

Gifts of the Spirit - Part 2 (Rora 2003)

by Les Wheeldon

The gifts of the Spirit are essential to church life, and waiting on God is the heart of the church.

Duration: 1:00:16

Scripture: Isaiah 40:30 - 41:1, Matthew 4:4, Revelation 10:9-11

Topics: "Gifts"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the importance of knowing the subject and purpose of one's speech. He then delves into the topic of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing that the underlying substance of these gifts is what truly matters. The speaker highlights the significance of the consciousness of God within the church and the eternal plan and purpose of God in gathering His people. He also references Isaiah 40:18 and emphasizes the greatness of God, stating that the nations are insignificant compared to Him. The sermon concludes with a mention of a quote from John Wesley, where he expresses a desire for the little book of God's word.

Transcript

Father, we praise you that we can open our hearts to you and you wonderfully open your truth to us. We praise you. We pray again this morning, open your beautiful truth to us.

It's winsome. We love you. We love all that you've said.

Thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Well, I am given the privilege of being the last one on this series to talk about the gift of the Spirit so I can dot all the I's and, I nearly said cross all the I's and dot all the T's. But Norman stole all my sermon material. That's a good excuse.

I noticed that Norman said that he had once written a letter to somebody and it had been a word of prophecy to them. There's actually two miracles in that. One was the gift of interpretation.

Reading the writing. I remember Norman, you told the story once about, was it you or Mr North? Mr North wrote to you with a letter saying this is a marvellous revelation. He couldn't read the writing of Mr North at all.

And when he asked Mr North, apparently he'd forgotten. So, interpretation is needed in more ways than one. Well, somebody asked me what I spoke on the other day.

You should know before you speak. You should know while you're speaking and it's useful if you know what you spoke about after you spoke. Anyway, better move on.

We're talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and last time I spoke about the underlying substance which is what the subject is really most essentially about. Really, it's what is in us, what is working in us that those two witnesses in Revelation chapter 11 prophesied in sackcloth because their hearts were in anguish over the state of the world. I believe those two witnesses are here in this present generation and have been in every generation.

And other things one can look at but the obedience to the Spirit, all these things. Now, what is coming through is the vital thing in the realm of the gifts of the Spirit. But in the realm of the gifts themselves, the gifts themselves are in one absolutely essential way.

They are essential. They are foundational to church life. So that if one imagined a church where there were no gifts of the Holy Spirit, it would not just be a dead church.

It wouldn't be a church. And that is an incredibly radical statement and I realize it may upset some people. A church that does not know the gifts of the Holy Spirit is either dead or not a church at all.

But that is not, it's a bold statement, it's a shocking statement but step back from it a little moment and realize that what are the gifts of the Spirit? They are the direct speaking of God from the hearts of his people. Now remove that. Where is the relationship with God being built? In the end you are left with a book, a brain and that's all.

But the gifts of the Spirit refer to the fact that the heart of the church is Christ himself. And one of the things we often forget and I think this is one of the reasons why ungodly conduct can come into a church. It happens when a church loses the ministry of the Spirit.

I believe many problems in churches can come back, be traced back to problems in the ministry. I believe that is true of the Corinthian letter. In the second letter he addressed the ministry and he talked about the ministry of glory and the ministry of the Spirit and one could call it prophetic ministry.

But the churches must deeply understand that prophetic ministry is not an option, it is the foundation. And it is because Christ is speaking in the midst of the church. Now it's the same in our own individual lives.

It is by the witness of the Spirit that we are conscious of salvation. Remove the witness of the Spirit and you are again left for logic. It doesn't satisfy, it doesn't minister life, it allows things to grow hard in us, it can allow us to become absolutely hypocritical and pharisaical in our way of life.

But the witness of the Spirit brings us into the consciousness of what God is speaking to us now, corrective, directional, so that we are living in the living presence of God now. So that our lifeline is the witness of the Holy Spirit. In fact the most precious gift any man has is the witness of the Holy Spirit.

By it we live. Remove it, we have but confusion. So when we talk about these things, the gift of prophecy is foundational in the life of the church.

Of course then we begin to say, would you mean when sister so-and-so or brother so-and-so says, thus says the Lord, I love you, all is well, I will prosper you, amen. Is that the foundation of the church? No, no, no. I'm not talking about the form alone.

