

Spiritual Gifts - Part 3

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual gifts and the role of the Holy Spirit in the church, highlighting the priority of love and the need for balance and wisdom in using spiritual gifts.

Duration: 34:21

Scripture: Joel 2:28

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the phenomenon of people speaking in tongues during public meetings. He emphasizes the need for interpretation of tongues in order for the message to be understood by everyone present. The speaker shares personal experiences of witnessing people speaking in tongues without interpretation and the confusion it caused. He then refers to the biblical account of Peter explaining the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as prophesied by Joel, signaling the beginning of the last days and the fulfillment of God's promise to pour out His Spirit on all people. The speaker highlights the significance of this event as part of the New Covenant.

Transcript

In the first Corinthian letter, the first letter that Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, when you get to, in our English Bibles, chapter 12, 13, and 14, it's a very powerful little combination of truths. First Corinthians 12 begins to talk about the fact that Paul doesn't want them to be ignorant about spiritual gifts, or charismata, charisma, charismata, charismatic movement, which speaks about a new attention given to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We saw an outline of some of the gifts as we read chapter 12, and we found out that that's not an exhaustive list.

In other parts of the New Testament, only written by the Apostle Paul for the most part, do we see references to how the Holy Spirit comes upon and works through ordinary Christians like you and me in a supernatural way, so that the church of Jesus Christ can be built up and even extended. We learned that God's plan for the Christian church, which is not an organization, it's not a corporation, it's a spiritual organism, and because it's spiritual in nature, the way that God planned to build it up through people with spiritual gifting. You have a spiritual organism called the body of Christ, and thus it can only be built up effectively through spiritual gifting, not even talents of an ability to sing, but that's something that only the Holy Spirit can bring.

So we learned about certain gifts that were listed there. For example, the gift of the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the Holy Spirit working on ordinary Christians who are open and controlled by the Spirit to be able to discern between what Spirit is really behind what's going on here, evil, God's Spirit, human Spirit. We've learned that there's the gift of faith, the gift of miracles, and so on and so forth.

Among the many things that the Spirit can do, again, working through ordinary Christians. This letter was not written to pastors or to leaders, it was written to a congregation. And we learned the key verse, the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the common good.

Listen again, the manifestation of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit wanting to work through you, if you're yielded and wanted and are hungry for this, it is given to each person for the common good, not to be blessed, not to feel good, but to bless another brother or sister, or more importantly, to build up the church of Jesus Christ. Now, after Paul lists that and says, now look, the body has many different parts to it. The toe can say to the elbow, I don't need you, because the elbow does things the toe can't do.

And the shoulder can say to the eye, I don't need you. You can't move around like this, but the eye says you can't see. In the body, all of us here have a calling, a gifting, we're all equally important for the body of Christ, just like every part of your body has a function and a role to play.

As Paul talks about these spiritual gifts, this impartation of the Holy Spirit working in our lives, he then, as our Bibles have it, stops and says, but let me show you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and I can prophesy, and I have faith to move mountains, if I don't have love, I am what? Nothing. I'm a zero.

So we learn there that love, God is love. God has power, but God is love. That without love, a church will fall apart.

A church will fall apart because love is patient, love is kind. And people can be gifted spiritually, and if they're not governed by love, they can cause more havoc and trouble than you could imagine. We learn that the priority is love.

Love is the greatest thing. Love endures forever. A day will come where there'll be no more gifts of the Spirit.

We'll be in heaven, but love will never end. The atmosphere of heaven will be love. Oh, praise God.

How many are looking forward to going to heaven where everything is going to be just pure, unadulterated love? Now, some people, some Christian writers have made a point using that by saying, okay, since love is the most important, and character is the most important, then spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit don't mean anything. They're inferior. But that's not at all what Paul is saying.

