

# Ministry in the Spirit - 3. the Complementarity of Grace Gifts

by Michael Flowers

---

*Michael Flowers emphasizes the importance of grace gifts in the church, highlighting their complementarity and the role of the Holy Spirit in ministry.*

**Duration:** 31:27

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:29, Luke 4:18, Ephesians 4:21, Hebrews 12:25

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit Gifts"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the completion of a membership class and the ministry assessment that was taken. The speaker emphasizes that while these assessments can be helpful, they should not be relied upon too heavily. The focus should be on understanding one's spiritual gifts, as outlined by Paul in 1st Timothy and 2nd Timothy. The speaker also highlights the importance of caring for others and imparting Jesus Christ through preaching and teaching.

---

## Transcript

Father, I pray that the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart will be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our Redeemer, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen.

May be seated. Let's look at Romans 12. Today, what we want to do is consider something called the complementarity of the gifts today.

So this won't be like a blow by blow analysis of all the seven gifts there. We won't have time for that, but we're going to see how they work together a little bit. The church is to be a symphony.

The church is to be a symphony of gifts harmonizing together in the unity of the spirit. Who is the conductor? Right. The Holy Spirit is the conductor.

We're being led by the spirit. Those who are led by the spirit are sons and daughters of God. And so the church is to be a symphony of gifts harmonizing together in the unity of the spirit, that unity of the spirit causes the harmonization, a unity of great complementarity, a complementarity in a great diversity.

Only the Holy Spirit can pull this off. Last week, we considered first Peter four, 10, which says, as each one of you has received a gift, a charismata is the word there, has received a gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. So we said in our community, no one should be unemployed.

If you have a gift, we've hired you. Don't worry about being unemployed. The thing is, is that these gifts come from this fountain of the manifold grace of Jesus Christ that we don't have to serve.

We get to serve. You know, it's that kind of spirit that we're eliciting. Serve the Lord with gladness.

Come before his presence. And we looked at the paradigms of Mary and Martha in the house where Martha was getting all upset in her serving. Yeah, exactly.

And so we've got this Mary Martha paradigm where Mary's sitting at the feet of Jesus, just soaking in his presence and adoring him. Really a good model of contemplation and Martha trying to learn maybe how to serve. We we concluded that we don't know if Martha has the gift of serving, but it doesn't look like it.

But we said in order for our gifts to fully mature and manifest well, we have to exercise them. And sometimes they squeak when we first start using them. Right.

They need oil, they need oil. And so we need an environment where we can begin to exercise those gifts so that they can mature and flourish and flower amongst us. And so we don't do things.

We don't do anything perfectly. Right. As each one of us has received a gift, it's grace.

Employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. And then in Romans 12, 6, it says, having gifts there again, that word is charismata. Having gifts, charisma, charismata that differ according to the grace, the chorus, it's the same root out of charismata gifts and chirus grace.

And so we're talking about the gifts of grace, which are called the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but they're gifts of grace. It's the same word having gifts that differ. There's the diversity according to the grace given to us.

Let us use them. OK, let us use them. So we just want our church to be a context where you actually can use them and you get to use them.

You don't have to use them. You get to use them. Right.

Do you want to use them? Yeah, I know you do. And you are using them. And so out of that, we said that every Christian is grace gifted.

Right. And that means that every Christian from a biblical point of view is a charismatic. OK, and we talked about, you know, we almost went into Jeff Foxworthy last week.

You may be charismatic if and boy, we could have fun with that, but we're not going to go there. I love that. I could really, really grieve the Holy Spirit by doing that.

Oh, man, I'm not going to do that. Holy Spirit. But you may be charismatic if you have the spirit of God dwelling in you.

In fact, you are from Paul's perspective and all of his communities, there are charismatic communities employing their gifts. And so it has nothing to do with some of the things that you may be turned off by

today in the various movements called charismatic movements or charismatic churches. We're going back to the root, the biblical source of what we're talking about here.

And so we just kind of want to re-explore what it means to be charismatic in St. Aidan's. Yeah. Yesterday, we completed our fourth membership class.

It was awesome. We just had a great time. And the last session, the last thing we did is we took a ministry assessment.

It's about 18 pages. So we didn't even finish it yesterday, but we got started on it. And basically, you know, ministry assessments, tests, personality tests, all these kind of things are just relative guides to get conversation going and maybe turn the light on here and there.