I'm talking about the inner sanctuary of the church. And this is the explanation why churches that can have the form of prophecy, and can have many prophecies in their meetings, can still be without the spirit of prophecy. We're not talking just about the form.

We can talk about forms and we can talk about all kinds of things, but what God is most jealous over is the inner life of the church, the inner life of the individual Christian and the inner life of the church. This is where we must give clear attention to, because there is something about God speaking in our midst that will go to the very heart of all that we are as people. And so, if I said a phrase, again it can be open to misinterpretation, misunderstanding, I would say, for example, that the heart of the church is to wait on God.

That is the heart of the church, so that God himself is consciously the centre of the church and not man, not committees, not elders, but God is himself the centre of all, consciously and really. Now, when we say that phrase, waiting on God is at the very heart of the church, immediately one thinks of patterns of waiting on God, just as we could think of patterns of prophecy. But patterns of waiting on God don't indicate that we are living in that, no more than forms of prophecy indicate that we are living in it.

The whole thing, and this is really what I want to speak about today, it is this, one of the main things I want to speak about this morning is this waiting on God, because it is the way in which the gifts work, it's the way in which the whole church functions. Take away waiting on God from a church, the church will soon descend into evangelicalism, which I mean by that, correct doctrine, but without that vibrant speaking of God. Now, I'm sorry, I must take that statement back a little bit, because many evangelicals would say that's what they mean by evangelicalism, vibrant speaking of God.

And these are vital areas that we've got to get a hold of. You see, you can go to prayer meetings, where there is constant chatter and noise, and no consciousness of God. And people say the prayer meeting is the heart of the church, and I don't believe it is.

I believe God is the heart of the church, and we must come to God. If we have a prayer meeting where we don't come to God, that doesn't, that means the prayer meeting is irrelevant, totally irrelevant in the life of the church. You can scrap all the prayer meetings, if God is not known in them, they are utterly irrelevant to the life of the church.

You can cancel them all, it will not make the church improve or go down at all. God must be waited on. God must be respected and honoured in the midst.

God must be known, and He will reveal Himself through the Spirit to those who wait on Him. And this is true of ministers who preach, but it's true of the whole body of the church, that somehow we must discover this wonderful place of being conscious of God. And it just delights me even to talk about these things, because they are the things that I most love.

And the thing that most tires me, is men and women talking, whether it's my voice or anybody's voice, I'm not criticising anybody, even my own voice tires me, if I don't sense the dew distilling from the presence of God. Because I know that place, it is the most precious place I know, to go and wait on God. And of

course as you wait there on God, you discover that what you are coming into is what God has made you in your spirit.

He has made you one of those beings that wait around the throne in adoration and awe and wonder. And as you give yourself to waiting on God, and as you yield there and discover God, you find that you are increasingly conscious of that is what God has made you in spirit. A being that lives around the throne of God, bowing constantly.

Sometimes, I mean, recently I was on a bus journey and I was, it was about 15 hours being thrown around like a pea in a tin can, and you were in Tanzania, and you were sitting there like this, but in my spirit I was conscious, so deeply conscious that it didn't change the fact that in my heart I was waiting on God. And you could want for quieter circumstances, you could want for easier circumstances, you could want for perfect, you could want for that perfect stillness and quietness, but that is not waiting on God. Waiting on God is something deep inside you.

And it is produced by the Holy Spirit, and it is produced by the work of the cross. Because the alternative to waiting on God is the enthronement of self. And waiting on God is to bring ourselves constantly to the place where we are always under and in the life of God.

I remember a phrase that I used to hear when people used to pray for the preacher, they used to say in the Baptist church, they used to say, hide him behind the cross, Lord. And I love the phrase, but I love it a little differently, keep him in the cross. Keep him crucified with Jesus.

Now, this is the heart of the gifts of the Spirit, that we know a place where we are not driven by the natural man. Now let me just turn you to Isaiah 40 for a moment, and it's a great chapter on waiting on God and all this, but one of the things I notice, if you want to read the chapter, you'll come to the end of the chapter where it says, the famous words, and this is a prophet speaking these words, he says in verse 30, even the youths shall faint and be weary. Natural man will always look to youth, but the young men shall utterly fall.

