-promotion, no! When you are exercising your spiritual gift in the power of God's Spirit, two things will be happening—1) Christ will be glorified, and 2) Christians will be edified. God will use you in the lives of other people. Imagine a man who is called by God to preach, and it is evident that he is gifted. If he is truly exercising the gift, he won't be

about about himself. He won't be building his brand. Accompanying that gift will be the corresponding discipline to study. I like this:

H.B Charles — *“A passion to preach without a burden to prepare is a desire to perform.”*

Far too many Christians just want to perform for the crowd, rather than serve under the radar. Some gifts may be more public in nature, but in no way does that mean they're more important than other gifts. Each one of us have been gifted in such a way to bless the body of Christ. Peter says:

1 Peter 4:10—**“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”**

Each one of us in the body of Christ has received a gift, we are stewards of God's manifold grace, and we are to use it to serve one another. Some may have more than one gift, no one has all the gifts, yet everyone has some gift. That's how spiritual gifts have been so designed. Then notice:

3—How they are DISTRIBUTED (12:8-11)

“For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apports to each one individually as He wills.”

Paul says that there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are varieties of service, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each member of the body is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. That means no one in the body of Christ has been left out. No one is without some grace gift, some contribution which they can make. Verse 11 says, “He apports to each one individually as He wills.” Are you an individual member of the body? Then you've been gifted to serve.

Now, I've noticed there are two spiritual afflictions in the body of Christ which are polar opposites of each other. On the one hand, I know some Christians who struggle with feelings of uselessness, inferiority, or envy. They see others as being useful, but they don't put themselves in that same category. They feel unqualified to contribute, they believe themselves to be unnecessary. Yet they recognize they belong to the body, but if anything they see themselves as the wisdom teeth or the appendix. There, but not needed.

Then on the other hand, there are those who experience feelings of self-sufficiency and superiority. They act as if they alone matter. Others may be dispensable, but not them. The church can't function without them. They may serve, but not out of humility. Their gifts are the means by which they find their identity.

Spiritual gifts are not given to you so that you can 'wow' everyone and bring glory to you. You are given a gift to serve for the 'common good' of others and thereby bring glory to the Lord. Spiritual gifts are to be exercised for the common good of the body. They are to flow through you to the benefit of others beyond you. When you and I don't make serving a priority, the body as a whole suffers for it. If you read on in chapter 12, you discover that the issue that God is most concerned about is unity in the body. The analogy of the human body is critical because, although we only have one body, that body is made up of thousands of parts. When the body of Christ ceases to function as a unified whole, it demonstrates that the Spirit's gifts are not being used properly. The Corinthians were guilty of sowing disunity in the body by comparing gifts and saying, "I'm more gifted than you, therefore I'm more important than you." It led to jealousy over who had what gifts, and the church became divided as some members were elevated over others. They had totally missed the point.

Another key passage is found in Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus. It serves to show the purpose of spiritual gifts, but it provides a job description for spiritual leaders.

Ephesians 4:7-13—“But grace was given to each one us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men’ ...And He gave the apostles, the

prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Jesus has gifted His church to equip the saints for service in order that the body might be built up. This involves the role of gifted leaders as well as the responsibilities of gifted saints. The job description of church leaders is not to do all the ministry, but to equip the saints for ministry by helping them to understand and use their gifts. Nothing can ever replace the collective impact that happens when the whole body is serving out of its giftedness under the direction of the Spirit.

One reason that the church seems to be having very little impact on society today is that too many members of the body have little interest in serving for the common good of the body. They are more like consumers rather than those who make a contribution. They sit, soak, and sour. When it comes to serving, ‘somebody else’ can do it. I came across a little poem that I thought really made its point:

There’s a clever young fellow named Somebody Else.

There’s nothing this fellow can’t do!

He’s busy from morning till way late at night

Just substituting for you.

When asked to do this or asked to do that

So often you are set to reply,

“Get Somebody Else, Mr. Chairman,

He’ll do it much better than I.”

There’s so much to do in our church,

So much, and the workers are few.

Somebody Else gets worried and worn

Just substituting for you.

So next time you’re asked to do something worthwhile,

Come up with this honest reply:

*“If Somebody Else can give time and effort,
It’s obviously true, so can I.”*

Many people today tend to be ‘ecclesiastical consumers.’ In other words, they’re only interested in what they can get out of their church, so they bounce from congregation to congregation like a feather floating on a breeze. There is no commitment or loyalty to a specific local assembly of believers. In fact, they may have little to no attachment to the church at all. And they are under no obligation for regular attendance—if they make it, they make it. If not, it’s no big deal. Their Christianity exists completely outside and apart from the local church. That’s not what God has in mind for the body. Every part is important and must not exist merely for itself, but for the greater good of the body. And when we work together from our individual uniqueness and spiritual giftedness, the end result is a beautiful scene.

Let me illustrate it this way as I close...Have you ever heard someone say that there are no two snowflakes which are identical? Conditions in the clouds need to be just right for flakes to form. Temperatures in the upper atmosphere have to be below freezing at the same time as the air is saturated with water vapor. This causes ice crystals to form around tiny objects such as particles of dust. Initially, they are too light to fall and only begin their descent when they become big enough. That descent happens when super-cooled water droplets evaporate and then the water vapor condenses onto the surface of the ice crystal. That makes them bigger and heavier, so that now they can fall to earth as a flake. And every individual flake is unique. There are no two which are exactly identical.

(See image of snowflakes and blanket of snow)

Think about the beauty of all those unique flakes, as they cover the ground with a beautiful blanket of snow. Just an average snowstorm that covers 500 square miles with an inch of snow is estimated to contain around 2 quadrillion (a two with 15 zeroes) individual snowflakes, and each one is unique. Now, that is the wisdom of the Creator as it relates to creation. How much more is His wisdom on display in the uniqueness of each individual member of the body of Christ, which He has purchased with His own

blood? If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, then you are gifted by Him to build others up in the body. But if you don't know Him, you can receive the gift of salvation today! And when you've received the gift of salvation, He will then supply you with the gifts.

Christian, you are gifted to make an impact. You have been gifted to make a contribution. What might your contribution be to this fellowship? Let's pray.