

# (Spiritual Gifts): Gifts of the Spirit 2

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in the work of God, highlighting the need for prayer, joyfulness, and love in the body of Christ.*

**Duration:** 33:56

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:8-32

**Topics:** "Spiritual Gifts"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of music in the worship of God. He highlights instances in the Bible where music played a significant role, such as during the creation of the heavens and the earth, the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, and Jesus' death and resurrection. The preacher also emphasizes the need for a meaningful and sincere worship service, rather than just going through the motions. He then discusses the importance of preaching the word of God and expounding on the books of the Bible, emphasizing the need for truth and understanding. The preacher concludes by emphasizing the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit for the work of God, rather than relying on human methods or power.

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## Transcript

Now, at the risk of being repetitious, I want to read a passage which I had been talking about for several Sundays, and then when Paris Readhead came, without ever checking with each other, he talked about it too, but it's Paul in the Ephesian epistle, the fourth chapter, with the eighth verse where he says, Wherefore, when he ascended up on high, Jesus, he led captivity captive, and he gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same that ascended up far above all heaven that he might fill all things. And he gave some apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and he did this for the perfecting of the saints to the work of the ministry.

That is, not as it says in verse 12 in the way we have it arranged here. You see, God didn't put the commas in. The translators put the commas in, and they have a comma there for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Those are three things. Take the commas out, because they don't belong there. Here's what it says.

He did this, he gave these gifts for the perfecting of the saints to do the work of the ministry unto the edifying of the body of Christ. The work of the ministry which the saints is to do, are to do, the work is the edifying of the body of Christ. And the ministry there is not the ordained ministry, but it is the ministry of all the body of Christ, the Christians, all of you Christians.

You have a work to do, and it is the building up of the body of Christ until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the wholeness of Christ. Verse 14 says you don't get tossed back and forth anymore. Now you will notice, particularly new people will notice, and we're always having new people here because we're such a very great turnover in our congregation.

We're in a part of the city where there are changes being made, and we lose so many. We've lost so many since July who have moved away, moved anywhere from north to south or east to west, and they can't come, and so we lose them. But we get others, and there must be a continual laying before the people what it is we believe here and what we stand for and what kind of people we are.

Now, you will notice, if you've been around just a little while, that there are a lot of things missing here which you find in a lot of churches. It's always very hard to keep from drawing uncomplimentary comparisons, which I don't mean to do. What others are doing, God will have to deal with them.

But what we're doing, we're responsible for. And according to what we see in the scriptures, there are only about five methods, or maybe we should say four, whereby God does his work, his final work, his eternal work. One is by consecration to Christ's glory alone on the part of Christians.

We do not recognize here merely performers. We don't recognize performers. We don't believe that God means that performers are to come in, that we're to be a kind of a religious stage upon which performers are to come and take their bow and do their little work and go again.

We don't think that's God's way of doing it. We believe his way of doing it is that the people, the good people, not the brilliant people always, but the plain people like you and me, that the plain people, we Christians, what the Bible so tenderly calls the common people. Politicians in our day like to use the word the common man, and they do it for political purposes.

And our trouble, of course, is we have too many common men in Washington. Now, you can just have that for what it is worth. But they say common men because they're political, but the Bible says the common people, and that's a dear term to God.

And Jesus was always surrounded by the common people. He had some stars, too, but mainly they were common people. And the consecration of these common people to Christ and to his glory, now that's the only thing God recognizes.

And then the prayer of faith to those people, to be able to pray the prayer of faith. Would I ask you an embarrassing question if I asked when you had your last prayer answered? The prayer of faith. It should be a prayer that can engage God and that can meet God's conditions and turn loose the third condition, which is the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, Brother Reed had preached this for a week, but I repeated this morning that only the power of the Holy Spirit can do any real lasting work. Nobody else can do it. The gifts of nature aren't enough.

The gifts of nature, the natural gifts. There are natural gifts that people have. Musicians have natural gifts.

In times of those natural gifts, I had a cousin by the name of Winnie. I don't know what his right name was, but we called him Winnie. And they said about him very proudly that he could play any instrument he laid his hand on.

I'll bet it was good. I don't know. But you can have gifts like that.

You can have such gifts. Some people have them. They're good any place you put them.