Paul is just saying love is paramount, but earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially that you might have ones that can bless the body of Christ. Now, he mentions three vocal gifts, shall we say, in that list. One gift is the gift of prophecy, which is speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, not always predicting something in the future, but speaking what God feels and says about a certain situation in a church's life, a person's life, a situation that's speaking forth the heart of God.

Notice, not by schooling, not by having a high IQ. Many people who have high IQs are held back because they try to figure out God. They try to be smarter than God.

No, the gifts of the Spirit many times work best in the people who are simple and childlike who just say, God, here I am. Use me. I want to be one of those simple people.

Are you with me? Say amen. So the gift of prophecy is speaking in the language of the people. So I'm going to, instead of using Greek, which is what Paul would have said, I'm going to say English.

And then there's this gift of the gift of speaking in tongues, which is called glossolalia in modern contemporary language. It's speaking in unknown tongues, speaking in different languages. And then along with it, the interpretation of those tongues.

Before we look at some verses, this is a night a little different. We're going to do a little teaching and then pray. I hope this will whet people's appetite for what God might have for you.

What do we know about this speaking in tongues? Well, we know that when the church was born on the day of Pentecost, that Jewish feast in Acts chapter two, when they were all gathered, probably 120 of them in an upper room, not in a church, they were not kneeling. They were not standing. They were sitting and they had been there waiting on God and praising God and whatever.

And when the spirit came, they were all filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit, baptized in the Holy Spirit. And they began to speak in languages that they did not know. Now this is hard for some people.

They began to speak in languages that they didn't know. Now, because it was a big Jewish feast, there were people gathered in Jerusalem from all different parts of the known world then. When they heard this noise, they came and they heard these fishermen and tax collectors and these followers of Jesus, they heard them speaking in their language.

And they said, what does this mean? Are these guys drunk? They're like in some kind of happy ecstasy, but they're speaking in languages that we know. They don't know it. We know that.

And now they're praising God and speaking about the greatness of God in a language that they don't know. What does this mean? And Peter got up and said, before he preached the first Christian gospel sermon, he said, no, these guys aren't drunk. It's nine o'clock in the morning.

Who's drunk at nine in the morning? He said, no, this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel in the Old Testament in the last days, which means 2000 years ago started the last days. In the last days, God said, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh on all kinds of people. And he said, this was the fulfillment of God doing this ultimate new thing as part of the new covenant, Jesus forgiving us for our sins by what he did on the cross and the Holy Spirit coming in and making us new creations and not only different people, but now powerful people, because Jesus has said, and you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

So that's the first mention of speaking in tongues in the New Testament. And we find it elsewhere where they prayed for people. In that case, everyone spoke in other tongues as the spirit gave them the ability to do it.

Now, when Peter went to Cornelius's house in Acts 10, he was a Roman centurion and Italian guy, a Gentile. And while Peter was preaching the sermon, it says, while he was still preaching the gospel, the spirit came on everyone who was there and they were all filled with the spirit and began to speak in other tongues, just like the disciples had done years before in Jerusalem. And when Peter saw it, he said, wait a

minute, I'm not used to having Gentiles as Christians, but who's going to stop these people from being baptized? They received the Holy Spirit just like we did.

Obviously God doesn't have any favorites, Jew or Gentile. Now, Paul is talking about a gift of the Holy Spirit and he begins to talk about tongues and interpretation of tongues. But to get the context, he's speaking about what happens in public meetings.

The problem in Corinth was that they got into a fascination with spiritual gifts, especially speaking in tongues, and they started to make it get totally out of whack in their services. Paul must've heard that because now he's going to do teaching, not to tell him to be quiet, but to bring balance and wisdom to the situation. See, anything that's in the Bible, if you overdo it and you don't keep a balance with it, it can go off.

Now, he's going to talk about how do you behave when you're in a public meeting like this? Because it seems as if, and this is why he's writing, that people would jump up and speak in tongues, stopping the meeting, everybody would listen, but nobody knew what they were saying. Because this is why the interpretation of tongues is needed in a public meeting. Because the person speaking in the unknown language is not only unknown to him, it's unknown to us.