So we don't we don't put a lot of stock in ministry assessments or personality tests. We know we know the relative standards. Now, Chris, the sticker would just poo poo them all the way down because he's a psych major.

So, yeah, it's an inside joke. OK, sorry, Chris, we won't have you take that. Some people don't like taking tests like that, you know.

And so anyway, we took that assessment and we're in the midst of finishing it. And basically it deals with trying to flesh out for the person taking the exam, what exactly are my gifts, what are my skills, you know, where you just kind of list your training and your experiences and your own personal vision. You get that on paper.

And then what happens is that is followed up by a one on one with me where we can actually talk about where you would desire to serve and where's the best place for you to serve. And so we're just going to continue to do this as people come through membership class or it's followed up at the end by a one on one, many one on ones if needed with me to help activate you and your spiritual gifts. OK, so it's not just talking about spiritual gifts and a homily.

That's really incomplete. What I'm doing today, I'm just sort of stirring the pot a little bit. That's all it is.

Fanning in the flame, perhaps what is in you. And so we want to consider ways of clustering the gifts mentioned here this morning. And there's seven of them.

And as I said all along, I'm going to deal with prophecy more fully when we get to First Corinthians. The speaking gifts in the cluster would be prophecy, exhortation and teaching. And then what I would say is gifts of caring, the caring gifts, the gifts of welfare, James Dunn calls them, who is a New Testament scholar.

I'm using a lot in his commentary on Romans. The caring gifts, the gifts of welfare would come under serving and he calls giving, sharing, serving, sharing and caring. He calls and we'll talk about this a little bit later, but that word translated leadership by most people, he translates that caring and he's got reasons for that.

So I'm going to go with that for this paradigm. And so serving, sharing, caring, and then the last gift showing mercy, showing mercy. When you start thinking about all of that surrounding you and the people in your spiritual family and all of that coming forth, it's very comforting.

Hopefully to me, I feel cared for just thinking about it. It's just like, wow, that's good. I want to be.

And I am. You know, our initial planting team had all of those seven gifts. And so there you go.

And we'll be getting examples of how that manifests later on in some of the teachings. Prophets, exhorters and teachers, you could break that down where prophets tend to guide, exhorters goad and teachers ground. Now, these three gifts travel together in Paul's apostolic teams, among other gifts.

But if you'll recall, Paul and Barnabas in the book of Acts, it says that Barnabas was a prophet and that Paul was an apostle, but he was also a teacher par excellence. Right. I mean, he gave us the New Testament pretty much.

And so Paul and Barnabas travel together. And if you'll read carefully throughout all of his letters, he's mentioning, oh, I'm bragging on my team. And he mentions them in the beginning or he mentions them at the end.

Read the end of Colossians. And he's just listing a ton of people that traveled with him. So Paul was no solo Christian.

Paul was no independent dude. I'm an apostle. I'm going in planning churches by myself.

No way. It's just all throughout his writings where he's just bragging on his team. And they were all like, look at this.

He's always praying for you. You know, just little you got to catch those little phrases. Those are important things.

You know, I can name people here that are always praying for you. They got a list of names that are always praying for you. I handed out a full list of your names to those in the membership class yesterday.

And I said, pray. Pray for this church, pray individually, right, guys, if you were there. Right.

We believe that the church is built upon, you know, connecting with Jesus in prayer. And without that, we don't go anywhere. But we've been doing that for four plus years.

And and it's and it's paying off. It really is. And so these these guys travel together.

And so Barnabas, the word means son of encouragement. That's what his name means. Son of encouragement.

And when you look at the effect of prophecy that Paul will lay out in First Corinthians, he'll say that prophecy. Actually, the effect of prophecy is encouragement, exhortation and consolation. Rarely has anything to do about predicting the future.

It's an effect of transitioning a person from discouragement to encouragement, right? From inactivity and passivity to activity, he activates, he encourages, he puts courage in you. It's the grace that does it. And you can do all of this and say the same thing without the grace and the effect won't be there unless you're a prophetic person.

That's the grace of a prophetic person. And we'll get into this later on, but that's what an encourager does. And teaching has a lot of those components in it from a New Testament perspective.

