

# Concerning Spiritual Gifts

by Charles S. Price

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit in the life of the church, and how they are meant to be used for the purpose of pointing men to Christ.*

**Scripture:** John 14:16, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 12:4, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 2:19

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Gifts"

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## Description

Charles S. Price preaches on the importance of understanding and exercising spiritual gifts, emphasizing the distinction between the 'gift' of the Spirit, which is the Holy Spirit Himself dwelling in believers, and the 'gifts' of the Spirit, which are various abilities given for the service of the Christian life. He highlights the transformation that occurs in a Spirit-filled person, leading to the natural growth of the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Price explains that the purpose of the Holy Spirit's coming is to empower believers for service and ministry, not just for personal joy or emotions.

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## Transcript

IT is possible for spirit filled people to be ignorant regarding spiritual gifts. It is even possible for people who have received the gifts of the Holy Ghost to be ignorant regarding the exercise of them in the service of the Christian life. There is a difference between the "gift" of the Spirit and the "gifts" of the Spirit. The "gift" of the Spirit means that the Holy Spirit Himself is offered to men with the assurance that He will come in to abide. He is the "parakletos," the one who works alongside to help. The scriptures very clearly teach the difference between having the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit. "He is with you," said Jesus, "but He shall be in you." The Holy Spirit Himself comes into our hearts to abide and He is God's gift to the church and His coming fulfills the promise. "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

A man who is filled with the Spirit will begin to grow on the tree of his life the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It may not be large and ripe and luscious fruit at first, but still it will be there. Apples are apples when they are green and small, just as much as when they are big and ripe and luscious. They are apples by nature, and they are apples for it is natural for the apple tree to grow them. The gift of the Holy Spirit; that is, the coming of the Holy Spirit into your heart will naturally mean that fruit will commence to grow on the branches of your life tree. All Spirit-filled people should manifest the fruit of the Spirit.

What a change takes place in our hearts when He comes in! What a transformation takes place in our lives when we are baptized with the Holy Ghost according to Acts. 2 :4. If it is real and deep and scriptural love will take the place of jealousy and envyings, and long suffering and kindness will grow in their place.

We don't have to struggle to grow this. It just grows. It grows easily and naturally, just as apples grow on the apple tree. It can increase in volume. It can become sweeter and riper and more beautiful, it is true, but Praise the Lord it is there just the same. It is not the fruit of our own struggle. It is the fruit of the Spirit. It is not the fruit of our own will, it is the fruit of the Spirit. It is not the result of our own endeavor, it is merely letting Him take complete control. Praise the Name of the Lord for the manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the fruit of the Spirit-filled life.

But the gifts of the Spirit are imparted after the gift of the Spirit. In other words, you must have the giver, that you might receive the gift. It is impossible for anyone to receive any of the gifts of the Spirit through any other means than by the act of the giver himself. Jesus gives the Spirit and the Spirit gives gifts. It is possible for you to have the Holy Spirit and to have a glorious experience in the things of God and yet not be the possessor of any or all of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. When a person tries to operate a gift they have never received, when they try to do in flesh what can only be done in the Spirit we find fanaticism. When we do in the Spirit the thing that the Spirit would have us do there is perfect harmony and co-operation in the church.

#### THE CHURCH - HIS BODY

What a glorious picture this is of the Spirit-filled church! What a beautiful Cathedral of Divine Grace! What an emblem of love and power of God! Ephesians the second chapter and nineteenth to twenty-second verse gives us a portrait of the perfect church upon which God places His Divine approval.

"Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Is not that a glorious picture? Is not that a magnificent ideal? We are built together, a great, beautiful, magnificent, symmetrical Cathedral of Divine Grace. That is the church! Not a thing of bricks and mortar and of wood and of stone, but a building of blood-washed, Spirit-filled saints of God in whom the fullness of the Lord Himself does dwell. Every brick in its place, the foundation being solid and sure, a foundation of the apostles and prophets and the chief cornerstone the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We are not only built, but we are built together. One stone is not the Cathedral. One brick is not the habitation, but brick joined with brick, and stone with stone makes the completed edifice. There is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the individual and there is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church. By the mortar of Divine Love we are held together. By the artistry of the Master Himself we are fitly framed together unto a holy temple in the Lord.

#### GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

But there is a purpose in all this. There is a deep spiritual significance to it all. The twenty-second verse tells us that we are huddled together that God might dwell in us. It declares that we are built together for "a habitation of God, through the Spirit." So we ought to realize that it is not our working through God, but God working through us that will bring the result. It is not the power of man through God. It is the power of God through man. "Once I tried to use Him, but now He uses me. The great passion of the heart of Jesus was to save the souls of men. To save the souls of men He left His kingly throne and was born in the manger at Bethlehem. To save the souls of men He preached and taught by the waters of Galilee, and in the hamlets and villages and towns of Judea and of Samaria. He faced the rabble in the judgment hall of Pontius Pilate that He might save the souls of men. He hung between two thieves on the summit of a skull-shaped hill that men might be saved. The passion of His heart then was souls, souls, souls. The passion of His heart in the day in which we live is that men might be saved.

The purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was not primarily to fill the hearts of the disciples with joy. The coming of the Holy Spirit was to endue that little group of people with all the power of the presence of God. The Master had promised them, "Ye shall receive power." Power for what? Power for emotion? No, not that. Power to feel good? Could that be possible? Was that all? No, a thousand times no. You will feel good. Praise the Lord! Your emotions will be stirred and billows of heavenly ecstasy will surge through your innermost being, but that is not the purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit! I can hear the clear, clarion ringing tones of the Master's "Ye shall be my witnesses, my representatives, my ambassadors. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and the signs shall follow them that believe." Signs of what? Signs of the power of the disciples? No, my friends, signs of the presence of the Spirit of God. Signs that would prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Lord was in the midst. The casting out of devils, the speaking with new tongues, the healing of the sick, the raising of the dead. Mighty, marvelous, divine signs of His presence. They were to be manifestations of His power and His power was not to be received apart from His presence.

## THE WORKS THAT I DO

There is a beautiful analogy in the New Testament regarding the body of Jesus and the body which is called the church. Jesus was God localized; Pentecost is God universalized. Jesus was God in the flesh. Jesus was the Son of God born of a virgin. Jesus was the second person in the adorable trinity performing His ministry in God's great redemptive plan. He spoke about the power that was in Him that came from the Father. He told of the works that He did not of Himself, but because of the Father's presence. He told of words that He said He received of the Father, but remember this truth, do not forget this fact. When He was in Nazareth He was not in Jerusalem. Mary said to Him, "Master, if you had been here my brother would not have died." She deplored the absence of Jesus, and believed it was because He was not there that her brother was laid in the cold, silent tomb. The ministry of Jesus did not last very long as far as this earthly life is concerned. Three years, and three years soon pass away. He went on no foreign missionary journeys. He crossed no seas except an inland lake during the short span of His ministry, but He did complete the work the Father had given Him to do.

But He knew that while the physical body was to be glorified and go back to the heavenlies, the body was yet to remain. The mystery of the ages was about to be revealed. A new body was to be born. A new something was to come into existence. It was to be His body. It was to be the church. The work that He did, the church was to do. The ministry that he performed, the church was now to perform, and Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

There is a picture, my friends; the glorious photograph of a spirit-filled church. Not only a group of separate members, not merely a collection of individuals, but members and individuals fitly framed together, joined together in the bonds of the Holy Spirit and joined together for a purpose. That the church might become the habitation of God through the Spirit.

In the New Testament church every one of the gifts should be manifested. Every single one of the gifts of the Spirit should be in operation and by the operation of the gifts the work that the Holy Ghost wants to do us can be accomplished. After we have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit we should pray just as earnestly for the gift that we need to make us efficient in our ministry as we prayed for the coming of the Spirit Himself. Not all have the same gifts. To one is given one gift and to some one else another gift. Let us read I Corinthians 12: 4 to 11:

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits to another divers kinds of tongues to another the interpretation of tongues but all these works that one and the selfsame Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will."