Because we don't have people from all over the world, possibly hearing what these languages mean. They were doing this and it was causing chaos in the services. But people said, no, but it's speaking in tongues, it's from the Holy Spirit.

But it was bringing chaos because the people weren't being edified because you can't be edified if you don't know what's being said. So now Paul is trying to notice, not like some people do, just everybody be quiet and let the pastor control the meeting and then we'll keep it under control and dismiss everybody. See, that's the other alternative, no Holy Spirit, just control everything.

And they were having no control and everybody doing what they wanted and strangers and people who didn't know about God would come in and go, what is that about? People are jumping up and talking in languages and syllables, I don't know. Then another one jumped up, what's going on here? Oh, we don't know, but it's the Holy Ghost. Well, that's not going to help a lot of people.

How many are with me? Say amen. What does he say? Let's look. Now follow the way of love.

Now we're into chapter 14. And eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. Now, see that word gifts of the Spirit? That's not the word that's used in chapter 12, charismata.

He's using another word, which means can be interpreted this way. Follow love, which I just told you about, and eagerly desire the things of the Spirit. Listen to me, everyone.

There's things that pertain to the realm of the Holy Spirit. And Paul says, although they're invisible and you can't touch them and you can't see them, set your heart on the things that the Spirit does, because he's the one who will use you to bless others, especially prophecy, speaking in English under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, not always predicting, but speaking words, which we'll find out will build up the church. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people, but to God.

Indeed, no one understands them. They utter mysteries by the Spirit. Now we find out, this is very hard for the Western mind, the American mind, the British mind, the French mind.

This is very hard to understand this. Paul says, when someone speaks by the Spirit, even though it comes from God, they have no idea what they're saying, but it's helpful to them as we're going to learn. See, to us, we're like, I'm not doing anything that I can't figure out.

So now we're into a realm of speaking mysteries to God. No one knows what he says. We're going to learn, not even him, but the one who prophesies speaks in English.

He speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging, and comfort. Notice, when you speak under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, what are the goals that God has for us, for someone who prophesies? This is not a sermon now. This is not preaching.

Some people would want to say prophecy is preaching. No, this is spontaneous. It's on the impulse of the Spirit.

It can happen in a service. It can happen after the service, but he's especially focusing on in the service. He speaks to people to strengthen them or edify them.

Why? Because people get beat down. Come on here. Haven't you ever been beat down? I know what it is to be beat down, and I don't need someone beating me down more when I'm beat down.

I'd like somebody to build me up. Do I get an amen here? So why God wants to do through prophecy, through speaking in English, is to say a word that will edify someone. Notice, not just edify, but encourage them.

Why? Because life is filled with a lot of discouragement. Hasn't anybody here ever been discouraged? I've been discouraged. So you don't need a word of discouragement when you're discouraged.

You need a word of encouragement and for comfort. That speaks of people who have had their heart broken and have gone through some things, and then somebody can speak a word of encouragement or comfort to them. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church.

So now we're getting to Paul's main point, is when you gather together, it's not about you. It's about God use me to help the church. Now notice what he says here.

Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves. This is a mystery. How do you edify yourself if you don't know what you're saying? See? The natural mind cannot receive that.

They go, that's crazy. But we didn't make this up. It's in God's word.

Amen? So the person who uses the Holy Spirit and prays and worships in the Spirit is building themselves up spiritually, even though they do not know what their cabeza does not know have the information in there. It's spirit to spirit with God. It's like a direct kind of praying.

God is a spirit, and they that worship him should worship him in spirit and truth. So when you pray by the spirit and an unknown tongue and whatever and commune with God, this is direct. This is bypassing the mind.

And the Spirit is helping you to pray for things that you don't even know you need, possibly. How about that? The brain is limited. How can I pray for something unless I know that I need it? But when the Spirit

takes over, now you're praying for things, even though you don't know it, you're building yourself up.

