



LIFE GROUP NOTES
For week commencing: 21/07/2024

Holy Spirit

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Communication

Life Group Activities

Use the Three Thirds structure for your gathering together.

Looking Back

- Mutual Care – How are you doing?

- Worship & Prayer
 - Worship
 - Pray
 - Communion

- Loving Accountability
 - How did you follow?
 - How did you fish? (Ask how many gospel shares in the last week)

- Vision Cast – Why are we meeting like this?
 - Talk about your vision for social events / outreach and how you will care and encourage one another.

Looking up

Discovery Bible Study The Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Communication

The preaching notes are added at the end of the notes.

- Review and summarise the series on the Holy Spirit so far
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (See Sermon notes for extra readings on the relevant gifts)
- Try to summarise the Communication gifts in your own words:
 - Prophecy
 - Discernment
 - Speaking in tongues
 - Interpretation of tongues
- How do you think that these gifts work together?
- Who are these gifts available to?
- When do you think that the Holy Spirit will impart these gifts for use in the church and in everyday life?
- Share stories of when you have seen any of gifts at work in your life.
- How are you going to apply this teaching to your life?

Looking Forward

- Practice – Practice the Three Circles or your People Map
- Set Goals:
 - Use C.O.S.T.
 - Connect – How am I going to connect with God this week?
 - Obey – How am I going to be obedient this week?
 - Share – Who am I going to share the gospel with or pray with this week?
 - Teach – Who can I encourage with this message this week?
- Pray together for the filling of the Holy Spirit

Preaching Notes for Reference

Gifts of Communication

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

- Review the teaching so far
 - The coming of the Holy Spirit
 - The Person of the Holy Spirit
 - How to be Filled with the Holy Spirit
 - The Fruit of the Spirit – Part 1 – Love, Joy, Peace
 - The Fruit of the Spirit - Part 2 – Patience, Kindness, Goodness
 - The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – Part 3 – Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control
 - The Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Revelation Gifts, Wisdom and Knowledge.
 - The Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Power Gifts, Faith, Healing, Miracles
 - The Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Communication Gifts, Prophecy, Discernment, Speaking in Tongues, Interpretation of tongues

Prophecy

Prophecy is receiving fresh revelation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that is consistent with the old revelation. (James Dunn)

If a message is a report of something God brings suddenly to mind, it is a prophecy. (Wayne Grudem)

“The NT uses two different Greek terms to describe the Word of God: *logos* and *rhema*.

Logos refers to the written word of God found in the Bible (Heb 4:12). It is also used to describe the living Word of God found in Jesus (John 1:1)

But the other word, *rhema*, describes the spoken word of God expressed in prophecy (I Cor 2:13).

There are a number of passages in scripture that we traditionally apply to the Bible, but they actually refer to the prophetic utterance. Here is an example:

In the wilderness, Jesus tells Satan “**Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every rhema that comes from the mouth of God**” (Matt 4:4)

Also, the original Greek word translated here as ‘comes from’ is *ekporeuomeno* which literally describes speech ‘continually coming out from’ the mouth of the Lord’.

What is Jesus saying here? We are sustained not just by studying the things God has said in the past as revealed in the Bible (*Logos*) but also by feeding on the things God is continually speaking to us here and now (*rhema*).

In Prophecy, we are hearing God's voice for other people. Read 1 Corinthians 14:3 – 4

“The one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation....the one who prophesies builds up the church.”

God speaks through us into the lives of other people.

- Prophecy is speaking out: The word “prophecy” in Greek means to speak for, or to speak before (something happens). Indication that the future may be a part of prophecy although there will often be conditions attached to this. More often prophecy is a forth-telling of the word, i.e. an encouragement, or a revelation about a situation or a word about God himself.
- Prophecy is distinct from preaching and teaching. Preaching may take hours of careful preparation and thought, whereas prophecy is (often) spontaneous.
- In prophecy God gives the words to say. In other words, God can say the most amazing things through very ordinary people!
 - But they will always be affirming. Does this word fulfil the criteria of 1 Corinthians 14, by being strengthening, encouraging, comforting, edifying and upbuilding? (**Affirming**)
 - Prophecy always agrees with what God says in the Bible. (Biblical).
 - So when using the gift, or receiving a prophecy, we can ask the question “Is this consistent with the broad teaching and witness of scripture?” (not just a specific verse taken out of context) (**Biblical**)
 - Prophecy is speaking out on behalf of God: When a person prophesies, he or she speaks on behalf of God.
 - So, is this message consistent with the character, mission and message of Jesus? (**Christlike**)

The ABC is not a perfect filter, for there are times when a word from God may not be comforting at all and could be deeply challenging. But for those of us taking our first steps in the prophetic area, it is much less scary to start with encouraging and affirming words before you move on to more challenging ones.