But you can't do holy work in that way. Only the Holy Ghost can do holy work. And then by the exercises of the Spirit's gifts, the giving of these gifts to men and the exercising of these gifts, that is, there must always be power present.

Just as you have in your home, say, a washer. All right, now that's a gift. That's an organ.

And if you put clothing in that, and water and detergents, you can wash. You have a dryer maybe in your home. There is a second thing that you have, and that does its work.

And you have a refrigerator, and that does its work. And maybe you have a radio, and that's an organ, too. And maybe you have a heater for some of the rooms that don't quite get warm enough.

And you can add to that any of the appliances we hear so much about now, and up to a dozen or fifteen different appliances, electrical appliances maybe in the home. And they're all built to do a certain work. But without the power, they'll never do that work.

They'll never do it. There must be power applied. And so in the work of God, in the church of God, there's your fellow who can play anything he can pick up.

He is an organ, he's an instrument. But without the power of the Holy Ghost in him and what he does, he might just as well stay somewhere else. And so it is with a man who can speak, so it is with a man who can teach, so it is with everybody who may have natural gifts.

The mighty Spirit of God has to animate and quicken and give those overtones of creativeness, or else you don't have a church at all. Years ago, there was a great preacher in Houston City. He was one of the greatest.

His sermons always appeared in the front page in the newspapers on Monday, after they were preached on Sunday. And his books sold like hotcakes. And he was known all over, and he'd go to England and draw great crowds, and they'd mob his great place to hear him.

Well, he wasn't a Bible preacher, although he believed in the scriptures. He was what we'd call an evangelical now. But he didn't preach the Bible, he preached subjects, and he talked about nature and science and literature and philosophy and all the rest.

And the result was, when he died, the bottom dropped out of the work that he had. God wasn't in it, and the whole thing fell apart. When Spurgeon in London died, his work went right on.

When Campbell Morgan died, his work went right on, because they built it on the word of God and the power of the Spirit. And no matter what a man may do, or how successful he may seem to be in any field,

writing, preaching, anything, if the Holy Spirit is not energizing his work, it will fall apart when he dies. And the terrible part about it is, he'll be dead and not know it, and he'll have to find it out in that great day when the Lord judges the works of every man, and there shall be wood, hay and stubble.

This fact that it's by the energizing of the Holy Spirit that God's lasting work is done, is very hard on the flesh. God is very kind and tender, but he's very tough on the flesh, that is, he's tough on carnality, he's tough on proud flesh. And the fact that nobody, no matter how gifted or how ingenious he may be, can do the work of God, that fact makes it very hard, and it submerges the worker in the work.

It frustrates the carnal desire to give and receive honor, and it starves the appetite for glory which lies at the root of every one of us. At the bottom of our hearts there lies a desire for glory, and all you have to do now is to get converted and bring that desire over into the Church, and you can spend a lifetime of religious work doing nothing but getting glory for yourself. But when we understand that no human gifts, no human power can do the work of God finally, but it must be the energizing work of the Spirit alone, then the bottom falls out of all of our glory and all of our human pride.

And God gets all the glory, and that's mighty hard on the flesh. And any method that man uses to carry on the work that isn't spiritual, as I've named here, it feeds the flesh. Now, I call heaven and earth to witness, my friends, that if you hear these words and follow them, that you shall certainly prosper and we shall certainly prosper and be fruitful.

Now, what are we aiming for? You say, but what are you aiming for, Mr. Pilgrim? Are you going anyplace? Is there anything that the Church is trying to do? Or are you simply going around the religious merry-go-round, riding the wooden horse, holding on to the painted mane of the painted horse, round and round with a little musical accompaniment? Is that what you're here for? Well, some people would think so, I suppose. But I know a good deal better than that. For instance, we are here because we believe that it's the will of God that a company of people should meet in the name of Christ as an assembly of redeemed believers, and that among other things there should be marvelous answers to prayer, that God hears and actually answers our prayer.

And one miraculous answer to prayer in a congregation will do more to help that congregation to solidify it and to encourage it and cheer it up and cause it to lift up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees than all the advertising you can do in the wide world. So we believe in the presence of God here, and we don't want anything that disturbs or grieves that presence of God. And if we knew we could have \$100,000 this morning laid at our feet, we would not take it if we thought it would disturb or in any wise grieve the gentle presence of God.

