

(1 Corinthians) the Gifts of the Spirit

by Brian Brodersen

The gifts of the Spirit are given to every believer to bring them to a full Christian experience and to edify the body of Christ.

Duration: 58:09

Scripture: 1 Samuel 14:6

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts", "Faith And Sovereignty"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the gift of faith as mentioned in the Bible. He gives examples of individuals who demonstrated this gift, such as Peter and Jonathan. Peter had the gift of faith when he walked on water towards Jesus, and Jonathan had it when he believed God could defeat the Philistines with just him and his armor bearer. The speaker emphasizes that the gift of faith is given by God and operates under His sovereignty. He also highlights the importance of relying on the Scriptures to understand and discern the gifts mentioned in the Bible.

Transcript

When the earthly ministry of Jesus was coming to a close, he began to prepare his disciples to receive the helper that he would send. The helper that he was referring to is the Holy Spirit, of whom Jesus said, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. He will guide you into all truth.

He will tell you things to come. He will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Jesus taught, in essence, that the Holy Spirit would carry on the work that he had started.

Only through the Holy Spirit, the work would expand to the uttermost parts of the earth, the work being delegated through the Spirit among a multitude of individual believers. God never intended that the church should run on human energy or ingenuity, but rather through the energy and ingenuity of the Spirit. In Ephesians 4, Paul tells us that it was for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, that the ascended Lord gave gifts to men.

The church is to be built by the power of the Holy Spirit, working through those he has gifted. That's why the whole subject of the gifts of the Spirit is so important, and that's why Satan has put so much effort into creating confusion over the issue. Confusion that has generally led people to hold extreme views of the person and the work of the Holy Spirit rather than the true biblical view.

Our goal is to obtain a true biblical understanding of the person and the work of the Holy Spirit, and from that, to experience to the fullest the Spirit's work in our lives. Now, before we look at the gifts individually, let me make a few remarks. First of all, we need to understand the purpose of the gifts, and Paul declares to us clearly that the purpose of the gifts are for the profit of all.

God has given gifts to his people so that his church might be profited. The gifts functioning in the body are essential to its edification. I really do feel sorry for those people today who have been taught that the gifts of the Spirit that we read about here in the New Testament are no longer available to Christians today.

That is really a sad interpretation, because what it does is it deprives Christian people of the very things that God has supplied so that they might live a full Christian life in the context of the church. So the gifts are essential. They're not optional.

They are essential to a full Christian experience. The context of the gifts is twofold. The context of the gifts is, first of all, the larger body of Christ.

Now, remember that we here today, we are just a small segment of the body of Christ. The body of Christ, of course, spans the entire world. And all over the world, there are people who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They are members of the same body that we are members of. And the gifts of the Spirit will function in that context of the larger body of Christ. But secondly, they will also function in the local assembly, the general gathering of God's people, the local assembly, something like what we are involved in here today.

So in other words, we can expect to experience the gifts and have the gifts in operation in and through our lives as we deal with Christians on a worldwide level and also as we relate to one another right here in our own local fellowship. The third thing that I want to point out to you is that it is the Spirit who works all these things. And this is a very important point.

It's the Spirit who works all these things. These gifts are not the permanent possession of any believer, but rather the potential experience of every believer. Note that they're not the permanent possession of any believer, but rather the potential experience of every believer.

We are all potential recipients and vessels of these gifts. We can all experience these gifts at one time or another, but they are the gifts of the Holy Spirit and are based upon the sovereignty of God, not the will of man. I want you to keep this in mind, especially as we come to the gift of healing and the gift of prophecy, that these are the gifts of the Spirit.

They're not the permanent possession of any of us, but they are the potential experience of every one of us. So with that, let's begin to look at the gifts themselves. Now, when we come to the gifts of the Spirit, and by the way, this is not an exhaustive list here in the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians.

We could look also at the 12th chapter of Romans. We could look at Peter's first epistle. We could look at Ephesians chapter four.

There are a number of gifts that are not mentioned here in 1 Corinthians 12, but we can get a good idea about the gifts of the Spirit as we look at the ones that are mentioned here. Now, there is a problem, though, when it comes to the whole subject of the gifts of the Spirit. And the problem is this.

The Scripture does not supply us with an exhaustive description of each gift. As a matter of fact, in some cases, we have no description at all. We just simply have a statement concerning the gift, but we have no description given to us of what the gift is.

Therefore, we need to prayerfully approach these matters and always let the Scriptures be our guide. You see, when we come to try to understand what the gifts are, we've only got one criteria by which to judge, and that's the Bible. And so we've got to pay close attention to what the Scriptures say.