OK, so prophets, exhorters, teachers help activate the grace within others. Let me give you some examples. First, Timothy four, 14, Paul is talking to Timothy, his young disciple, who has also been ordained as a bishop in Ephesus.

And Paul is translocally looking at Timothy and his work, and he's saying, do not neglect. He's saying this to Timothy, a bishop, do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message, through a prophetic message. Timothy received a gift through a prophetic word, right? This is New Testament.

Through a prophetic message, when the body of elders laid their hands on you at his ordination, he received prophetic words. And he's saying, hey, don't neglect those words. Apparently, he was.

And it's so it's so easy to do this. I mean, I've had prophetic words, you know, I got prophetic words through my bishop and I got prophetic words when I was 16 and I met with a guy and some personal prayer and he just prophesied over me. And that's why I went to Bible college and ended up in seminaries because of a prophetic word opening me up to ministry.

Second, Timothy one, six. Fan into flame, the gift of God, Timothy. Fan into flames, what is other translations? Stir up the gift with a poker almost in those coals, those embers that are almost going out.

Fan into flame, the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of fear. OK, he's giving reasons why he needs to exhort, this is exhortation, this is encouragement, this is an apostle exhorting another leader, Stuart does this all the time, his priest in the diocese.

Fan into flame, the gift of God. I mean, he's huge on that. Fan into flame, the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and self-discipline or sound mind is another translation.

So that's just an example of how gifts get imparted through prophetic messages sometimes. Wow. Yeah.

That's been my experience. For almost 40 years. This is not new, this is this is like, yeah, I totally get that, I've seen it again and again and again.

Teaching, teaching is not just a download of information, is it? From a New Testament perspective, right? And a lot of times it can be, but it's intended to be. The grace of teaching is different than the guy in the academy who's got the Ph.D. That's a different gift. But teaching in the church and I can be applied in the church.

But they need grace because just because you can do it in the academy doesn't mean you're going to have the same effect in the church. Ask me how I know I've been to seminary. I've had a lot of Ph.D.'s and wake me up when it's over, you know, so you know what I'm saying? Wake me up when it's all over.

Yeah. So not just a download, but it's and it's not just to boast our IQ, you know, I know more than you do. Just a few things about the gift of teaching.

Jesus says this. Learn from me, OK, I want you to learn something, that's the gift of teaching. For I am meek and humble.

What? Learn from me because I want you to buy this book and we're going to discuss it. Well, that's good. That's that's a form of conveying knowledge and I'm not you know me, I love books.

Come to my office, but no, that's not it. If that's where it ends, learn from me for I am Jesus is saying you're going to learn from who I am, not what I know. Right.

Learn from me for I am meek and humble. Matthew 11, 29. Jesus surely taught the scriptures in the synagogue and almost got him thrown off a cliff when he came out in Luke for 18.

He taught prophetically this day, the scriptures are fulfilled in your hearing. They loved him. Yeah, no, they wanted to kill him.

They wanted to kill him. That's the prophetic ministry of Jesus. There it is.

He taught the scriptures prophetically, it wasn't just boring, you know, Hebrew or Aramaic renditions. And then he allowed his life to provoke deeper learning. He allowed his life.

So we're talking about communicating now, communicating gift, whatever that is. There's a lot of gifts, right? Communicating the gift and the character and in the charismatic group, a lot of times character is laid aside because we want the superstar charismatic gift guy who has the hot hands and can get people healed. But he's living in adultery.

Character, character, character, and I can just go through my 40 years of being a Christian and just I'm not going to do it, but I can just name so many people that have just bitten the dust that were amazing in the spirit. Charisma. But their character was really, really questionable, and yet they continue to be promoted.

That's just not good. I mean, you know, I think Bob Dylan today would be a more outspoken Christian had we not made him the big Christian hero when he came out with with an album called Saved. I mean, you can't get any more out than that.

And they would throw tomatoes at him in San Francisco. Yeah. And so what we do with gifted people is really, really it's reprehensible sometimes because we all like to worship heroes.

So remember that charisma, yeah, but where's the character? And we're not talking about legalistic judging of perfection here, but there are certain standards for eldership and all of that. Just read it in First and Second Timothy. There are standards that we have to live by.

And if I don't live by those standards, my plug gets pulled right by my bishop. I won't be allowed to continue on. Like so many others who are unaccountable, unaccountable with no authority except their own spiritual authority, that's dangerous, brothers and sisters.