Then such a thing as revival wonders. When I was a very young preacher, I preached on revivals and how to have them. I have my old outline here.

But I learned shortly afterward that that's very easy to do but very hard to make good on. But what I mean by a revival wonder is that within the Church, somebody suddenly enters out into a new and grand and wonderful spiritual experience. And let that happen to just one person.

Let that happen to one young person. Hear me, you young people. You wonder how you can make your young people's work prosper.

All right, now I'll tell you. Just let one young person enter out into a new, wonderful spiritual experience, and it will do more to cause your young people's work to lift and go and get off the sandbar than all of your Sunday afternoon interviews and talks. They are all right, too, friends.

But I'm trying to think of conferences, that's the word. And all of our conferences and committee meetings, they are good, and I want you to have them. But just let one person get through to the mighty Holy Ghost, and it will do more to bless and cheer the spiritual fallout that will come out on everybody around about you.

And it's the same everywhere else. Just let somebody get blessed in some sphere, somewhere, and all around the circle, everybody will be helped by it. Now, I believe in that.

And we don't believe that can be super-induced. We don't believe that can be bought. We don't believe that can be brought in on an airplane or by a freight.

We don't believe we can get that except as the Holy Spirit energizes his people, energizes the Word as it's preached. And then, joyfulness. I believe in the joyfulness of the children of God.

You know me, that I am not exactly what might be called by nature an optimistic man, not particularly cheerful. But the joy of the Lord is still the strength of his people. And I believe that the sad world is attracted to spiritual sunshine.

Now, I know there is a kind of spiritual sunshine. Some churches train their people just the same as Fuller Brush Company trains their salesmen, to know how to smile and show all their 43 teeth and to do all that sort of thing. But I can sense that.

When I go into a church and I'm greeted by a man that has been trained to greet me, I know I'm taking the flipper of a trained seal. I know it! But when the Holy Ghost is in the congregation and they are just spontaneously joyful and can't keep the grin back, it has a wonderful effect on people. There is the old stock story of the Moravians on board ships with the storm, and everybody was scared, including the sailors.

And John Wesley was there, and he was scared, too. And the Moravians sat around saying psalms. And Wesley said, If I had what they have, I'd give the world.

And somebody said, You can have it. So he went back and talked to one of them, Peter Bowler, back in England after he arrived there, and got blessed. And he said, I felt a strange warming in my heart.

And out of that strange warming was born Methodism, so the joyfulness of the children of God. I have said this a hundred times, that the reason we have to have so much to cheer us up is that we're not cheerful inside. A man can be cheerful and not have anything to cheer him.

I think about dear old Brother Lilly, the black man, the black brother. God knows his skin was black, and nobody get offended. It was black.

He had a black face. God gave it to him, and he wasn't ashamed of it. Black face.

But he had a heart that shone like the noonday sun. And he was a happy man. He was a happy man.

Well, happiness is very desperately needed. Do you know why? And I say this with no intention of raising a titter of laughter, but do you know why someone like the famed Elvis Presley can be so widely, widely loved by the multitude? Just because they're sad. They don't have anything there to cheer them.

And they see around about them a world that looks mighty tragically bad, and they hear, even though they refuse to listen, they catch bits from the radio, not the newspaper, about H-bombs and A-bombs and Russia and cancer and polio and coronary thrombosis. And they're worried. People are worried.

Young fellows in high school are worried. They're worried because they say, What's the use? What's the use? They pull me into the service, and I'm sunk. And if a war comes, I'm done.

What's the use? And so the psychology of our kids, the psychology is a gloomy psychology. And the young women say, Well, what's the use? I go over to the young fellow, and we plan to marry, and bang, they've gotten him into the service, and if something happens, he's gone and may be dead, and here I am sitting back here wearing a ring with nobody attached to it. And don't smile.

Now, this is real with a lot of our people. Real. Businessmen say, Well, what's the use? They take it all away in taxes, and so it goes.

People are worried, and a sense of gloom is on people. Well, of course, if somebody can come along that acts happy, even though he acts drunk, if he comes along and sounds happy, they'll go wild about him. And that's the psychology underneath the strange phenomenon known as Elvis Presley.