And so we begin in verse 8, For to one is given the word of wisdom. Now, when possible, I want to try to give you a definition. And so here I would say that the word of wisdom could be defined as God's answer or solution to a dilemma.

God's answer or solution to a dilemma. Now, there are several places in Scripture where we see the word of wisdom in operation. We see the word of wisdom in operation consistently in the life of Jesus.

We see the word of wisdom in operation in the life of the early church as we study the acts of the apostles. But let me give you a few examples, first of all, from the life of Jesus himself. Remember, the word of wisdom is God's answer or solution to a dilemma.

In Matthew chapter 4, we have a record of the temptation of Christ. And you remember the first thing that Satan said to Jesus was this. If you are the son of God, take these stones and turn them into bread.

Now, the question is, how is Jesus going to respond to the suggestion of Satan? And I believe that Jesus responded to him with the word of wisdom. But the word of wisdom in this particular case came as a result of God's written word. Jesus fell back on the written word of God.

And you remember what he said. He said, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. You see, this was God's answer to the dilemma that Jesus was in.

Satan was tempting him and he brought this suggestion before him. And in wisdom, the Lord responded. Man shall not live by bread alone.

Satan said, if you're the son of God, turn these stones into bread. Jesus said, oh, but man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. In John, chapter eight, you remember the incident where there was a woman.

Who they had claimed to have caught in the very act of adultery, some of the religious leaders of the time, and they brought this woman to Jesus and they were wanting Jesus to pass the death sentence on her. And they said to Jesus, we caught this woman in the very act of adultery, and Moses in the law said that she should be stoned. What do you say? They see they were trying to trap Jesus.

They were trying to get him either to contradict the law of Moses, which then they could turn around and say he couldn't be the Messiah because he's contradicting Moses, or they were trying to get him to violate the Roman law, which would have then put him in trouble with the Romans and gotten him out of the way. So they're saying to him, Moses said that we should do this. What do you say? Jesus said, he that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone.

That was a word of wisdom. God's answer to the dilemma. It was the ultimate response to the challenge that they had brought to Jesus.

You remember, perhaps another incident that had a similar motive recorded in Matthew, chapter 22, they'd come to Jesus with a coin and they wanted to know about taxes. And of course, they were trying to trap him. If he said you should pay taxes, then they could say, oh, look at this man.

He's in support of the Romans and the Romans are our idolaters. And he certainly couldn't be the Messiah. If he said you shouldn't pay taxes, then they could go to the Romans and say, oh, there's a man over here trying to create an insurrection.

So they're saying to him, what should we do? Should we pay taxes? Jesus responded with the word of wisdom. He said, show me a coin whose image and inscription is it? They said Caesars. He said, render, therefore, to Caesars the things that are Caesars and to God the things that are God.

You see, there it was. It was the perfect answer to the problem. This is what the word of wisdom is.

As we come to the early church, we find that there was a dilemma that the leadership was being faced with because there were certain members of the early church who were feeling that they were being slighted. They were feeling that they were being discriminated against because they were Jews from a Greek culture rather than from the Hebraic culture. And so they came with this complaint that they were being shunned and slighted in the distribution of things.

And so here the leadership is faced with this problem. How do we resolve this problem? How do we help these people to understand that there is no discrimination? It was a very complicated matter. As you well know, racial issues are very complicated issues and people can easily misunderstand things and so forth.

So here they are, they're faced with this dilemma and yet the apostles speak up and they say, seek out from among you seven men full of the Holy Spirit that we may put over this work. They said, look, you Hellenist Jews, you're thinking that that you're being slighted. Well, look, take seven Hellenist Jews, take them from your own midst and we'll put them over it and then we'll be certain that there won't be any discrimination.

And it says, and this answer pleased the multitude to give one answer and please the multitude has to be the answer that comes from God, because there's no way to please a multitude. So you see, this is the word of wisdom in operation. Now it can come either through the written word or through a spoken word.

We saw in the first incident it came from the written word. Jesus fell back on the scriptures and he quoted directly from the scriptures. But then on these other occasions, we find that Jesus was speaking the word of wisdom, not necessarily giving a direct quotation from scripture.

And I think that that same thing is also true in our experience. Sometimes when we are faced with a dilemma, we will open the scriptures and there the very word of God that is written will be the solution to our problem. It will be the ultimate answer to the thing that we're facing.

But on the other hand, there are times when there's not going to be a specific declaration in scripture that's going to give me the answer that I need. And this is where God will impart wisdom, perhaps to you directly or through someone else to you or through you to someone else. Now, I've had many times the experience of the word of wisdom working through my life towards someone else, being a pastor and being involved in years and years of counseling and advising people and so forth.