Old men grow weak anyway, but the young men also shall utterly fall. So, the strength, the strongest area shall not be sufficient, but those who wait on the Lord, young or old, they shall exchange their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

And the next word says, keep silence before me, O coastlands, and let the people renew their strength, let them come near, then let them speak, let us come near together for judgment. I remember reading in George Fox's journal, he spoke about visiting a place, I can't remember where it was, it was somewhere in the northeast of England, and he came across a company of people and he said this, this was his, to quote from memory, he said, they have had talked themselves dry. When he came to them, they were swilling beer and their lives were worldly, but they had once been in blessing, but they said they had talked themselves dry.

And he said, I advise them to gather together, to wait, to feel, I can't remember all that he said, to wait to feel the inward presence of God and to know the witness and to gather together to the speakings of God and God would refresh the work of God in that place. And I think I remember that they did what he said, they gathered again. And that is what the gifts of the spirit are for, that we should be gathering to wait on God to renew our strength, that our spiritual life is constantly renewed by God.

When I say by God, I don't mean by an act of God, I mean by God being there and by us knowing and sensing God. It's one of the strangest things, but you can go to a church and start talking about God and people have never heard about him before. They've heard his name used, they've read his book quoted, but to talk about experiencing him, feeling him, knowing him, being aware of him, knowing his voice, knowing his ways.

And here Isaiah speaks. Now Isaiah, one of the mistakes we all make is to assume that Isaiah was such a different and specially anointed man that well, that's it, we can never, but this is what Isaiah got from the fact that he knew God. This is what he got and we haven't got time to look at it, but in this chapter 40, prior to those verses, we have this.

In verse, I'm going to quote just a couple of verses and not really comment on it, but just a couple of comments here. Verse 8, the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever and Isaiah had a tremendous sense of the eternal God, the eternal God and the word of God that would outlast every fashion, every pressure from his generation, everything around him that would seem so big and large and strong, it will fade. The names of the men of our generation will be forgotten, the politicians will pass away, their reputations will be tarnished.

Tells you all these things, but the one thing that he was conscious of, the word of God and this is what God wants right in the centre of his church is his word. He doesn't want his word just in our preaching or in our Sunday mornings or our morning devotions, he wants the word in the centre of our beings. Another thing he says here, verse 11, he will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs with his arm, he will carry them in his bosom and gently lead those who are with young.

In his waiting on God, he came to a consciousness of the eternal God and the tender God, the tender God. You see the world is not waiting to see what a wonderful church we are, but what a wonderful God we have. We cannot advertise ourselves, we have nothing to advertise from ourselves.

We have to live in the realm of the consciousness of God within, that's the church, the eternity of God, the tenderness of God. Here in verse 12, who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, measured heaven with a span, calculated the dust of the earth in a measure, weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, who has directed the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord? Or as his counsel has taught him, and here you have the wisdom of God, you've got the eternity of God, the tenderness of God, the wisdom of God, that God should be coming through the gifts, the presence within us in wisdom, in tenderness, in eternal strength. Look at verse 17, all nations before him are as nothing, they are counted by him less than nothing and worthless.

The greatness of God, churches can feel that they are such a minority, such an irrelevance in such a sweep of history, despised, not even taken note of. It's no doubt now that if a Muslim leader says something strong enough, he will be taken note of, but a Christian leader, hardly at all. But the truth is this, that the church is not the footnote to history, it is to the historians of the world.

But the nations of the world are the footnote to history to God. It is the church that is the centre of all God's attention in our generation, in every generation, God is building his church through the history of this world. And when the books are open and everything is understood, it will be revealed and seen that what really was happening was the gathering in of a people.

And that everything that happened that God allowed and decreed in the nations was all to the fulfilment of his eternal plan and purpose to build and call a bride for his son. The heart of the church is the consciousness of God and we can feel that we are irrelevant until we go into that place and understand by the speaking of God, by the Spirit speaking in our midst, that God is the great God. The nations are just as a drop in a bucket.

Verse 18, to whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to him? There are images and idols and so on, but who knows God? What picture can you take to describe God? The church must get beyond the sense of having defined God. We have to get beyond the place where we have defined how God will work. We have to get beyond the place where we think God is waiting on us, that we will do everything and that we are independent to get everything done.