And, of course, much others the same. But the Christians ought to, as Brother Brown always says, preempt that. The Christians ought to be there first.

The Christians should be the happiest people in the world, and they shouldn't have to get it anywhere but in the Bible and from the God above. They should be the happiest people in the world, the joyful people. A very sharp, penetrating woman came to this church one time, and she went away from here, and she said, Mr. Toedtner, your people are not a happy people.

I defended you. I said you were, but I don't know whether I over-defended you or not. How many of you brought trouble to church with you this morning? How many of you brought family trouble to church here? How many of you brought business trouble to church here? Only two months away or a little more until income tax time.

How many of you brought worries here about your health, brought worries about your physical condition and about your children? You brought them here. God's people shouldn't love them around. Why should the children of the king go mourning all the day? Why should the children of the king bow their head like the bull rush? Why should we not stand straight up and thank our God? Well, I believe that.

I believe we can get a company of people who know how to reach God in answer to prayer and get answers, a company of people that have been, some of them at any rate, met recently God in new spiritual experiences. I believe it will show in their face. I don't believe we need very much more to prosper as a people of God than love for each other.

By this shall you know that you love each other. We should love each other. I'm determined I'm going to love everybody.

It kills me. I've got my heart. I'm going to do it.

I'm going to love everybody, because it's so easy to love some people. First is Ed Maxey. Every time I look at him, I grin.

Every time I think of him, I grin. He's just lovable. But I know lots of people are not like that.

Brother, I'm afraid you're listening to one that is. Some people, only their mothers. Yet I'm determined that I'm going to love them.

By God's help, I'm going to love them. Some people don't like me, but I'm going to love them. Some people don't like me so seriously and so ferociously that I'm even afraid to go and ask them why.

But I'm going to love them anyway, and they're not going to be able to stop me. If the love of God is in the hearts of people, and you know that your love is of the will, and you can will to love people, you can will to love them. Love is not a feeling.

Love is a willing. And the Lord says love people. All right.

He didn't mean feel love for them. He meant will to love them. And so the love of God.

And then we have another thing we believe is scriptural, and that is good, joyful, revival music. The singing of good music. Somebody wrote an ugly attack on me and said that I didn't believe in religious entertainment, but that hymn singing was entertainment.

Well, brother, you take that for what it's worth. I don't know how anybody could be so far off the track and still be loose. But anyway, the Holy Ghost sings in a man.

The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. You know that everything God ever did, he did through musical accompaniment. You know that when he made the heaven and the earth, the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

You know when he led the children of Israel across the Red Sea on their way finally to Palestine, that Miriam grabbed the Salvation Army tambourine and led off in the 15th chapter of Exodus one of the most rhapsodic songs you ever heard. And did you know that when Jesus went out to die, having sung a hymn, they went to the Mount of Olives? And did you know that when he rose from the dead, he said, I will sing among my brethren. That's in the 22nd Psalm, a prophecy according to all the traditional beliefs of the Church, a prophecy of the resurrected Jesus.

He sang among them. And did you know that when the Holy Ghost came at Pentecost, they became a singing church? And did you know that every time there was a new poured out blessing down the centuries, they became a singing people? And do you know now that we are forced to sing the songs that were born out of revivals hundreds of years ago? We're singing the revival of the friends of God in the early 11th and 12th centuries. We're singing the songs of the Moravians when they had their revival.

We're singing the songs of Luther in the time of the Reformation revival. We're singing the songs of the Westleys at the time of the Wesleyan revival. And we're singing some of the Salvation Army songs at the time of the General Booth revival.

And we haven't had any new songs amounting to anything in recent times because we haven't had a revival born. Brethren, if we can call down the blessing of God as we should upon us, I believe that there will be new songs written in our day equal to those written in other days to fit the thing God is doing. Or it may be a revitalizing and reactivating of some of the songs.

When Camel Morgan left London and went to Wales to see the Whale House revival, of course they had great singing in his tabernacle in London, his chapel they call it there, in his great place. But when he got back he stood up and scolded the people. He said, You've never sung in your life.

He said, I've just come back from Wales. And he said, Such singing you never heard. And they were singing the psalms like our brother sang this morning.