There have been times when I have seen the word of wisdom work so beautifully. I've been at times sitting with people and they're sharing with me their problems. And they're faced with some great difficulty, some great dilemma, and they've been racking their their brains to try to come up with a solution.

And there just doesn't seem to be any solution. And as they're pouring out their heart to me and asking me for counsel, I'm thinking in my own mind, oh, my, why did they come to me? I wish they were talking to somebody else because I don't know any more than they do about this. I'm as perplexed as they are about it.

But yet suddenly, as I've been in these kinds of situations, suddenly the Lord would give me something. And it would be so obviously the perfect solution to the problem. And as I would go on to tell them what God was putting on my heart, they begin to rejoice.

Oh, that's so wonderful. How did you come up with that? Well, quite honestly, I didn't. I was as clueless as you were two minutes ago.

But the Lord just gave this word of wisdom. Now, we can expect that kind of thing to take place among us as God's people. That's the function of the word of wisdom.

Let's move on to the word of knowledge. The word of knowledge. A definition would be the God given ability to instantly know something previously unknown, the God given ability to instantly know something previously unknown.

Again, we have examples, many examples from the scripture. Let me give you just a couple. Jesus was speaking to Nathanael.

This is recorded in John chapter one. And Jesus said to Nathanael, they had just met one another, and Jesus said to Nathanael. Because Jesus said to Nathanael, he said, an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile.

He just met him, and that's what he said about him. You are an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile. And Nathanael responded and he said, how do you know me? We've never met before.

And Jesus said before Philip called you when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. You see, Jesus knew what Nathanael was doing before he ever met him. And so he told him that he informed him of that.

Nathanael said, oh, you are the son of God. You are the king of Israel. That's so impressed him.

That was a word of knowledge. Peter to Ananias. You remember perhaps the story in Acts chapter five, a man named Ananias, along with his wife, Sapphira.

They had a piece of property. They sold it. And they decided to withhold some of the money.

And yet they went to the apostles, giving the impression that they were giving to them all that they had gained from the sale of the property. Now, Peter. Spoke a word of knowledge, he said to Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? You see, Peter knew something that he as a as a man did not actually have the capacity of knowing.

He knew that Ananias was being deceptive. He had a word of knowledge. There are many other places in Scripture that we could point you to, but I think you get the idea again with that definition that God given ability to instantly know something previously unknown.

I remember one incident in my own life not all that long ago where God gave to me a word of knowledge and it had to do with the condition of my oldest son. And what had happened is he had he had come come down with some really strange symptoms and he had a rash all over his body and he was really fatigued and had sort of a low grade fever and he was just nothing like his his normal self. And so we took him to the doctor and the doctor looked at him and said, oh, I think it might be allergy to this or it might be, you know, just some vague diagnosis is really what we got and take him home and, you know, don't don't allow him to eat this anymore.

And, you know, so so we went home and tried to apply what the doctor said. But yet it was obvious that there was there was no change in his condition. And one day I looked at him and it was apparent that he was actually getting worse.

And I looked at him. And as I looked at him, just like a flash, it came into my mind, he has Lyme's disease. And I suddenly thought he has Lyme's disease.

And then I I remembered we had gone camping up into the mountains and you get Lyme's disease from a from a tick and he was, you know, playing out in the brush and everything. And it just it seemed like, yes, this this could be a real possibility. But it was just so so clear to me he has Lyme's disease.

So I phoned the doctor and I said, I want to bring my son in for testing. He has Lyme's disease. He said, oh, how do you know? What do you mean he has Lyme's disease? He doesn't have Lyme's disease.

I said, yes, he does. I want to bring him in for testing. So how do you know? He's a Christian, by the way, the doctor was.

And I said, I said, look, as the Lord spoke to me, he said, it's Lyme's disease. He says, all right, well, bring him in. And so he runs a blood test on.

He comes back. Guess what? Your son has Lyme's disease. And thank God we caught it in the initial stage, because if it goes beyond the initial stage, it becomes chronic and there's nothing you can do about it after a certain point.

So we put him on the antibiotics and, you know, he's recovered just fine. But that was one of those just an instant where God just in a flash spoke and revealed something to me that I certainly could not have known in any other way. So that's a contemporary example of the word of knowledge in operation.

Now, moving on to the next gift, and that is to another faith is given by the same spirit. Now, the faith that's referred to here by the apostle is not the same faith that you have as a believer in Christ. It's not that initial faith that brings you into salvation.

Of course, Paul is writing to people who are saved. And he's talking about some some something that's additional to that. These people already have faith.

So he's not talking about the faith that saves, but he's talking about a faith beyond that. And I would define this as special faith or faith for the moment. Or you could also define it, I think, as extraordinary faith.