We must come to the knowledge of the indefinable God, the God who surprises, the God who baffles us, the God who is greater than us, greater than our definitions, greater than ours. And when we say that the gift of prophecy is at the heart of the church, I am meaning with all my heart, if we lose the speaking of God in our churches, we will perish, because the life of the church is God. It is not our teaching, it is not our whatever, it is not our preaching, it is not our natural gifts, it is not our abilities.

None of these things can sustain or even further the church. God can take them up and use them, but at the heart of all that he does, he is speaking in our hearts, man shall not live by bread alone. The church shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds, not from the book, but from the mouth of God.

Where does the book come in? Let me turn you to a chapter in Revelation. Revelation chapter 10, because when Jesus said that word, every man shall not live, he was quoting the book. And there is no doubt that in waiting on God, and the place where we are listening to God, one of the activities in waiting on God is not just quietness, we'll come to that, back to that in a moment, but one of the activities in waiting on God is to read his word with a listening, believing ear.

Here in chapter 10, at the very end, verse 11, he says, you must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues and kings. You must prophesy again. In King James it says before, you must prophesy.

Now if God is saying that to that man, he is also saying it to us. The church must prophesy, the church must speak, the church must have the knowledge of God. Now in verse, in chapter 10, the mighty angel came down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, a rainbow on his head, his face like the sun and his feet like pillars of fire.

We've dared to open the book of Revelation. Several brothers said they wanted to avoid it. Well, I quite sympathize with them, but I'm daring to open the book of Revelation.

And in verse 2, this mighty angel comes down, stands there in his great might and strength, and he had, in verse 2, a little book open in his hand. He set his right foot on the sea, his left foot on the land, a mighty angel. He cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars.

When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. When the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered and do not write them. Not everything God says in prophecy to you, or when you're alone.

I've got a friend in Germany, he is, I think, in his 70s. When he was a young man, he was baptized with the Spirit. When he was a young man, he was thinking to serve God.

He went out into the woods one day to pray, and God spoke to him. And he said to me, I've never told anybody what he said to me. And I'm sorry, I still don't know.

I wish I could tell you, but I don't know. For 50 something years, that man has kept secret what God said to him on that day. There are men who receive words from God.

That man has a real ministry from God. God has used him in many places. He's a very precious man of God.

God spoke to him as he was seeking something that he couldn't say. I guess there are things that God will reveal about himself that you cannot explain. Not only that they can't be said, that they're just difficult to utter.

What happened to John? What happened to Paul? And again, we make them as great exceptions. Well, I have never received a revelation, but I cannot tell you. I'm afraid that I've not received a voice or a word like that.

But here, it happened, and it does happen. But now, verse 5, the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven, and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer. Let's read verse, let's read it all.

Verse 7, But in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished as he declared to his servants the prophets. Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, Go take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth. So I went to the angel and I said to him, boldly I guess, I don't know how his voice sounded, but he said, Give me, this mighty angel standing there, he said, Give me the little book.

And the angel said to me, Take and eat it. It will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth. Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and I ate it.

And it was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. And then he said, You must prophesy. And whatever the meaning of this passage, all that I can say to you is what it speaks to me is that this man was said, went to the angel under the command of God and he said to God, Give me the little book.

There it is, the little book. Give me the little book. I remember a quote from John Wesley, when he said exactly those words.

He said, Give me that book. That's what John Wesley said. He said, I can't remember the quote exactly, just quoting from memory.

He said, God has opened the way to heaven. He has sent his son to make that way on the earth. He has sent him, can't remember all that he said, but he has lived and died.

And God, he said, has caused it to be written in a little book, how I may land safely on that celestial shore. Caused it to be written in a book. And then Wesley said with a passion, you can feel the passion of Wesley in his writings.

He said, Give me that book at any cost, I pray. Give me that book. And God said to John, he said to him, Go to the angel, take the book out of his hand.

And he said, Give me the book. And I guess there's many here have got to get it into their hearts to go to God, not just to go with all their mind and say, I'm going to get a hold of this book. But they've got to take the book in their hand and say to God, Give me the book.

