

1 Corinthians 12, 4-11, “What Are Spiritual Gifts?”

9.27.20

I've said this many, many times, and I'll continue to say it: I really, really love this church and I've loved this church since I was a little boy. I grew up in this church and I've shared many times how I was literally raised by many of you in this church...taught by many of you (who I now call, “young at heart-ers”) and I'm forever grateful. I share this because THIS LOVE for our church, that I have, is the overriding and overwhelming wind in my sails for what I do. In fact, I would tell you this morning it's that same love that drives Pastor Dale, Jacob and Matthew too...it's a love for you, (the people), that comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and it was His love for us that drove Him!

You see, we're the bride of Christ and His love for us led Him to give Himself up for us by shedding His innocent blood on a despicable Roman cross on a hill called Calvary. A love that was expressed in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus prayed to His Father. See the words recorded by John:

John 17:21-23

²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

You see, Jesus wants us to be ONE...unified...living and loving as ONE body, His Bride, because as we serve as ONE BODY (in love), a lost and dying world will be drawn to Him. However, if we're not ONE...as they were not ONE in the first century in Corinth...they will see a blighted testimony in Christ. Oh, the world watches how we treat one another... They look to see if we're ONE or if we're divided. And this brings us back to our study, our study of the Spiritual Gifts that we began last week:



You see, it's these Spiritual Gifts, given by the Holy Spirit that makes us strong and makes us ONE. This morning we're going to look at the Spiritual Gifts identified for us in Scripture and see how we're gifted in the Body to be ONE...so as to draw lost souls to Jesus.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in

everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to 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. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Now if you were with us last week, I broached the subject of what I believe is the key phrase regarding spiritual gifts that we dare not miss...it's found in verse 7 and is embodied in the phrase "for the common good." Remember, church, the common good simply means: "for the good of the church." Listen, try to wrap your mind around this thought: spiritual gifts are given to us for the common good of the church, so that our witness to a lost and dying world might be so sweet and fragrant...like a wonderful perfume, that lost souls would be drawn to Jesus.

You see, your spiritual gifts, my spiritual gifts are not for us. They are for the common good of the church, (in our case, the folks here at MPBC); and ultimately, our community. Unfortunately, the Corinthian Christians didn't properly understand this and thus, their church was in a chaotic mess! They had gone off the Richter Scale in their unruly and unwise use of spiritual gifts in their congregation and the Apostle Paul is now seeking to set things straight.

Look back at verse 4, and watch the flow as we work toward that phrase "common good" to verse 7.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Same Spirit, same Lord, same God...all pointing to unity...to glorify God...and THAT'S THE POINT...the church at Corinth wasn't unified...and thus, they weren't glorifying God. You remember, they were divided into cliques and factions...they were suing one another, taking one another to court, fussing and fighting...and this attitude had moved to the realm of Spiritual Gifts. Remember, by the time we get to chapter 14, the Apostle Paul will literally have to describe to them how to have their meetings (their services) because things were so out of control. **Now as we move to verse 8, we begin to see this list of spiritual gifts...**

1 Corinthians 12:8-11

⁸For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to 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. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Now Church, here's the issue in Corinth regarding spiritual gifts...they were grappling with another, arguing with one another over who had the greatest gift and much of that arguing was simply a sort of: "one-ups-manship," which primarily became directed toward the gift of tongues, and we'll see that as move through the next several weeks. For now, I want to show you a listing of the Spiritual Gifts as listed in the New Testament. See the screens.

Listing of Spiritual Gifts

Romans 12

Encouragement
Giving
Leadership
Mercy
Prophecy
Service
Teaching

1 Corinthians 12

Administration
Discernment
Healing
Interpretation of Languages
Languages
Prophecy
Wisdom

Apostle
Faith
Helps
Knowledge
Miracles
Teaching

Ephesians 4

Apostle
Pastor
Teaching

Evangelism
Prophecy

1 Peter 4

Serving
Teaching

The gifts in italics are repeated in one of the other passages.