It's where you suddenly have such confidence in God that you can do anything. And, of course, it's a gift from God. It operates, again, under the sovereignty of God, and he will impart the gift of faith at times when it's needed.

A couple of examples from the scripture going back to the Old Testament, back in First Samuel, chapter 14, we have the story of Jonathan, the son of Saul, and his armor bearer suddenly being filled with faith and realizing, as he said, for nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few. Jonathan one day looked out at the army of the Philistines and he said, you know, I do not need a whole army to defeat these men. God is not limited.

He could actually defeat them through just one man. And so he said to his armor bearer, let's go and see if the Lord will do this. They went, they took that step of faith, and God did deliver the Philistines into the hand of Jonathan.

And there was a great victory for Israel that day. But you see, it was the gift of faith that came upon Jonathan. He had just this confidence in God.

He knew that as he stepped out, God would be with him. I think we see something similar in Peter when he stepped out of the boat and he began to walk on the water to Jesus. There was that gift of faith.

Jesus said, come to me. And Peter said, OK, and he stepped out of the boat and he began to walk to the Lord on the water. Now, of course, he suddenly realized what he was doing and he said, I can't do this.

And he began to sink and Jesus reached out his hand and he saved him. But I think there's another example of the gift of faith. And then we also see it once again demonstrated in Peter recorded in Acts, chapter three, as Peter's walking by this lame man.

Who's sitting there begging by the gate of the temple? And Jesus, Peter turns to me, he says, silver and gold, I do not have, but what I do have I'll give you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he reached out and he took the man by the hand and he pulled him up onto his feet. The man had been in that condition for thirty eight years.

And yet Peter, experiencing the gift of faith, is confident that as he reaches out in the name of Jesus and pulls this man up, the man is going to stand to his feet. He's going to be whole. That, I think, is an example of the gift of faith.

And so working in our lives today, it would be extraordinary faith. It would be faith for the moment. You're suddenly faced with something and it seems impossible, but yet at the same time, you have this absolute confidence God is going to do this and you just step out and God does indeed do it.

There are probably some really great examples of this, but I just couldn't think of a single one last night. And it's not because there aren't plenty, but it's just, you know, you sit, you pray, you think, and and yet it just doesn't come. But if you study the lives of missionaries, if you look at even, you know, currently what what's happening with different Christians throughout the world, you would see that this gift of faith is operating in the lives of God's people frequently today.

Now, moving on and, you know, we're trying to get through all these, so we do have to go rather quickly, could probably spend an entire hour on each one of these if we if we wanted to. But let's move on to gifts of healings, gifts of healings. It's pretty self-explanatory.

The Bible, of course, is full of examples of healing. Matthew 11. You remember the report that was brought to John the Baptist, the blind see the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear.

These are all examples of healing taking place. Now, of course, they were all examples from the ministry of Jesus. If we go into the book of Acts, we find that there are plenty of examples there of the apostles being used to heal people.

And as we go on in the history of church of the church, we can find examples also of people being healed. This is a vital question. Is the gift of healing still in operation today? An important question is the gift of healing still in operation today? There's nothing in Scripture to indicate that it's not.

As a matter of fact, everything in Scripture would indicate that it is the gift of healing is still in operation today. Now, the next question is this, who has the gift of healing? And this is where I want you to remember the point that I made earlier. The answer to that is no one has it permanently.

No one has the gift of healing permanently, therefore, never waste your time going to a faith healer because there's no such thing. There is no such thing. You cannot find a single example in all of the Bible of anyone having a permanent gift of healing apart from Jesus Christ himself.

Jesus was the only one who could. Use any of the gifts of the spirit at any given time. Jesus, of course, did not receive the spirit in measure like we do.

The fullness of the spirit was upon Jesus. He's the Messiah. He's the son of God.

So the gifts of the spirit were always active in his ministry and they were active upon his will. But we never find that same thing in the ministry of any of the apostles. And if it wasn't in the ministry of the apostles, I can assure you that it's not in anybody else's ministry today.

You just don't find it. You don't find the apostles being able to heal at will. The case we mentioned a moment ago, Peter lifting up that lame man.

How many times do you think they walked by that man? He had sat there for years and years and years. But you see, there was a moment. There was this occasion where he was healed.

But you can be certain there were many people that were never healed. As a matter of fact, Paul, the apostle, makes it clear, although he did at times have the gift of healing in operation through his ministry. He talks about people that were sick.

And to Timothy, who had an ongoing sort of a chronic kind of a problem, Paul advised him. Medicinally, really, he said, take some wine for your often infirmities. He talked about a papyrus who he left in a certain place sick.

