

Concerning Spiritual Gifts - 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Very few topic in the church are more controversial than that of the Spiritual Gifts, and no passage will push us into that controversy quicker than this section of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. The letter began with an affirmation and commendation for not lacking any Spiritual Gift (1:7). Now Paul is going to go into great detail to explain and correct their use of these gifts, with his treatment covering three chapters of this letter. At the core, Paul affirms the reality that all followers of Jesus have been empowered by the Holy Spirit with Spiritual Gifts, and then placed them into a body so that they gifts can be used to edify the body, be a witness in the world, and to glorify God. Yet, this passage lists several gifts that make many of us squirm, including things like tongues, miracles, healing, and prophecy. On one hand, we have seen misuse and false versions of these gifts from TV Evangelists and some Charismatic churches. The other extreme, though, is the belief that the "miraculous" or "sign" gifts passed away at some point in the distant past and are no longer even available for the church today.

Theologian Wayne Grudem has defined the Spiritual Gifts in this way, "A spiritual gift is an ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and is used in the ministry of the church." That is fairly simple. Yet, the issue can get fairly challenging. Apparently, in the Corinthian church there were some who were functioning in the so-called miraculous gifts (prophecy, healing, tongues). Yet, some were actually doing things that looked more like their old paganism than the true worship of Jesus as their Lord. Furthermore, some who had these gifts may have been prideful or exalted in the church, while other gifts were ignored and despised. In a letter written to Paul by some in the church, these concerns seem to have been expressed. Paul is writing to correct the misuse in the gifts. But one thing I will point out, Paul does not negate or discourage the exercise of any of the gifts, rather, he teaches to lead them to the correct use of all gifts, a reminder that this is an important topic for every church.

The first eleven verses, then, is the introduction to a lengthy corrective on the topic.

Yet, there are some amazing theological truths about the value and importance of all gifts. First, they are just what we call them, gifts. God is the giver, and while it is the work of the Holy Spirit that energizes the gifts in our lives, the text points us to the Trinitarian God (v. 4-6) as the source for the gifts. In verse 11 we are shown that God's gifts are given by the will of the Holy Spirit. The names of these gifts in this text also shows us that they are given by God as an act of His grace. In verse 1, the phrase "spiritual gifts" in the ESV is a translation of a Greek word that literally means "the Spirituals", referring to the Holy Spirit as the giver. The word used in the rest of the text for gifts is the Greek word "charismata". The root is the word meaning "grace", and literally means a gift of grace. God's grace is never deserved, rather, the gift of salvation and the gifts of the Spirit are given freely on people as He wills and ultimately has nothing to do with the worthiness of the person. So, if God is the giver, the Spirit gives gifts to those whom He wills, and they are purely gifts of grace, then no gift is more important than another, and there is absolutely no room for pride or division in the church over these gifts.

Yet, the church is to pursue these gifts and encourage people to operate in the gifts and callings God has given them. I believe the key to understanding the entire passage rests in verses 4-7. Again, we see the reference to the Trinity at work in our redemption and mission. The gifts are given to people in the church as they join God in His mission that includes the building up of the Body of Christ and the advance of His Kingdom to the nations. And each person has their role, but our roles are different. In each of these verses we are told there are varieties of the outworking of gifts, meaning that God has made us different, called us to different things, and gifted us in different ways in order to accomplish His multicolored purpose in the church. Three words are used in the text that help us understand the point, gifts (v. 4), ministries (v. 5), and activities (v. 5). Gifts is the word mentioned earlier,

meaning grace gift of the Spirit. The word for ministries here is the word we get deacon from, and literally means a place of service. The word activities actually means “energies” and is a reference to the energizing of the believer to accomplish the supernatural work of God through the church for the world. God has a ministry or area of service for every follower of Jesus, and gifts us in certain ways for that ministry, then it is God the Father Himself who energizes the gifts as we serve in our ministry to accomplish His purpose.

I have heard people speak of the “miraculous gifts” against the normal gifts. But the truth is that all of the Gifts of the Spirit found in the Scriptures are supernatural, as those who in faith invest their lives in the work of the Kingdom experience the energizing work of God. The goal then, is to find our calling, not discover our gifts, to find ways to serve and involve ourselves in the mission of God through the work of the church. Then we should cry out to God to fill us with His Spirit and empower us through our gifts to be world changers. We should hope and trust that God will do works that are unexplainable apart from Him. And we should rejoice if it gets weird because God sends His Spirit in powerful ways to people in the church. Our goal for this series is that we as a people would open ourselves up to the powerful, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Spirit in the Body of Christ. Gonna be fun!

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 Chronicles 13	1 Chron 14	1 Chron 15	1 Chron 16	1 Chron 17	1 Chron 18	1 Chron 19

Reading from this past week: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27-30

Family Worship

Song - *In the Hands of Christ My King*

<https://youtu.be/4IFbVx-2Lv0>

Gospel Project

Story: Jesus Raised Lazarus

Story Point: Jesus has power over death.

Big Picture Question: How does God care for His creation?

Answer: God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Scripture: John 11

New City Catechism

Question #40: What should we pray?

Answer: The whole Word of God directs us in what we should pray.

Verse: Ephesians 4:14-21

Scripture

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

*According to Paul, how can we know if something happening is actually a work of the Holy Spirit (v. 3)?

*Who is responsible for our Spiritual Gifts? What is our role in these things

*Do you have an area of ministry where you are participating in the mission of God through the church? Why would Mike say that this comes first before trying to discover your gifts?

Prayer

*Pray that the Holy Spirit would make Himself known in our church.

*Pray for the people living in your neighborhood that do not know Jesus.