I don't listen to people like that if they're not under authority. I don't listen to them. I don't care how charismatic they are.

So as persons in communication, we not only impart what we know. We impart who we are, and that's very important. A person can talk about the peace of God.

And make people nervous, there it is, words, but then on the inner life of the person, the effect they have talking about peace is agitation. The incongruity of word and character is coming forth there, and so what we're attempting to do and growing in maturity in Jesus is that our words reflect our being and our being reflects our words. And, hey, there's always going to be somewhat of a disconnect there with the holy word of God and what we're attempting to live up into.

So, but if that intention is there and that desire is there and that accountability is there, it doesn't have to be perfect to impart something like giving. So Jesus says that who I am and what I say agree. And Paul just in 1st Timothy and 2nd Timothy just specifically nails all of this with Timothy.

And so we've heard it said, well, that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Yeah. There again, that's another illustration of, you know, where I'm preaching the truth, man, come on, you know, it's kind of like, yeah, but you really don't care about me.

The goal of teaching is to communicate Jesus Christ, that you would have an encounter in an impartation of Jesus Christ now, present tense, the risen Lord feasting on him through these words. And if that doesn't happen, brothers and sisters, it's not a sacramental action. Needs to be the grace flowing through me and flow flowing through you to impart Jesus Christ to other.

That's the only way to preach and teach and encourage and prophesy, because if it's not Christ, we're ministering. We're not ministering in the spirit and we can minister a lot of things. We can.

There's spirits of divination that can read your mail. The slave girl in Act 16. This is a servant of the most high God, this is a servant of the most high God, she's prophesying and it's true.

And Paul went for days and then it said he got agitated in his spirit and he spoke to Python. That's the name of the spirit, the spirit of divination. It's Python in the Greek come out Python in the name of Jesus.

And she lost her ability to tell the future. And then Paul got locked up because they were making money off of her. This is real.

Well, it happened in the Bible. No, it's happening now. It happens all the time.

And we need to be a church that can set people free. This is what the three streams are all about, Catholic, charismatic and evangelical. We can't choose one of them.

We have to have all three, because that's what biblical Christianity is. It's not some upper Midwest diocese slogan. It's biblical, right? It's biblical.

Fortunately, what's missing in my life was not the charismatic dimension. It was the Catholic dimension. And it's about team ministry.

And that's why Paul traveled with Barnabas, Silas and all these other people, because gifts are complimentary. We can't do it alone. But teaching like prophecy and the other gifts is an encounter with Christ and get this.

OK, the translators of Ephesians 4:21, if you have your Bible turned in, I'm going to quote the NRSV and then I'm going to quote the NASV, too. So this is not the way you learned Christ, Paul is saying to the Ephesians. For surely you have heard about him.

About is not in the Greek text, but the translators in the new RSV couldn't get their heads around that Jesus is still speaking today. So for sure, you have heard about him and were taught in him. Yeah, that's right.

You were taught in him. Get that. You were taught in him as truth is in Jesus.

That's communion language, you guys. It's not an encounter with information. It's encounter with a person.

Translators didn't know what to do with that, though. And here it is. Here's the correct translation of the literal translation.

Because translations have interpretations in them to make sense sometimes. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you heard him not heard about him. That's not true to the Greek text.

If indeed you have heard Jesus, does his sheep know his voice? He said my sheep know my voice. But we do church a lot of times like God is not saying anything, you know, and we have to not figure all this stuff out alone. No, this church was birthed in listening prayer.

And it continues to survive by listening prayer, and it's scary for some people to come to a church like this. What I'm saying scares people sometimes. It's just Christianity.

It's biblical. But you did not learn Christ in this way. If indeed you have heard him and have been taught in him, I want you to be taught in him, not about him.

Information about Jesus won't transform you. It must be it must be taught in him. You get that.

I mean, it's not a subtle difference, really. You understand communion. I'll be with you always, even till the end of the age.

That's the promise that Jesus gave us. We have to remember that the writer of Hebrews exhorts, see to it that you do not refuse the voice that warns from heaven. The ascended Christ still speaking through his spirit.

Hebrews 12, 25, that's where that's from. See to it that you do not refuse the voice that warns from heaven, exhorts Christ is still exhorting. The exhortation will give is multifaceted, so it exhortation is translated, exhort or encourage or comfort.