They see if the apostles could heal at will. We have to wonder why they didn't do it. Well, the answer is they couldn't.

No one can. The gift of healing is something that. Any believer can potentially experience in and through their life, but yet again, this is something that.

Is. Dependent on the sovereignty of God is dependent on the sovereignty of God. So how does the gift work? There's a person who is sick.

God decides he's going to heal this person. And sometimes he uses another individual to do it. There are times when he doesn't use an individual to do it.

He just simply intervenes and does it directly. And the person who is healed, in a sense, does receive to receive a gift of healing. But there is also those times when a human instrument is involved.

And let me say this. There are people who have the experience of these gifts more frequently than others. But nevertheless, none of them have the power to exercise these size, these gifts at will.

So there might be someone who actually does have a frequent experience of, let's say, the word of knowledge. But yet it's not within their control. They can't simply know something about somebody that couldn't otherwise be known.

God has to reveal that. And likewise, with healing, there might be a person who is used frequently by God to heal someone else. The gift of healing works and flows through them frequently.

But it's not something that they can just do at will. You know, you hear all of the stories about these great men of faith and their healing crusades and all of this. My question is simply this.

Why don't you go down to the local hospital and why don't you just clear it out? If you have the gift of healing, let's see it in action. Well, the fact of the matter is they don't. And so much of what they're saying is nothing but it's just nonsense.

And whenever you look for any documentation or whenever you look for any substantiation for their reports, you find that there isn't any at all. But yet, nevertheless, although there are not faith healers, there is a true gift of healing. And God can use any believer to be the vehicle through which he might heal someone else.

God has used me in this area. I have experienced through my life the gift of healing imparted to another person. Now, the funny thing about it is I didn't even know it was happening when it happened.

I really didn't. I'll tell you the story real quickly. I was called upon to visit a man in the hospital who was, according to his doctor, going to die within the hour.

A man whose body was wracked with cancer, he battled cancer for many years, and now this was the end. And I was called upon as a young pastor to come and just basically pray for him as he departed this world. And so I got to the hospital as quick as I could.

I came in and here's the man lying in the bed. I remember to this day, this is years ago, 15 years ago, probably. But I remember, you know, he was in very, very sad condition.

He was actually unconscious at the time. And I just, along with a friend, laid my hand on his foot was sticking out of the end of his bed and just prayed that the Lord would touch him and have mercy on him and just minister to him and the end. We left and I never thought any more about it.

About a week and a half or so later, some people came to the church office looking for me and they said, are you the one who went down to the hospital and prayed? And but, oh, yeah, I think, yeah, I did. As a matter of fact, I remember doing that. They said, well, we want to tell you something.

We want to tell you something, first of all, that you didn't know. The person you prayed for was filled with cancer and was I didn't know at the time, you know, was going to expire any moment, according to the doctor. They said, but that person is completely whole today and that person is praising God for his healing and sharing the gospel of Christ.

And I said, well, what do you know? I mean, I was I was absolutely amazed. Because I wasn't even aware that that was happening when I was praying for him. So you see that the gift of healing is it's more like that.

You know, anyone who puts up a big banner, you know, come to my healing crusade. I've got the power and all that right away. Please know that this person is.

Is off. And don't be part of anything like that, because it's all deception and the underlying factor and all that, of course, is money. But yet let's not be so foolish as to say that the gift of healing doesn't exist because of what we see in these charlatans, whatever they are, that's their problem.

And they'll stand before God. But let us not react to the extreme that we say, oh, there is no gift of healing for today. There is a gift of healing today.

There's nothing in scripture to indicate that the gift of healing is not in operation. Now, moving on to the next one, the working of miracles. The working of miracles, a few examples real quickly, turning water to wine, multiplying loaves and fish, raising the dead.

These are miracles. The Bible is full of examples of miracles from both testaments, of course. Now, again, the question arises, do miracles still happen? The answer is yes.

And the answer isn't yes, because I've seen them happen. The answer is yes, because the Bible never would for a moment indicate that they ceased. You see, in the problem that people run into is that they they make a determination upon their own experience.

They say, well, you know, miracles don't happen today. Well, how do you know? Because I've never seen one. Well, if you were omnipresent, then I might, you know, put a little bit of stock in what you're saying.

But since you're not. Since you are limited to your locality, I I'm not going to buy that. Do we know one one thousandth or one one millionth of all that's going on in the world today or all that's going on in the lives of individual people, all that's going on in the Church of Jesus Christ? We don't know.

And again, this is where the Bible has to be our authority. The Bible never indicates that miracles would cease. Just because I've never seen a miracle doesn't mean that.