Oh, praise God. Can we put our hands together and thank God for the Holy Spirit? But the one who prophesies edifies the church. Now, I would like every one of you to speak in tongues.

So it's for people to say, I don't want that stuff in the church and all of that. Well, listen, we don't want chaos, but why would Paul say that unless it was important to him? I'd like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies, who speaks in English, is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets.

Why? So that the church may be edified. Don't you get the whole point here? What he's trying to say is this is not at home in your closet. This is not when you're riding in a subway.

This is not when you're all alone taking a walk and you're talking to God. Then you just pray as the Lord leads you. But in a public meeting, you can't be running all over the place and shouting and carrying on.

And when I grew up, I grew up for a while, I was in the most bizarre things. Just everybody shouting, screaming, carrying on. And what does it all mean? We don't know, but it feels good.

But no, that's not the way God wants his church to be. How many are with me? Say amen. No, then you're against the Holy Spirit.

See, when there's chaos, the way people excuse it is, oh, you're fighting the Holy Spirit. Paul's not fighting the Holy Spirit. Paul is giving a scripture now and saying, you have to have wisdom because it's to build up the stranger or the person who needs encouragement.

And if you're speaking in tongues, how would they know to be encouraged? They don't even know what you're saying. Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you unless I bring you some revelation? See, the Spirit can give you revelation on a part of scripture, let's say, or just a revelation from the Spirit or knowledge, something that God gives you, or prophecy, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, or a word of instruction. Notice, see how the Spirit works? He's adding something else.

A word of instruction can be done just mentally, or it can be done specially, anointed by the Holy Spirit. Come on, we've all heard that. Someone preaches, and he's preaching stuff from the Bible, but it's like, yeah, whatever.

And then someone else is preaching the same passage of scripture, and boom, it hits your heart. How many know what I'm talking about? So what's the difference? Is it the speaking ability? Of course it's not. It's the Spirit.

It's the Holy Spirit taking the words and taking the thoughts, boom, with power, dunamis, muy fuerte, strong. Let's go to the latter part of that chapter. For this reason, the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say.

Now he's talking about something else in the meeting. He's saying, if you're going to interrupt the service and draw attention to yourself and speak in a tongue, unless that's interpreted into English, you are not helping one soul. So if that's something you feel that God has given you to do, you should pray that you interpret it.

Why? Because when you interpret it, you'll put it into English, the thought, the feeling, whatever. So now the church can be blessed because God loves us so much that when we gather together, he wants us to be encouraged. He knows what you're going through.

What do you see when you see up here a guy with a blazer and a tie? You don't know what's in my life. You don't know what I need today. You think you do? You don't.

And I don't know what you need, but God knows what all of us need. And he says, if my people will be open to the Spirit, I'll send them messages and I'll use them so that they'll build up their brothers and sisters. Don't you want to build up your brothers? Outside these doors, there's people tearing us down all the time.

For this reason, the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say for it. Now here's something else about speaking in tongues. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.

It's very hard for an intellectual bent mind to accept. You're saying my spirit is praying and I don't even know what I'm saying and it's good for me. Yes.

By the Holy Spirit, you can pray in an unknown language. Your mind has no idea what you're saying, and yet it's edifying you, it's building you up. How many believe it because it's in the Bible? Say amen.

This is absolutely what the Bible teaches. And that's very hard for people who want to have a logical understanding of everything. This is a mystery.

So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit in tongues, but I will also pray with my understanding in English. I will sing with my spirit in tongues, and I will also sing with my understanding. Otherwise, when you are praising God in the spirit, how can someone else who is near now put in the position of an inquirer say amen to your thanksgiving since they don't know what you are saying? You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.

Brothers and sisters, how many are hungry for more of the Holy Spirit in your life? Say amen. You got to want it so that you can be a blessing. If you don't want it to be a blessing, what do you want it for? To feel good or to be proud that you have something from the Holy Spirit? No.