We need the prophetic speaking of God in our generation. And every generation is not new. This is the way that God will reveal himself, make his way known.

And this is part of it. It's not against it. When he said, You must prophesy, before he said, You must prophesy, he said, Take the book.

And he said, Give me the book. And you've got to pray it. You have to go with all your heart to God and wait on God.

And I believe that there are people set aside to read this book and study. But I also know that God wants a church that is soaked in the book. People who are brimming with this, the words of this book, brimming with a desire to understand its mysteries.

Paul said to Timothy, You have known the scriptures since the youth and it's profitable in all things and is to make you wise unto salvation. Who wants to be wise unto salvation? Who would not then say as Wesley, Give me the book. Give me the book.

You can take it from a bookshop. You can take it from wherever you like. But in the end, you have to go to God and say, It's your book.

Give it to me. And then it says, the angel said, Take it and eat it. I love that phrase.

Eat it. Eat it. You've got to eat the book.

You've got to swallow it. You've got to devour it. It's got to go down.

And I love to think of the book going down into your stomach, if you like, into the place where it becomes part of you. In other words, Jesus said this on one occasion. He said, Who builds on the rock? They that hear my words and do them.

The word of God has to go down into my active personality. There is a place where the word of God is penetrating my active man. And if the word of God does not penetrate into my active personality and affect me and convict me and make me mourn and make me weep and make me change my way, then the word of God is just a course in somewhere that I've followed and I've got my certificate and I've done it.

But it's not what God intended. God wants his book eaten. It affects the person I am.

Written of George Miller that he read the Bible, was it five times a year? I can't remember. But I've never attained that. But you know, whatever the number of times we read the Bible, we mustn't become legalistic

about Bible reading.

It doesn't matter how much you read, it's how you read. You can spend a year absorbed in a book, reading it, eating it. You can be digesting it.

It becomes something that you can read a verse and become riveted and spend the next hour reading that verse. And somebody has legalistically read 10 chapters. God must change the way we approach everything.

Because God wants us to eat this book, digest it, let it affect us and it will be sweet in our mouth. We'll be sitting there, oh this is wonderful, this is tremendous. When I'm reading and meditating, sometimes I'll come, Vicky, look at this.

Tell Vicky and Sir, oh she'll find it wonderful. Then of course I'll go back to myself, oh yes it is that, isn't it? And I'll get convicted, break you, change you. You see, when we talk about the gifts of the Spirit, the truth is that every single voice comes from Spirit.

There is no voice you will ever hear that is not from Spirit. It doesn't mean that every voice is spiritually charged. If you're listening to a lecture on mathematics, the spirit of man is able to have power for intelligence in all kinds of strange areas like mathematics and physics and chemistry, areas which I studiously avoid now.

No, I still read science books, I'm fascinated. But you know, the spiritual charge of a voice may be different in different ways, but every single voice you hear comes from a Spirit. And even in a lecture on mathematics, the teacher may suddenly say something dismissive of the class, he might say, you are the worst class I've ever taught.

And Spirit is on an indifferent level, talking about some logical area, can suddenly turn and be barbed. And even some teachers, well, every teacher, when you send your child to school, the children come under his spirit. He's a depressive, if he's into witchcraft.

I've heard of teachers that they go in their classes and the pictures are dark, about witches and things, and you wonder, why? Is it a theme of the week? But when you hear a prophecy, it comes from a Spirit. It can come from the Spirit of God, it can come from Satan, or it could come just from the Spirit of man. And here's an example in the scripture, that, well, we're passing on now to another scripture, there's an Acts chapter 21.

But when you see these things, that we must wait on God in prayer, we must wait on God in his Word, why? Must we become anxious about how we're prophesying? Well, we're anxious, but we must enter with faith into the place that God has given to us, the Holy of Holies. We must meet him on the propitiary. We must meet him in that place of his presence.

Now here, in this chapter 21, we're not going to go into detail, but just this simple fact, verse 4, finding disciples, we tarried there seven days, who said to Paul, through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. Verse 11, when he was come to us, this is Agabus, the prophet from Judea, he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. When we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Paul answered and said differently. And the strange thing here is that the disciples were speaking with understanding given to them by the Spirit, but were not bringing a word from the Spirit. The word of Agabus is this, Thus saith the Holy Ghost.