What you see there is a list of 19 gifts in four (4) passages of Scripture. You see Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4. Some of these gifts overlap and are listed on the chart (as such) in italics. Look at the list from Romans 12: Encouragement, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Prophecy, Service, Teaching. I'll not read through the 1 Corinthians 12 list, because we've read through that list twice already. The Ephesians 4 list: Apostle, Pastor, Teaching, Evangelism and Prophecy and the 1 Peter 4 list is: Serving and Teaching.

So, what's your gift? Some of you know...perhaps some of you don't...maybe this is all new to you, and that's okay...let's remember a few things we talked about last week, remember a spiritual gift is not just someone's natural talents. You can be a non-believer and have natural talents. In fact, everyone has natural talents that the Lord has blessed them with but that does NOT mean those talents are being used for the Lord. It's true, your spiritual gift may have nothing to do with your natural talents...but, in a lot of cases they do. Also, understand this...I'm convinced and most Bible scholars are as well, that the lists of spiritual gifts in Scripture are not exhaustive, meaning that there ARE certainly more gifts than just the 19 we've shown you. Ultimately, I'm convinced Paul was giving examples, not lists in totality.

So now, what I want to do is to try to give a brief definition of these 19 gifts. But, before I do...I want to show you something that I did recently... I did a Spiritual Gifts Inventory. And you can do the same thing. Just go to our website and you can take the inventory test yourself. It's pretty fascinating. Here were my top three... Shepherding, Teaching and Prophecy.



D Kevin Brown, thank you for completing

the Spiritual Gifts Survey!

Your dominant gifts are:

Shepherding

Teaching

Prophecy

Curious about Pastor Dale's:



**Dale Jennings, thank you for completing
the Spiritual Gifts Survey!**

Your dominant gifts are:

Shepherding

Evangelism

Mercy-Showing

Just hearing those makes sense, doesn't it? So now, let's go through these 19 gifts and see if you can begin to pick out yours. See the screens.

What I'm going to do is to go through these in alphabetical order...and remember, these gifts are being defined in the context of the church...

#1 Administration

The Greek word is *kubernesis* and refers to a shipmaster or a captain. The literal meaning is "to steer," or "to rule or govern." With this gift the Holy Spirit enables certain Christians to organize, direct, and implement plans to lead others in the various ministries of the Church.

#2 Apostleship

There are no Apostles today, in the sense that the office of "Apostle" was held by the 12 Apostles who Jesus hand-picked. Instead, today, this gift is often exhibited by missionaries and church planters in that they are willing to start new ministries and go to places where the Gospel hasn't

been preached. They're typically entrepreneurial and are able to take risks and perform difficult tasks.

#3 Discernment

This Christian is able to distinguish, judge or appraise a person or situation, as to whether or not it is right or wrong. They can clearly recognize and distinguish between the influence of God, Satan, the world and the flesh in a given situation. These Christians often warn other believers to keep them from being led astray by false prophets or false teaching.

#4 Evangelism

All Christians are called to evangelize, that's the Great Commission, but some are given an extra measure of faith and effectiveness in this area. Evangelists are given the unique ability to clearly and effectively communicate the Gospel. They are burdened in their hearts for the lost and are able to overcome the normal fear of rejection and engage non-believers about Jesus.

#5 Exhortation

Sometimes called the "gift of encouragement." The Greek word is *parakaleo*, meaning to come alongside of, to encourage and to strengthen by reminding the hearer of the power of God. They exhort by motivating and challenging, and at times, rebuking others in order to foster spiritual growth and action.

#6 Faith

All Christians have "saving faith," but not all have the special gift of faith. This Christian exhibits confidence, certainty, trust and assurance in God, which allows them to live boldly for Him and manifest that faith in mighty ways. They take God at His Word and put the full weight of their lives in His hands. They expect God to move and are not surprised when He does.

#7 Giving

This Christian loves to give and support the various needs of the church and its ministries, missionaries, or people who do not have the means to provide fully for themselves. They're typically very hospitable and seek out ways to help others. They're excellent stewards and often adjust their lifestyles in order to give more to the spread of the Gospel and care for the needy.

#8 Knowledge

This is the ability to understand the things of this world and the lives of people that is founded and grounded in the Scriptures. They are well-versed in the Scriptures and communicate it effectively to the church and individual believers in providing proper understanding of circumstances and situations. They connect people to the truth of the Gospel in order to make good, sound decisions.