Miracles don't happen. Now, I say I've never seen a miracle, I've never seen a miracle in the sense of I've never seen water being turned into wine. I've never seen a few fish and a couple of bread multitude to be multiplied to feed thousands of people and so forth.

But yet, I must say, I've seen plenty of miracles in the sense of what God has done in the lives of people and especially the miracle of the new birth, which is not a cop out, but in reality is probably the greatest miracle of all. To take a sinner, a man who or a woman who has lived a life of rebellion against God and hostility and hatred toward him, and then to see them become a worshiper and a lover of God, that is the ultimate miracle right there. I heard one man say when he was being challenged about the validity of

miracles, I read this actually.

He said, well, yeah, miracles do happen in my house. Beer has been turned into furniture and drugs have been turned into food. That's a miracle, truly, because what he used to do is spend all of his money on beer and drugs.

But now, because of what Christ has done in his life, he's taking care of his family. And that's a miracle to see that kind of transformation take place. But going back to the miracles in the sense that are being referred to here, are there still miracles today? Yes, there are.

Certainly there are. Read some of the. Some of the books of the missionaries.

A great book to get ahold of is a book called Pastor She HSI, it's spelled Chinese man, and to read the story of the life of Pastor She and to see the things that God did in and through his ministry there in China, see how he was converted. That was a miracle. But as you as you read the the accounts of the missionaries going into the different places where the gospel hasn't come yet and where Western culture hasn't.

Affected people. And taught them to depend on man instead of on God, you find that miracles indeed are taking place in those places. Now, moving on from miracles.

We come now to. Prophecy. Prophecy, what is prophecy? Prophecy is a direct word from God resulting in edification, exhortation and comfort.

It's a direct word from God resulting in edification, exhortation and comfort. Prophecy can come to us in a variety of ways. It can come through someone simply quoting scripture to us.

It can come through someone passing on something impressed on their heart. It can even come in the course of conversation with another believer. Prophecy is a beautiful, beautiful gift.

And as as Paul says in the 14th chapter, he that prophesies speaks edification, exhortation and comfort to men. But you see, the point about it is that it's a direct word from God. It's something that comes directly from God to you, sometimes straight to you, maybe again through just a Bible verse being quoted, or sometimes it can come through another believer.

Now, who can prophesy? Potentially all believers. You see, with the gifts, this is what I want you to understand. Every one of us can potentially experience every one of the gifts because of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

You're indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can conceivably do anything he wants through you. So you can potentially experience any one of the gifts, whether you do or not, is up to God.

That's what Paul emphasizes in the 11th verse, the sovereignty of God, the will of God, not the will of man. So potentially all believers can prophesy. Now, here's another question that's important, especially in light of the current situation.

Are those who prophesy prophets? The answer is no. Those who prophesy are not prophets. There are no prophets today.

There are no prophets today. It's clear from the New Testament that the prophets had a foundational ministry. Ephesians 2:20 again.

The church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. You see, the prophets were the colleagues of the apostles. As a matter of fact, in Acts chapter 13, the apostle Paul is not referred to as an apostle.

He's referred to as a prophet. And so is Barnabas. Barnabas is referred to as a prophet.

So there is no such thing today as a prophet. But there are people today whom have a frequent experience of the gift of prophecy. But that does not make them a prophet.

Again, the prophets had a foundational ministry. Their ministry, in a sense, ceased when the scriptures were completed. But yet their ministry is carried on perpetually through the New Testament.

The ongoing ministry of the apostles and prophets is the New Testament scripture. That's the ongoing ministry of the apostles and prophets. So listen closely.

Do not buy into this idea that there are apostles and prophets today. There aren't. And those men who are claiming to be apostles and prophets today, the fact that they're claiming that should be enough to let you know that you don't want to listen to them because they're obviously quite arrogant.

Anyone who would claim that for himself is lifted up with pride. So those who prophesy are not prophets. There are no modern day prophets.

And remember that these gifts are not the permanent possession of anyone. So in other words, even though a person might frequently have the gift of prophecy in operation in their life, that person does not have the ability to prophesy at will. I have experienced many times a gift of prophecy working in my life.

But if you walked up to me and asked me to prophesy over you, I would say, sorry, I can't. I can't do it. Why? Because it's not up to me.

That is up to the sovereignty of God. And so if God wants to work through me to prophesy to others, well, he's certainly able to do that and he will do that on many occasions. But I do not have the power to turn on the prophecy.

I can't just begin to prophesy. The spirit of God must move on me in order that I might prophesy. Now, prophecy, prophecy is a beautiful, beautiful gift.