And the word of the Holy Ghost did not say he should not go up. The word of the Holy Ghost said, this is what will happen to him when he goes up. And then the addition that comes to it is the human element, brother don't go.

So when you hear prophecy, you must be prepared to test it. You must be prepared to wait on God. You must ask God to confirm his word.

You must not take God's word as something coming to you as directive information. You must take God's word as something coming to confirm what you are knowing in your own spirit, the witness of the Holy Spirit. Paul said, no I'm going up, because God has shown me what to do.

And you're weeping and you're breaking my heart, but I'm still going up. Why have I directed you there? It's because when we consider the church, we can consider the church in different ways, but what we know is that one of the great pictures of the church is the tabernacle. And there in the center of the tabernacle is the place where God would meet with us.

And there is the place where worship and holiness are flowing, where God is waited on, where God is consciously known. This is the heart of the gifts of the Spirit. This is why the church must know speaking from that place.

In the time of Josiah, when they cleansed the temple, which is like the tabernacle, they found that there in the center of the tabernacle they found a dusty old forgotten book of Moses nobody had read for years. That was all because in the center of the tabernacle there was neglect. And it's neglect of the inner sanctuary, neglect of fellowship with God in the Spirit, neglect of waiting on God through the cross, neglect of self-denial, to look up away from self.

I guess so many hours are lost and wasted in some kind of prayer that just regrets all our sins and regrets all our mistakes and goes over all our worthlessness and goes over all our needs and goes over all these things and then that's all we've got time for. We never penetrate to get into where we're conscious. And suddenly realize that all those things were long ago dealt with.

They're not something that God's wanting to talk about. He just wants that that's done. That's finished.

Get over the regrets. Get it all behind you. Come here, just take a long look at me and you'll find that there's a healing here.

Just look at me. You want me to address the problem? Yes, but I've addressed it. What you really need now is to look at me.

And when we get to the point where we are in that place listening to God, I guess that the cross is the power that quietens our minds. If you've got a mind that will not obey God, will not rest in his presence. You know, we can flood through with all kinds of prayers and words and so on, but in the end, God wants those things to be submitted.

There must be a place in our life that is in deepest submission to God himself in us, in our lives and in our midst as a company of people. And there, as we grow in stillness, not psychological stillness, not just tricks of meditation. The Buddhists can do that.

This is not tricks of all kinds of religious praying. This is getting to the place where we are looking up in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ and his Father, where they are enthroned in our midst, where their word is honoured as the stillness is in us. A calm place that is never disturbed by anything.

There is a place in God that is never disturbed by anything. And in that place, a stillness grows in us. We become conscious that in the heart of us, in that stillness, we begin to see a reflection of the Son of God.

Like in a glass, we don't see clearly. We see as in a reflection. You can't see everything and then as you begin to look, you see clearer and then you can begin to make out the form of God.

You can't put a word to it. You can't think of any likeness. You can't think of any explanation to what he's like.

He's unlike anything you've ever seen and yet, there are many things that are like him. But as you look on God, your breath is taken away. You become in awe.

Your spirit is made sensitive to God. Your heart is washed and strengthened. Your mind is renewed and clarified and as you're there before the throne of God, you're brought to the place of worship.

And while you're there, from time to time, God will speak and it will be the Holy Ghost that speaks. Something that is not contrived from a couple of verses, but something that comes with a blaze of light. You have to check it out through the Word, but you've been eating the Word.

Scriptures flood into your mind. When the way of God is made known, you have brethren with whom you are in fellowship, with whom you are in submission, so you are safe. They can check you.

This is what Paul said. He knew things by the Spirit in Arabia that no man had ever said before. When he went to Jerusalem in fellowship with the apostles, he said, I want you to tell me, is this right? And he submitted himself.

But he heard things and he shared them with the apostles and I think they also were amazed. The most glorious thing a man can ever do is to discern in his heart the reflection, the image of Jesus Christ. When you see it in a glass darkly, the glory of the Lord, without realizing it, you're not thinking of yourself, you're not praying about yourself, you're praying about Him.

You're looking for His ends. You're seeking His purposes. You're seeking His glory.