The whole reason the Spirit was given was why the Son was given. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. Now the Spirit is given so that as we yield to him, he can build others up and help other people.

Oh, my goodness. I thank God. This is for people who say speaking in tongues is not important.

I thank God, the apostle Paul says, that I speak in tongues more than all of you. Now, if it wasn't good for you, why would he thank God for it? I don't care what any pastor says or anyone who says. There's been an anti-supernatural movement in Christendom for hundreds of years.

It's gotten really strong lately now. So anything that's supernatural, anything that's not under the control of the pastor and logic and your mind and planning the meeting and scripting the meeting, anything outside of that is looked down at like, what are you, a fanatic? Are you an emotional nut job? I don't want to be a nut job. I want to be a Spirit-filled believer.

How many are with me? Say amen. Notice what Paul says. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

But in the church, I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than 10,000 words in a tongue. See, how people have made that is either tongues are everything or tongues are nothing. Tongues are the least.

People are causing a lot of chaos. Then the other people are, no, that's everything. I grew up in a church that a guy would just grab the microphone and start to speak in tongues for like 30, 40 seconds and then go, hello, everybody.

Praise God. How are you today? And I was just little and I was watching. I remember as a little kid, let me give you just some reminiscences here.

I remember as a little kid in a rally of the church that my mother drug me to. And they had a rally in Connecticut and there was a man in a nice suit, handsome man, probably 35, 40 years old. And the Spirit supposedly came upon him and now he started falling and kicking.

And they had little folding chairs. He smashed about seven or eight of them, fell down, almost broke his back. People had to come and help him.

And I was little and I watched and I thought, what was that? And they said, that's the Holy Ghost. And I went, oh, good grief. I don't want the Holy Ghost.

And the guy almost killed himself. How many have seen things like that in your life, in your travels? If you question it, people say you're against the Spirit. Don't buy that.

No. Paul was not against the Spirit. Paul said, I thank God I speak in tongues more than all of you.

By the way, the construction of the Greek is probably this. I'm glad, I thank God I speak in tongues more than all of you put together. He built himself up through his prayer language.

But in a church, he said, I'd rather speak five words in English. The Lord is my shepherd. I'd rather speak five in English than 10,000 in tongue.

Why? Because nobody understands it. I have so many, so many memories of the Holy. I'm so glad I grew up around people who were open to the Holy Spirit.

Did I see fanaticism? Yep. But the devil, when people do crazy things, you know, he tries to get you to do, throw away the baby with the bath water. No Holy Spirit.

I'm not buying that either. I don't want fanaticism. I don't want manipulation.

I don't want the organ to work everybody up into, you know, and the Lord said, whoo. Yeah. Whoa.

Jonathan can do that. Jonathan could tune me up if he wanted. Right.

But anyway, I know I would not be here today if it wasn't for the manifestations of the Holy Spirit that I encountered as a child, young man, and oh, at critical points in my life. In fact, today, sitting alone in my office, I said, God, you got to come to me and manifest yourself in a new way to me. Because when you experience the supernatural, it erases 70,000 lies from the devil in one second.

Right? If you just try to think everything out, well, that could have happened. Oh, maybe that was a coincidence. But then when, oh my goodness, my goodness, my goodness, so many times.

One time, Reena, Sister Gudula, I should say, was holding my daughter, Chrissy. And Chrissy was two years old, and she had gotten a growth under her eye right here. And it just was because she was little.

It was just a little bump. My wife pointed it out to me. I said, oh, it'll go away.

It didn't go away. It got bigger. And every day it got bigger.

I had no insurance. We had no money. That year, I think I made \$5,800 for the year, \$7,300 for the year.

Both were working second jobs. So I would take Chrissy and walk with her at night. And I would just cry over her and hold her, put her on my shoulder like this, say, God, heal her.

I can't go to the doctor. I have no options. Just heal her.