And again, as Paul said, it speaks edification, exhortation and comfort to people. And I've experienced numerous times where God has used me to prophesy. God has prophesied to me through others.

I've also had people come to me and want to prophesy over me. And I'll have to say, honestly, anyone who's ever done that has never given a true prophecy. I've had people who prophesied to me who didn't even know they were doing it.

But yet it seems to me that in every case I can recall when somebody has come to me and said, I have a word for the Lord from you. It hasn't really been a word from the Lord. I've never borne witness with it.

And I've always responded with, well, if God want to speak to me, I think he could just do it directly. You see, when when somebody prophesies, they're not going to announce to you, I'm going to prophesy now. And you have to really be careful with this prophecy thing.

It can ruin your life. There have been people that have supposedly been prophesied over by the prophet. And you know what they do? They spend the rest of their life trying to get the prophecy fulfilled.

But it was never a true prophecy anyway. And so their faith is shipwrecked so often because of that. Numerous incidents where that has happened.

Now. Prophecy, let me say this before we move on to the next one. Prophecy, word of wisdom and word of knowledge will frequently be in operation along with the gift of teaching.

You see, some people who are really into the charismatic thing, they have a real big problem with the kind of environment that we have in here, because what they would say is that where are the gifts of the spirit? Look, I come in here and I don't see the gifts of the spirit in operation. Well, let me tell you honestly, when I'm teaching, the gifts of spirit are in operation. And I'm not saying that, you know, as something to boast about.

I just told you I don't have the gift of prophecy or anything like that. But I know for certain that when I teach, God comes alongside and he gives the gift of prophecy. He gives words of wisdom, words of knowledge.

And you know that by experience, although you might not even know what it is. But many of you have come to me and said, you know, last night we spent the whole night talking about the very things that you addressed this morning and questions that we weren't able to answer last night were all answered for us this morning. You know what that is? It wasn't because somebody phoned me and told me what you were talking about.

So I prepared my sermon to answer your questions. That's the gift of prophecy. That's a word of wisdom.

That's a word of knowledge. Those things accompany the teaching ministry. That's what's so wonderful about teaching when you're relying on the spirit of God, because, you know, there's not that many of us here this morning.

But I certainly don't know all of you personally, even the ones I know personally. I don't know what's going on in your life. Sentimentally, I don't know the deep issues that you're battling with.

But you know what? God knows. And so when I just say, Lord, I'm going to stand before these people that you know that you love, you've got to speak to them through me. He does it.

He's faithful to do it. So that's where these gifts will frequently be in operation. But to the undiscerning eye, they can't see it.

Oh, there's no gifts of the spirit in operation because nobody jumped up and shouted in tongues or nobody hollered out a prophecy or something like that. That's all. Well, we'll talk about that when we get to Chapter 14.

We'll tell you what it is. Discerning of spirits real quickly through the next three discerning of spirits. Is the God given ability to recognize false teaching and teachers, man, we need more people in the church today that can.

Have the gift of discerning of spirits, the God given ability to recognize false teaching and teachers, John said, Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits. People in the church, they are so gullible, they just believe anything because somebody up front says that, oh, it must be true. That person's a vicar.

That's a pastor. That's a bishop or whatever. No, we need discernment and we need to test the spirits, and of course, the Bible is the ultimate criteria.

Peter demonstrated the discerning of spirits when he discerned the true condition of Simon. This is recorded in Acts, Chapter eight. You remember Simon? Philip had gone to Samaria.

He preached the gospel. This this sorcerer who was there, he heard what Philip was saying and he saw the miraculous power being demonstrated through the life of Philip. And so he joined the church.

He was actually baptized. But when Peter and John came down, they laid hands on the people and the spirit of God was imparted to them. And Simon came to Peter and he said, he said, I want to I want that.

And he offered Peter money. And Peter said, your money perish with you. I perceive that you're bound by iniquity.

You're filled with bitterness. See, Peter had discernment on Simon that no one else apparently had. He was a member in good standing in the church.

But Peter could see into his heart and to see that his heart was wrong. That's a discernment of spirits. Now, finally, the last two.

Kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues. Tongues are the supernatural ability to speak or pray in a language unknown to yourself. The supernatural ability to speak or pray in a language unknown to yourself is the gift of tongues.

And the interpretation of tongues is a supernatural ability to interpret a language unknown to yourself. Acts chapter two and then one Corinthians 14 deal with this. So we'll get to tongues and discuss it more when we get to chapter 14, our tongues for today.

Yes, but they've certainly been exaggerated as far as their importance. And that was a problem in current. So it will be very applicable as we come to it now in wrapping things up.