Discernment

The spiritual gift of discernment is also known as the gift of “discernment of spirits” or “distinguishing between spirits.” The Greek word for the gift of discernment is *Diakrisis*. The word describes being able to distinguish, discern, judge or appraise

- a person,
- a statement,
- situation, or
- environment.

The Holy Spirit gives the gift of discernment to enable us to clearly recognize and distinguish between the influence of a) God, b) Satan, c) the world, and d) the flesh in each situation.

The church needs those with this gift to warn believers in times of danger or keep them from being led astray by false teaching. See also I Corinthians 12:10,

Acts 5:3-6; Ananias & Sapphira (Peter is given Discernment)

Acts 16:16-18; Paul & the Slave girl with the demonic spirit

1 **John 4:1.** “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of discernment so that the church may not be deceived and torn down but built up and edified.

Speaking in tongues

What is “speaking in tongues”?

It is speaking in a new language given by the Holy Spirit. It is a real language even though it may not be a human one.

“Speaking in tongues” or languages is quite different from the other gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12. While speaking the language the mind plays no part at all (it does in other gifts).

What is “the Interpretation of tongues”?

It is the interpretation of what has been said in tongues into the native language of the listeners. It is an interpretation and not a word-for-word translation. (WE will come back to this)

Should all speak in tongues?

Not everyone does speak in tongues **publicly**, but on the personal level should all speak in tongues?

There is no doubt that “speaking in tongues” is related to the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the church and upon individuals, as seen in the book of Acts.

- At Pentecost: Acts 2:4 – tongues/languages
- At Caesarea: **Acts 10:45-46** – tongues or other languages
- At Ephesus: Acts 19:6 – tongues and prophecy
- At Samaria: Acts 8:17 Tongues not mentioned but it is extremely likely that what Simon saw and heard were the Samaritans speaking in tongues, as well as, perhaps, other things.
- Paul: Acts 9 – We know that Paul spoke in tongues. It is possible that Paul spoke in tongues at this point.

Do I have to speak in tongues? No!

Do I have to speak in tongues to be filled with the Spirit? No!

Can I speak in tongues if I am filled with the Spirit? Many DO, others SHOULD, and all COULD!

How should tongues be used in public?

- Simply put, you speak out in tongues publicly when the Holy Spirit gives you that public gift. You do it when you know that the anointing is on you.

The temptation is to speak out your personal tongue as if it was a public one. We have to learn the difference between our own heavenly language and the prompting of the Holy Spirit to bring a public one.

It could be that any public tongue given to you would be a different language from the one you speak in personally.

Each public tongue must be followed by an interpretation of that tongue. The responsibility for the interpretation is with the one who speaks in a tongue. **1 Cor 14:13:** This sounds a bit daunting but is not so bad when we remember the following:

- Before you speak out you need assurance from the Spirit that someone will interpret what you say.
- If you don't get that assurance ask the Spirit to give you the interpretation. Then, if no one else interprets, you can.
- If you do not get either of these assurances do not speak out!
- If in doubt, check it out with a leader.
- If you speak out in confidence and the one who should interpret fails to do so, ask the Spirit to give you the interpretation.
- If you cannot then get the interpretation don't worry! The ultimate responsibility for seeing that this guidance is followed in the church rests with the leaders of the church. Let them sort it out!
- Better to step out in faith and take the risk than never to step out at all! The Lord honours those who are obedient to him.

What effect does “speaking in tongues” have?

Its value in the church.

“Speaking in tongues” can be praise, worship or prayer, leading us personally into the heights and depths of these things.

If that is true for the person who speaks in tongues, then it is also true for the church **provided that there is an interpretation.**

Without an interpretation the effect on the church is at best nothing, at worst leads to confusion. (But see the note on responsibility, above. Don't be put off from “having a go”!)

With an interpretation those who are listening can say “Amen”, 1 Cor 14:16-17.

With an interpretation the church is built up. 1 Cor 14:5:

Its effect on the unbeliever.

Should we keep tongues away from the person who is not a Christian or the one who is seeking but does not yet understand?