What an error it is for us to believe that because the Holy Spirit has come we can exercise all of the gifts and operate them at will. It is possible for the Spirit to give a gift at the time of His coming. He might even give more than one. But the fact remains that because we have received the Spirit we do not necessarily possess any or all of the gifts. We are told to pray for them we are told to covet them earnestly and I believe with all my heart that we should seek sincerely before the Lord that the Blessed Giver might impart the gift He has for us. Let me repeat. Every one of the gifts should be working and in operation in the church. What had happened at this church at Corinth and why was Paul writing in the way he did? Let me remind you in this connection that he in no way intimates that the gifts were spurious and that they had become possessed of a false spirit. As a matter of fact he emphatically declared them to be of God.

But the flesh had crept in. Human desires were taking the place of the purposes of God. Instead of being led by the Spirit they were trying to lead the Spirit. Divisions had crept in among them. Instead of being "fitly framed together" the church was being divided. They were commencing to open up new missions in town. They were getting mad at the pastor and were beginning to be unteachable, and as a result nothing was being accomplished in the way of saving souls. There was a crowd that followed Cephas, and another sect that clung to Paul, and still another group liked Apollos and wanted to become followers of him. Paul, Cephas and Apollos each had their ministry. Paul upbraided these Corinthians because of their error. What a world of meaning there is in the words of the question Paul asked, "Is Christ divided?" He is trying to impress upon them the necessity of a united body. He is trying to emphasize the fact that they are the body of Christ and as God dwelt in Him who was Jesus, God can dwell in the church which is His body.

## FLESH AND SPIRIT

I have often noticed that when splits and divisions come people often try to vindicate their position by the use of the gifts. Someone will jump up and say, "I am right and the other fellow is wrong because God spoke through me in an unknown tongue." Another will say, "I know I am right because God helped me preach and I spoke under the anointing of the Holy Spirit." In our endeavor to vindicate our position there

is often a decided tendency to do things in flesh that can only be done in the Spirit.

God will bless you, my brother, many times in spite of your mistakes, and not because of them. If God had to wait for absolute perfection in all of us before He manifested Himself I am sure He would have to wait a long time for some of us. I have my gift, you have yours. I have my calling, you have yours. The hand cannot tell the foot that it is not needed because it does not handle things and the eye cannot dismiss the ear because the ear cannot see. Many members and many gifts, but only one body.

Many members functioning in many ways. Many gifts operated in many ways, but still there is only one body. But in the operation of the gifts there will be perfect harmony and wonderful coordination. There are not one hundred Holy Spirits. There is only one. There is not one Holy Ghost in me and another Holy Ghost in you telling us to do diametrically opposite things. The Holy Spirit does not tell me that a thing is true and tell you that the same thing is a lie. When divisions start it is a sure sign that somebody is wrong somewhere.

What is the purpose of your gathering together in your public assembly? I am not talking about the prayer meeting. I am not discussing the upper room and the tarrying meeting. I am asking what is the purpose of you assembling yourselves together in the body and in the capacity of the church? Is it merely for what you can receive or is it for what you can give? Is it merely to be blessed or is it to be made a blessing? Is it to make sure of the salvation of your own soul or is it to try to bring the sinner who comes within your gates to the knowledge of real salvation that he will find in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Why are the gifts given? Merely to give you something to play with or something to enjoy? Do you believe in your heart that that is the purpose of the gift? Is not every gift for a purpose? Is there not some object in the joy in all the operations of the Holy Spirit? The mission of the church is to point men to Christ. The ministry of the body is a ministry of service; every member operating and cooperating and working harmoniously with one great object in view. The church that loses its missionary and evangelistic vision is the church that will soon be losing the presence of the Holy Ghost.

The church that is alive to its glorious opportunity and that will get on its knees and cry out, "Lord, give us souls, give us souls, give us souls" that is the church through which the Spirit will minister. That is the church to which the Holy Spirit will impart His gifts.