This is a question that I think we all have to face honestly. And the question is this, why is it that we see so little of the work and the gifts of the spirit in the church today? Why is it? I mean, let's face it. Let's just we're just being real honest.

We believe in the gifts. It's it's clear. I've made that clear.

But let's be honest. We don't see the gifts of the spirit as active in the church today as we would like to. Do we see the gift of healing in operation frequently? Do we see the gift of miracles and prophecy in these things? Is this going on? And I think honestly, we have to say no, we don't see this to the extent that they saw it in the early church.

So the question is why? And I want to give you three reasons why we don't see these things in the church to the extent that I believe we ought to. Reason number one is that confusion over these matters has led to quenching and grieving the spirit. Confusion over these matters has led to quenching and grieving the

spirit.

Now, when it comes to the subject of the gifts, generally speaking, people are divided into two camps. There's what you would call the conservative camp, and then there's what you would call the charismatic camp. Now, it's my contention that the conservatives have quenched the spirit and the charismatics grieve the spirit.

And that's why we don't see a genuine work of the spirit so often going on. You see, the conservatives quench the spirit because they do not give the spirit. His rightful place in the church and they take away from what the Bible says about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, their problem is one of deletion.

They they delete, they take away. There are certain passages and statements in Scripture that they say these things are no longer applicable for us today, and so they completely ignore them. They discourage anyone from pursuing a deeper experience with the Holy Spirit.

They tell people that they shouldn't do that because they could end up getting in contact with demons, even some of them go to the extreme to say if a person is speaking in tongues, they're speaking under the inspiration of demons. Now, let me tell you this. If you want to quench the Holy Spirit, just start attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to the devil and that'll quench the Holy Spirit real quickly.

And that, I believe, is what's happened with many of the conservatives. And I can't help but feel that the majority of conservatives have done this as a reaction. They haven't come objectively to the scriptures.

Instead, they've come with a preconceived bias because of what they've seen among the charismatics. And so what they're doing is the same thing, just going in another direction. The charismatics are guilty of going beyond what the scriptures say.

The conservatives are going to come short of what the scriptures say. And in doing so, they end up quenching the spirit. As I said, the charismatics, on the other hand, go to the other extreme of going beyond what the scriptures say and in many cases doing the same thing that the conservatives do, the conservatives blatantly deny certain statements in the scripture.

The charismatics will do so also in practice, especially. We're told clearly here in the New Testament about the gifts of the spirit and how they're to function in the body of Christ. But you find that the charismatics completely ignore that.

Say, oh, that really doesn't apply right now because we we've got new revelation knowledge from God, and he told us that we could all shout in tongues together. And that's what we do because we're filled with the spirit. But you see, all those things are clear contradiction of scripture.

So they go beyond the scripture. And in doing so, they grieve the spirit. And of course, the further they go, the more they grieve the spirit.

And so this is one of the reasons why we're not seeing the spirit working as we see in the New Testament because of the quenching on the one hand and the grieving on the other. So we can safely say that if we seek not to quench nor to grieve the spirit, we could conceivably then open ourselves up to experience the work of the spirit like we read about in the New Testament. That is just one problem.

The second problem is the problem of self-sufficiency. The problem of self-sufficiency, and this is where the Western world is the most guilty. The Christian church in the Western culture is extremely guilty of self-sufficiency.

Our culture teaches us to be self-sufficient. Our culture teaches us to depend on ourselves. And that mentality has been brought over into the church.

You see, we no longer need the word of wisdom today. Why would we need that? Every pastor who goes through seminary, he has to study psychology. And as a result of the study of psychology, he comes out capable of counseling.

His whole basis for being able to counsel is not the gifts of the spirit, but it's his degree in psychology. You see that self-sufficiency right there, that's dependent upon dependency upon man. So we no longer look to prophecy.

We no longer look to healing and those kinds of things. We've got it all taken care of for us. Why would we seek God for healing when we can just go to the doctor? I'm not saying that we should never go to the doctor, but I'm saying that this is the general mentality.

We have in many ways in the West eliminated our need for God. And even in our own Christian lives, we prove that by the only time we really get down and cry out to God is when we're in a desperate situation where no one else can help us. You have to wonder if God doesn't many times bring us there for the very purpose of getting us to finally do that.

I'm amazed at how much people will seek the help of other people to the exclusion of seeking the help of God and will not go to God unless they're absolutely forced to do it. And they're beaten and battered and finally, you know, it's OK, I'll finally pray. I'll finally seek God on this.

You know, I've been through all the counseling. I've been through all the programs. I've been through, you know, all of this and that and the other thing.

And but that isn't the way it ought to be. As Christian people, our first resource should be God. That's the first place I should go is to the Lord.

And not to man.

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