#9 Leadership

This gift is associated with the caring of others. These Christians help to lead other believers into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and one another. They lead relationally and have a deep concern for the well-being of others. They are "visionary" and will go to great lengths to protect those under their care and are equipped to lead with courage through crisis situations.

#10 Mercy

All Christians are called to be merciful, but there are those who are gifted to be extremely patient and compassionate toward those who are suffering or afflicted. They are able to come alongside

people over extended periods of time and see them through their healing process with great compassion. They are literally the hands and feet of Jesus to the afflicted, burdened and suffering.

#11 Pastor/Shepherd

This gift carries many responsibilities and is often related to the gifts of leadership and teaching. They lookout for predators and protect the church (the flock) from attackers. They care for wounded, sick sheep and nurse them back to health. They spend enormous amounts of time guiding the flock by teaching the Scriptures. This results in a relationship of comfort and trust between pastor and flock.

#12 Prophecy

Those who have this gift differ from the Old Testament Prophets who spoke directly from God. Today, they have the ability to take the Word of God and exhort, correct, disclose secret sins, comfort and inspire, ultimately equipping and edifying the body of Christ. They are often pastor/shepherds and those with this gift are sensitive to both the prompting of the Holy Spirit and the needs of the church.

#13 Service

The Greek word is *diakonia*, which means “to wait tables,” from which we get our word: Deacon. They are not concerned with recognition or the “spotlight,” instead, they just love to help and to serve in the background knowing that their contribution will bless the church, display the love of Christ, and bring glory to God. They “fill in the gaps” in a church to free up others to use their gifts to the fullest.

#14 Teaching

This gift carries a huge responsibility in the church. Teachers have been entrusted with the task of effectively communicating what the Bible says, what it means, and how we as followers of Jesus Christ are to apply it to our lives here and now. Teachers instruct, explain, expound and instill doctrine. Without this gift, the church would quickly fall into error and sin.

#15 Wisdom

They have an intimate understanding of God’s Word and His commandments which result in holy living. They can easily recognize where a decision or action may lead and can warn against those that may be harmful or unfruitful. They can often see through the confusion of a situation and can give direction that would help an individual or group obtain a God-glorifying goal.

You say, “You’re at the W’s in the alphabetical order, so we’re done, right?” No, I left out 4. Because we’re just to #15. The last four are considered somewhat controversial, and have been for centuries. These last four are called the “charisma” gifts,” and they are gift of miracles, healing, tongues and thee interpretation of tongues. **Now think of what we’ve just seen...**the Scripture teaches that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are for the unifying and edifying of the church. 1 Corinthians 12:25 says the same thing:

Corinthians 12:25

25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

Is this what was happening in Corinth. No. They were a chaotic mess and they weren’t caring for one another. In fact, many were using their gifts, (not in an edifying way for the church), but instead

were saying, "Look at me! Look at me! My gift is better than yours!" And many of these issues surrounded the gifts of miracles, healing and particularly, tongues.

Now as we think about these gifts...think about where we see these gifts in the Bible... For instance, where do we see miracles and healings? The 4 Gospels and the book of Acts primarily. Did you know there's not a single occurrence in any of the Epistles that a church member performed a single miracle or healing for instance. Now, I'm not saying it didn't happen...it's just not recorded. Think about miracles and healings... who performed the recorded miracles and healings in Scripture? Jesus and the Apostles and the Apostles associates. Why? Why did they perform miracles? Because it's these "sign-gifts," (as they're often called), that marked the power of God, authenticating that what they were doing was from God. These miracles opened the door for the sharing of the Gospel!

But, you may ask, "Well, why are these gifts listed here in chapter 12, then?" Well first, I'll tell you...only in 1 Corinthians will you find these "sign gifts" listed. They aren't listed anywhere else in the NT. So, here's the deal, I can't stand here and categorically say that these sign gifts died out with Jesus and the Apostles because they are listed in 1 Corinthians 12, but it seems from the text that these gifts were not commonplace...they were the exception, rather than the rule.