If only we could arrive at the conclusion that it is only to the consecrated heart and life and to the surrendered spirit that the Holy Ghost will impart His gifts, some of us would be down on our faces before God. I covet earnestly the best gifts not because I want to enjoy them, but because I want to use them in His service. I want to come to the last great day when I see my Saviour face to face and lay my trophies at His blessed feet. Around you, my friends, is a world that is sinking into hell. Your neighbors are lost, your relatives are lost, your friends are lost, unless they have accepted the blood of Calvary as the atonement of their sins. How helpless we are, after all, in the face of this great big world of unbelief. When we testify to the Baptism of the Holy Ghost the apostate church who has crucified the Lord afresh calls us "fanatical." The spirit of the age is to drift away from God.

Our institutions of learning are for the most part atheistic and the pulpits of the country are filled with preachers who deny the Word of God. How helpless we are! How impotent we are! The world needs to be reached. Can we do it? No, brother, we can not do it, but God can in us and God can through us. That is why the Holy Spirit came. That is the purpose of the ministry of the Holy Ghost. No body appreciates more than I do what the Holy Ghost means in me, but how I want Him to work and speak through me. Nobody

appreciates more than I do the ecstasy and the glories and the power of the Holy Ghost in the church, but Oh! how I long to see Him work and operate and minister through the church.

So you have your gift, brother, and I have mine. Your gift is not mine and mine is not yours, but we both have the same Holy Spirit and the one who leads me leads you. Have you crucified self? Are you really letting the Spirit control and lead and guide you? Are your own interests upon the altar? Are you working and laboring for His sake and not for the glory of man? Are you an evangelist for what you can get out of it, or are you preaching for what you can give to the Lord? Have you really presented your bodies a living sacrifice holy acceptable unto God? May the Lord help us to be true and to be sincere. If we are really consecrated, if there are no ulterior motives; if we have entered through the swinging gates of Calvary and have been saved through the blood then we should be 'workers together with Him' in the great harvest field. Love one another. We must cooperate as members of one body. The ministry of the Spirit in the church service will be beautiful and harmonious and yet impregnated with power. When a gift is manifested it will be for a purpose. When the Holy Spirit operates He will have some motive in it all. It will not be repulsive, but the very glory of heaven will overshadow the place wherein we are gathered.

#### POWER FROM HEAVEN

I have often noticed that unsaved men will seek the Christ when I am preaching about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and have hardly mentioned salvation at all. The presence of the Holy Ghost means conviction. The presence of the Holy Spirit will mean regenerative power. May the Lord help us to be in the place He wants us to be and do the things He wants us to do. My friends, I have been in meetings where the glory of the Lord was so marvelous that we were lifted above the material world in which we live. We have traveled to the skies in chariots of fire. Our souls have bathed in the radiance of God's love that has streamed upon us from the throne. I have seen whole audiences moved upon under the power of the Holy Ghost as if the hand of God had swept across the strings of a harp and the melodies of Glory have broken forth. I have heard music with the ear of the Spirit and I have seen the glories of the eternal city with the eyes of my soul. Oh! for the Spirit-filled life! Oh! for the baptism of the Holy Ghost! You dear people to whom Pentecost has become a reality, let me plead with you not to remove the old landmarks. Let me beseech you not to depart from the old doctrines. We do not want a vaudeville show. We do not need any shows inside or outside the pulpit. We do not need the spectacular to draw a crowd. We do not need the supper rooms and social halls and we need not appeal to the hearts of men through sensationalism. What we do need is to climb the steps to an upper room and in obedience to our Lord's command tarry until we are "endued with power" from on high. We need Pentecost. We need Pentecost! And then when He comes, in surrender, in abandonment of self and in yielding to His will let Him have the right of way. It seems to me that I can hear my Master say: "My little children, a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you. What a glorious building, what a spiritual edifice. A body, His body, a body of Spirit-filled saints, fitly joined together, and framed by His will, in which God Himself dwells in the Spirit. And in which glorious body the manifestations of His divine presence and power are continually seen. A body in which there is operated every gift of the Spirit, a body that because of the power of the divine manifested in the human will be able to accomplish the work He has called us to do. That is the church which is His body.

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