And wow, man, that is a wide palette of exhortation. What comes to mind when you think about exhort anybody, let's think about exhortation, what does that bring to mind? You got correction, yeah, there's a sense of urgency in that, right, speaking God's principle, yeah, it's like this is the truth now that can come as a teacher or that can come as a prophetic exhorter. Teachers speak God's truth, exhorters speak God's truth, but it has this sense of urgency like.

I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, Paul's doing it at the beginning of this chapter, that urge there, that's it. I urge you by the mercies of God, present your bodies as living sacrifices. He's exhorting the church, right? He's exhorting us.

That's an exhortation. We need that. In this very laid back, casual culture called Christianity, the whole new testament is an exhortation.

Encourage. What does the word encourage mean? To impart courage, right, encourage. Like enthusiasm, what does that mean? In chaos, that's the word in chaos, in the Greek enthusiasm in God.

And so all these words can really have a powerful impact once you start understanding the difference. So, but that that word parakaleo is translated, encourage, exhort, comfort depending on the situation. And the gift of encouragement knows when to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice.

Sometimes it's not appropriate to rejoice with somebody. You have to be sensitive to know when to weep and to know when to comfort. That would be that third word comfort.

I need to comfort this person now. They don't need urging along. They don't need exhortation.

And a person that comes in with a primary gift of exhortation and they've not learned how to hone those three shades, right, of exhortation, encouragement, comfort can really tear somebody up. Ruth, you know this. You're a counselor.

You get that. You're a Christian counselor, so you really get that. And you're a spirit filled Christian counselor.

You really get that. So we could just go on and on, Ruth, but we'll stop. And so that's what exhortation is all about.

Giving, sharing. Dunn goes on to say that it's better understood sharing. And it's probably talking about in this context, the sharing of food or wealth or possessions.

And so the act of sharing is the gift. It's not what you share the way this word is translated. It's the act of sharing that becomes the gift, not what is received.

And then caring, that word is often translated to leadership and a lot of great commentaries translate it that way. So this is it could go either way. But most people translate it leadership while others translate it like James Dunn, who is a massive, you know, he's got the magnum opus on on Romans.

He goes through all of the options and he ends up with caring. But it has the sense of advocacy and protecting. And so you get a person who has great means, great ability, like, say, in a village and they become an advocate for those less fortunate.

That's the idea behind this work. And so that's how leadership takes place. And that's Jesus, isn't it? That's the leadership of Jesus.

I want to be a servant. And so I want to be an advocate for the poor. I want to be a protector.

And that's the way I want my leadership to evolve. And it is evolving. I am growing into this.

It's not there. OK, so to take advocacy for the vulnerable, that's what Don is saying. And then the last one, showing mercy, showing acts of mercy with cheerfulness, it says.

And this is the only occasion, Dunn points out, in Paul's letters where mercy is used of human rather than divine mercy. Wow. It's the only occasion in Paul's letters where the act of showing mercy is not divine.

It's human. One place. There it is.

And it's a beautiful gift. The grace to overcome the reasons why a person is in need and to show love and care. A lot of times, if you don't have the grace of mercy, you'll think of all the reasons why you shouldn't show mercy.

Right. They're valid from a human point of view. Right.

But the people with the gift of mercy can overlook the bumbling reasons why this person is in the place they're in and they can give that mercy. That's what Jesus does to us. None of us deserve mercy, but Jesus gives it to us.

And so why do we need people who have the gift of mercy? Because they show us what it's like to be merciful when we struggle with it. That's why I need to be around people with the gift of mercy. And there's many in this congregation have the gift of mercy and leadership and encouragement and prophecy and all of this stuff.

And we need each other to complement each other because we're not going solo with each other. Right. We're a symphony of beautiful harmony in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

And so Holy Spirit, come and continue to stir up the gifts amongst us. We pray. And we ask for your divine enablement and for you to come and just set us on fire with the Holy Spirit.

Our God is a consuming fire and we want to fan in the flame those embers that perhaps may need more breath. And so send your breath upon us, send your breath upon us to glow in the fire of your love. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28670.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/michael-flowers/ministry-in-the-spirit-3-the-complementarity-of-grace-gifts/>

# *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](http://www.sermonindex.net)**