Now, it's not a question of whether God still performs miracles or not. It would be foolish and unbiblical to claim that God does not heal people today, or that miracles can't occur today. Of course, they do. The question is whether the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, described primarily here in 1 Corinthians 12-14, are still active in the church today. Church, this is where I honestly struggle. For instance, I don't believe in faith healers and the ministries of people like Benny Hinn...



He started knocking people over with his coat 50 years ago. "Slaying people in the Spirit," he says. Listen, you don't see faith healers working in hospitals for the same reason you don't see psychics winning the lottery, living in mansions. They're fakes, and they've been fleecing the flock for years.

Yes, God miraculously heals people today, every day throughout the world. God still does amazing miracles, signs, and wonders and sometimes He may perform those miracles through a Christian. Yet, Church family, in my mind, these things are not necessarily the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

Again, listen carefully, the primary purpose of the miraculous gifts recorded in Scripture were to prove that the gospel was true and that the Apostles were truly messengers from God. No, in my mind (and some disagree with me, because this is a disputable matter), in my mind the Bible does

not say outright that the miraculous gifts have ceased, but it does lay the foundation for why they might no longer occur to the same extent as they did, as recorded in the New Testament.

So, with all that said, now gift number 16...Miracles.

#16 Miracles

Based on the Greek context this word is a “double-plural,” (that I can’t pronounce), and it means that this gift of miracles was not available upon command, but subject to the divine will of God. This gift is often accompanied by strong prayer, as the believer asks God to reveal His glory to His people. They do not claim power for themselves, but always give credit and glory to God for His mighty works.

#17 Healing

Again, this not a gift that’s available upon command, but comes by way of strong prayer. In fact, in the New Testament in James 5, this gift is available to those who call upon the Elders and who are anointed with oil...and with the prayer offered in faith, there MAY be healing. May...it’s not always God’s plan to heal. Paul still had a thorn in his flesh. Church, if healing is not granted, then we can conclude that God has greater plans for letting the person go through the illness or infirmity.

#18 Tongues (Languages) and #19 Interpretation of Tongues (Languages)

The Greek word for “tongues” is *glossa*, and as it is used in the New Testament it means, “languages.” Speaking in tongues is the utterance of languages...it’s that simple. These languages are for the glorifying of God, (1 Corinthians 14:2). Typically, the language being spoken is in a tongue or language that is unknown to the one speaking it. Therefore, to properly understand this gift, we need an interpreter (just like if you’re in Ethiopia, like Katy was in 2009). See her with her interpreters...



They were speaking Amharic...translating Katy’s English or those kids would have never understood and this is why we’re told in 1 Corinthians 14, that tongues should never be used in church without an interpreter. Got all that! ☺ And understand this...we’re going to spend a lot more time talking about tongues when we get to chapter 14, because this was THE GIFT that all the Corinthians wanted. But, for now, I want to say this... And this would be a good place to try to wrap this gift discussion up, (pardon the pun), so we’ll try to put a bow on it. And I’ll use this GIFT of languages to do so.

In the Garden of Eden, mankind had one language and we were in direct communication with God, having perfect communion with Him. Unfortunately, this relationship changed at the fall when Adam and Eve sinned against God. They were ultimately banished from Eden, and yet we know

that humanity continued to have just one language up until Genesis 11, where God confused their language at the Tower of Babel...



and the people were dispersed throughout the earth. God did this because they had united together in one language and conspired to “make a name” for themselves and thus replace God in their hearts and so, he confused their language.

Fast forward to Pentecost and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the people of God.



At Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, we got to see a glimpse of God’s reversal of the curse of the divided languages. People from all over the world heard God’s people proclaiming His mighty works in their own languages. This, church family, was a foretaste of the beginning of the redemption of language for its original purpose: to glorify God and draw all people to Himself.

And one day in heaven, as recorded in the book of the Revelation chapter 7, an innumerable throng from every nation, tribe, people and tongue will join together to praise God. Will we all speak JUST ONE LANGUAGE, or will we be able to understand one another, like at Pentecost? I don’t know. I can’t be dogmatic, but I do know we will eventually sit down at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, with Jesus at the head of the table and we will rejoice as ONE PEOPLE. And that’s where we started...

[John 17:22](#)

²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to make us ONE...to glorify Jesus and to make Him known!
May we go and do just that!