They were singing the psalms, but they were singing them with a buoyancy and lift that helped bring people under conviction and helped get other people to faith. And the man of God saw the difference and scolded his own congregation good-naturedly by saying, You don't sing here. Well, I believe in singing and I believe in joyful gospel singing.

The expression, whether it be a camp meeting song, such as Brother Thomas sang, I will make the darkness light before thee. What is wrong, I'll make it right before thee. I will make the crooked straight before thee, and the high place I'll bring down.

Not Miltonic, you know, in its quality, but an expression of honest people who love God tremendously. So I believe in that and we're going to have it by the grace of God. If any of you have nice sweet tenor voices or big rumbling basses, we can use you up here in the choir.

But if you can't come to the choir, sing down there. But the point is, we never want to degenerate into just rumbling through a song service, muddling through it. And then there's the good word, the psalm from the pulpit.

I'm not the greatest preacher of my day by a long, long way. But as long as I'm around, you're going to hear good words from the pulpit, the words of the living God. You're going to hear books of the Bible expounded and truth told and texts illuminated and the word expounded and illustrated from the stories of the Bible until the Bible is everything.

That we plan to do. And sympathy of sympathy with each other. God's sympathetic people.

I hope you're sympathetic people. I hope all of you are sympathetic. I hope you never can hear of anybody's trouble without worrying over it, suffering over it and being disturbed by it and taking it to God in prayer.

Now this we hold in charity and this we hold in understanding. No censorious against others is intended. No superior attitude is taken.

If the Lord should lift his hand out from under us, we'd all plunge down and be gone forever. Only the goodness of God. And there's lots of things wrong with us.

No question about that. But I ask of the great tall, what was his name, Palmer, Noel Palmer, the great tall fellow. He was close to eight feet, or was it seven feet, seven foot something.

He married the daughter of Bramwell Booth, and she was almost as tall as he, and they sang a duet one time in our old building. And I stood up alongside of him, you know, come just a little above his knee. And there we were.

Well, he was a great big, great big expansive Salvation Army fellow. And I said to him, brother, brother Palmer, what about, what about sanctification and the heart? What about it? Well, he said, I'll tell you, brother Tozer, I believe if the heart loves God and wants to do right, God will overlook an awful lot of blemishes. He says, if the heart loves God tremendously and is on God's side and determined to do right, God will overlook a lot of flaws in the life.

I felt good over that, because I knew there were flaws. And you don't have to be flawless to be blessed. You only have to have a big heart that wants the will of God more than anything else in the world, and that has a single eye single to his glory.

I tell you, no censoriousness is intended. And for those who do things otherwise, we're sorry, but we're not going to spend a major part of our time condemning them. We're just going to police our own church and see that these are the things that matter here.

The word of the living God, sweet music, answers to prayer, occasional wonderful coming out into a fullness of joy by some Christian, and the sweet friendliness, plus the good words from the pulpit and the personal interest in each other and love for each other. These are the things that matter, exercising the gifts of God's Spirit, energized by the Spirit. And though we may not build big, as the world sees it, we'll build forever.

And that's what I'm for, my brethren. And I wouldn't want a dime of your money or a minute of your time if I couldn't guarantee to you that you could build forever. I don't guarantee you will, because motive is everything, and I don't know your motive.

But I can guarantee that you can build forever by the grace of God, and you can do things that will be here after you're gone. Wonderful to leave something behind you after you're gone. Say, by the grace of God, he enabled me to do this.

Maybe it's only the winning of a boy, a wild boy, but oh, why did I say only the winning of a wild boy? If you were the parents, you wouldn't want me to say only the winning of a wild boy, that Christ is more wonderful than the establishing of a great institution. And if you're ready to go along this way and let Jesus Christ be our joy, let him be our delight, be in love with the Savior, and let him be your joy and your happiness, for we're going to go places. We've been hit, as I said at the beginning, we've been hurt here on the South Side by a terrific change, and many, many people moving away and going to other parts of the country and other parts of the world and leaving us.

We've noticed that. But there are a lot of us around here that still have a private line to the throne of God, and we're going to see God do greater things in the next month than we've seen him do in all the years that I've been here. I can promise you that if we will obey God and do what we should do.

Amen? Amen. All right, Brother Mack.

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