Paul applies a scripture from Isaiah to other languages in 1 Cor 14:22-23. The unbeliever will hear tongues and if he denies that they are of God then it is a sign of the judgement of God. Indeed, the unbeliever may think you are mad. We should not worry if the outsider rejects tongues; this may be a powerful sign that God is convicting him or her of judgement.

The unbeliever, however, may react as the people did on the day of Pentecost. He may ask what it all means and the tongues will have shown him that God is at work. This will prepare the way for the word to do its work.

What about the “Interpretation of tongues”?

It is interpretation, not translation (literal word-for-word) and can be longer or shorter than the original tongue.

As the tongue has a God-ward direction (1 Cor 14:2) so also will the interpretation. If the tongue is one of praise, the interpretation will be of praise. If the tongue is prayer, so will the interpretation be one of prayer. If the

tongue is one of crying out to God so will the interpretation. It has been a common practice in some circles that where a tongue has been given the interpretation that has followed has been indistinguishable from a prophecy. Tongues are always directed to God (see above). Interpretation of these tongues must be the same.

Interpretation opens up some of the mystery that tongues express. As what has been uttered in a tongue is made known a little part of the divine mystery is revealed to the people of God.

Let's return to Prophecy

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire..prophecy” (1 Corinthians 14: 1)

The Corinthian Church was badly in need of Paul's correctional letter! Most of them had been pagans before conversion, and they lacked knowledge and understanding of how to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit they had been given by God. (Plus many other things, as seen in the whole letter.)

(Our view of Spiritual Gifts, like Prophecy and tongues, may have been shaped by our previous experiences, both within churches and outside of them.)

Paul is taking them in hand, and showing them the best way, the most excellent way. It appears that when they came together as believers to worship, everyone was speaking in tongues at the same time, there was chaos and disorder, and believers boasting that their 'gifts' were more important than what others were manifesting.

READ 1 Corinthians 12: 27 - 1 Corinthians 14: 1

1. Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

How eager are we? Let us start asking the Lord to use us to help others through the gift of prophecy.

2. Receiving the Prophetic Word

The BIG questions are:

- How do I receive a prophecy from God?
- How do I give a prophecy?

The answers to these questions are closely linked to the TYPE of prophetic word you receive AND has a big effect on how you give it.

a) Through a Bible Verse or passage.

This can happen while you are at home alone, or in a life group meeting, or in a church service.

- God will “highlight” a verse or passage to you and impress on you a truth, a principle or a promise which you feel you ought to pass on.
- When this happens, read the passage slowly and prayerfully. Read it again and ask the Holy Spirit to either emphasise a particular theme or a particular verse to you.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sense of what He wants to say to this group/individual/church. Even if you think these might just be your own thoughts, note them down. Remember, you are not looking to the Holy Spirit to speak to you personally, but rather to say something through you to others.
- Now, pluck up the courage to say what you believe the Holy Spirit has said.

There are direct ways in which the Spirit may speak to us for others without using the means of the scriptures.

- b) You could be in a worship service, a home group or just praying with one or two people. As you are worshiping or praying a picture comes to mind. Some people actually ‘see’ pictures in front of them while others get an impression in the imagination. Whatever way it comes, it stays with you.
- i. When this happens you must ask the Lord what the picture means and he will tell you! Either a few key words or an understanding of the picture will take root in your mind. For example, you might ‘see’ a line of people going up a hill with some lagging behind. The Lord might then place in your mind the thought that some people in the church are struggling, and we must make sure they don’t get left behind.
 - ii. Next ask God to keep this with you if it is genuine, to increase the pressure to pass it on to others or else to take it away. You may have a physical sensation going along with this, like a thumping heart or hot hands – everyone is different – or you may feel nothing at all, just the constant conviction this is of God.
 - iii. Finally, in a Sunday service check it out with an elder or whoever has responsibility for the meeting that day (not necessarily the person leading worship). They will release you to give the word at an appropriate time. In a home group check with the leader if this makes you feel more secure, or just step out. (We are allowed to make mistakes in home groups.!) One-to-one have the courage to share your word.
- b) Similarly, some words come into your mind about what is happening in the meeting, or about a situation, or about something brought by the preacher, or ... The words may be about or concerning the person you are praying with / for ... It could be the first words of a sentence, but you don’t know how the sentence finishes. It may be a whole sentence, but you sense there is more to come. They stay there! As you think about the words the “gist” of what God might be saying comes to you. In the same way as above ask God to keep this with you if it is genuine. It stays with you and you feel you will be disobeying the Lord if you do not speak it out. Check it out with the person responsible for the meeting / elder and give him the sense of what you think God is saying. He will either tell you to “hold the word” and wait or he will permit you to release the word at an appropriate point. Or speak out the word to the person you are with. You will be able to speak out the word in usually one of these ways.
- i. You will give a “report” of what you believe God is saying; e.g. “I believe God is saying he will bless the people who respond to him now. He is saying he wants to do a new work in people’s lives.” You give thought to each thing you say.
 - ii. Words may just “flow” using the third person singular, as if you are quoting what God is saying in indirect speech; e.g. “The Lord says he will bless you now; he will do a new work in your lives if you turn to him...”
 - iii. Words may “flow” in the 1st person; e.g. “God is saying something like: I will bless you my people. I will do a new work within you if you turn to me now...”