That thing is getting nasty. Well, it got so big that we had to take her to a doctor that someone said was down the road from where we were living then in New Jersey. And the doctor looked at it and said, I don't think it's critical, but she's going to have to get it cut off.

She's going to have to do surgery, and they're going to have to go under and take that thing out. Well, we didn't have the money for the surgery, and I wasn't about to have my first child have her eye cut underneath her eye. Brothers and sisters, have you ever tried to believe something, but you know you're trying in yourself to have faith? How many know that feeling? In other words, you're believing, and you know what the Bible says, but you know like, no, something's up with this.

Something's wrong with this. This is me trying to believe. Well, then I became aware that the Holy Spirit gives faith, the gift of faith, the gift of tongues.

He gives these things from promptings. If you just open and you obey those promptings. Remember, if you want to speak in a prayer language, if you want to be used by God in different ways, God's not going to come with a hammer and knock you out.

Sometimes it's the gentlest proddings of the Spirit. Sometimes it's very strong. So Reena was, Sister Godula was holding Chrissy in the back of this little rundown church that was our church on Lennox Avenue, and I had preached, and we were praying and waiting on the Lord, and suddenly the Spirit came sweet into the meeting.

You could sense something had changed. My hands were up, and I was just waiting on God, and suddenly I saw myself laying hands on Chrissy, and I saw Chrissy's eye healed. I saw it as real as I see this Bible, except I didn't see it with these eyes, but I saw her.

I saw her. I saw her eye healed, and I saw myself praying for her, but I hadn't prayed for her. I saw myself doing it, and I yelled out in the meeting, who has my daughter? Who has Chrissy? There were 40 of us there, or 60, or whatever church I'd grown to, and Sister Godula, if I remember correctly, I have her back here.

I said, bring her up, and she brought her up, and all I did was reenact what I saw, and by the next morning, there was no bump in her eye. God had totally healed. I didn't stress.

I believe. How many have ever tried that? Come on. That's heavy lifting.

Am I right? While you're saying it, something else is saying it. No, you ain't. No, you don't.

No, you don't. You don't believe. See, faith comes from God.

Love comes from God. Everything comes from God. You know how God made us? Only to be receivers.

We're only receiving sets. We can't send out one thing unless we receive it first. God made humanity to be totally at His disposal, that if we would just look to Him, He would send things into us, a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, the word of salvation, but what could you give anybody unless God does it first? Brothers and sisters, look, I close.

Where the Bible says, love one another, even as Christ said, as I have loved you, can you love someone else like Jesus loves them? Well, of course you can't, but you can when God begins to work in you and give you that love. To try to love people who are mean to you is impossible. You got to let God baptize you with His love.

Then you start. Come on. You can live in a whole new realm.

How many want to live in a whole new dimension? Wave your hand at me. I mean in a whole new dimension. If not, I'm going to try harder, read more verses.

I'll read those verses, but Holy Spirit, you have to come. Just begin to worship God. Use your mouth.

Desire earnestly the things of the Spirit, especially that you might prophesy. For the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every single person for the common good. Holy Spirit, come.

Come in a new way in our lives, Lord. Starting with me, come in a new way, Lord. Those of you really hungry, like, pastor, that was, while you were just reading that from the scripture, I have such a hunger.

I want to live in another dimension. I want to live in the realm of the Spirit. I want to be familiar with spiritual things.

I don't want this try harder religion. I want to see God flow through me, work through me. He gives the gifts as He chooses, but He does say, desire earnestly spiritual gifts.

If you have a hunger in your heart that you want to just tell the God, God's starting tonight. Even when I go home, when I lay in bed at night, I am open, Holy Spirit, to you coming. Some of the most amazing things can happen laying in your bed.

Waking up in the morning, God can just come and give you a prayer, breathe something into your life. You just stand. If you're really hungry, pastor, I am with you.

I want God to do something new in my life.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25923.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/spiritual-gifts-part-3/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net