The presence of God makes you a person who is now not earthbound, looking at all the needs of earth, though you don't forget them, but you see greater needs. They're the needs of heaven, the will of God, the glory of God's name. And your praying is being moved now into a different realm.

Your praying is prophetic. Your praying is revealing something to those who hear you. There's a consciousness coming through as you're praying.

There's a consciousness coming through as you're living. There's a consciousness coming through that there is a dignity and a presence and a person about you that is not you, it's greater than you. And yet you

are one with that person.

And Paul said this amazing verse, they glorified God in me. It wasn't that they glorified all the Bible verses I'd learned, or all the preachings I preached and they were so marvelous, they were conscious of the greatness and the glory of God coming through. And if the gifts of the Spirit have any meaning, they are not just for little homilies or little words, they are for the consciousness of God to come through in loving tender words, in revelation of the eternal quality of God, the greatness of God, lifting our hearts, lifting our eyes.

The church can only be motivated by one person. I nearly called him a thing. It's God.

We talk about we need a vision, we need a program often we mean. If we have a program that galvanizes the church, we'll really go places. It may be true, but there are other sects do that.

There are sects like Jehovah's Witnesses that motivate their people through guilt and have big programs of evangelization, all kinds of things. But the thing is that the church seeing God is filled with such holy zeal. If a church remains there and it never enters their active place, then they're deceived.

If God revealed doesn't affect our active person, then where is that holy of holies? Is it in our head? Is it in our imagination? Some people live in their imagination. God's Spirit must affect us so deeply that we are unconsciously aware of the things that are going on in us. We're not conscious of them.

We're unconscious of what God is doing in us and through us. We're conscious of him because through God every deed we do, every word we say is changed. And when Peter on the day of Pentecost and they all spoke with tongues and they were all filled with such rest in their hearts, the glory of Jesus was shining in their hearts.

This is what the Holy Spirit does. The light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shining in our hearts. That's what the Holy Spirit does.

We see him and as we walk in that and we know that place, the face of Jesus, we are changed from glory to glory. These are the things that are the very heart and center of the church. God himself, not God's works, but God himself.

Where God is, things happen which are simply the result of him being there. Many were healed but their souls remain troubled. But where God comes, there comes such a stilling, such an end to all distress, such an end to all confusion.

God comes himself and is our life. Why are the gifts of the Spirit essential? Because they are the sign, the speaking of God and not just the form of the gifts, but the gifts of the Spirit are the mark of the direct presence and working of God. The church should be the place, the church meeting should be the place where we most desire to be.

There should be something that draws us there, but form is not enough. We have to wait on God. It's a folly and a madness to think we're going on in the things of God with mere forms, prayer meetings, gifts of the Spirit, all these things operating and still no awe, still no thirst.

Prayer meetings that are so short, they're almost an insult to God, but they're a reflection of what's really happening. I don't care the length of a prayer meeting. What I want is to come and sit in the glory of God

and lift up my eyes and be quickened by the fact that others are speaking from the same place and God is moving, laying burdens in us, showing us things to pray for, speaking amongst us.

Churches will inevitably drift away from the gifts of the Spirit. Gifts of tongues, gifts of prophecies, they will inevitably degenerate into simple forms. The life is in the direct contact through faith, through the cross, through submission, through the Spirit, in our depth, in our lives, in our hearts.

God is the center of the church, not man. Let us pray. Father, I know you want to bring everyone deep into these things.

Even it is written that Christ died to bring us to God, not just to some form of salvation, some words, but to bring us to God. Father, I pray now this simple prayer. Bring everyone to God.

Bring everyone to God. Bring people out of forms and deadness and things that are just repetitions and traditions of men. Lord, whether they are good traditions, they are good forms inherited from times of blessing.

Lord, I pray, bring people to thirst for God, to a revolutionary thirst for God that will be willing to throw over forms, to cut up dead wineskins and be slain that new wineskins be built, be formed. Jesus, we pray, we confess we are thirsty for God. Oh, our Father, perhaps not yet enough.

And we pray that you will move in those realms, create thirst in every heart. Lord, I pray you will direct hearts to seek God, for God, for the honor of your name, for the glory of your name, not for a lesser thing. Oh, Father, we pray these things as sons, not as beggars.

We are not slaves, we are sons. And we pray these things. Answer our cry, we pray, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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