Each of these ways is spontaneous; the first example involves more “thinking” than the other two examples; in the second and third examples the words just come in a way which almost bypasses the mind.

However, the speaker is always fully in control; “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the control of the prophets.” 1 Corinthians 14:32. It is quite possible for God to give you a word like this at home which you can hold until the church meets together or until you see the person for whom it is meant.

RECEIVING THE PROPHETIC WORD

We have looked at receiving the word through scripture and through the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God can and will speak to us at any time if we are open for him to do so. This may be a personal word to us or it may be something we are to pass on to others – a prophecy. For example:

- In our personal times of prayer and reading God's Word.
- While we are doing the ordinary things of life, like gardening or housework. His word may, or may not, be connected to what we are doing at that particular moment. Jeremiah 18:3f: I went to the potter's house and I saw him working at a wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands...
- Through conversations with other people; a comment someone makes to us can ignite a sense of God speaking to us about an issue or situation.
- Through what we see around us. This can be especially so when we are walking out in the countryside or visiting an area new to us. Psalm 19:1f: The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.
- Through dreams and visions. Acts 16:9: During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over and help us."
- Through worship and music. 1 Chronicles 25:1: ... For the ministry of prophesying accompanied by harps...

WEIGHING" PROPHECY

One of the things that troubles people most about prophecy and prophetic words is whether or not a prophecy is true and what value or importance ought to be given to it.

This applies to words given in the church context, or to groups, as well as to people individually. Many hold back from passing on a prophetic word in case they are wrong. No-one wants to mislead the church or an individual and few like the idea of making a mistake in public.

There are several interrelated issues that need to be decided:

1. The genuineness of the word
2. The partial nature of the word
3. The meaning of the word
4. The importance of the word
5. The application of the word

The process of coming to these decisions is termed “weighing” prophecy, see below.

This all looks rather fearsome when set out in this way. **Actually much of it is spiritually intuitive and instant; very rarely does one have to go through a checklist!**

WHO WEIGHS PROPHETIC WORDS?

1Corinthians 14:29: Two or three prophets should speak and the others should weigh carefully what is said.

The task of weighing prophetic words thus falls on all who may prophesy, which is everyone. Of course, the elders (those who oversee the life of the church) and the leader of a particular meeting will have greater responsibility here.

The 3Thirds Discipleship Model

Look back	Look up	Look forward
<p>1. Mutual care: How are you doing?</p> <p>2. Worship: Praising God in a simple, relevant way.</p> <p>3. Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Follow:</i> How did you obey the lesson from last time? ◦ <i>Fish:</i> Did you pray with anyone who was in need? ◦ Did you share your story and/or Jesus' story? ◦ Did you find a person of peace? <p>4. Casting vision for reaching lost people and making disciples.</p>	<p>5. New lesson: Enough Biblical content to obey and pass it on.</p> <p>Use the Discovery Bible Study Method:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Read the Bible Story b. Ask them to re-tell the story in their own words c. Ask four questions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. What does this story tell us about God? ii. What does this story tell us about people? iii. Is there a command to obey or an example to follow or a promise to live by? iv. How does this apply to my life? 	<p>6. Practice the lesson until everyone is confident and competent to apply the learning. e.g. Retell your story, Jesus' story, or this week's story.</p> <p>7. Set goals</p> <p>Goals for personal growth, sharing the gospel, and training others.</p> <p>C.O.S.T. Connect Obey Share Teach</p> <p>8. Pray and Share Communion</p>
<p>1/3 of your time (e.g. 30 mins)</p>	<p>1/3 of your time (e.g. 30 mins)</p>	<p>1/3 of your time (e.g. 30 mins)</p>